

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

Down Memory Lane

Book I

A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES CAPTURING SOME OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND REGION.

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Central Queensland University

is pleased to present

Down Memory Lane

Down Memory Lane is a collection of stories from real people living in our midst, people who remember with pride and humour, either their forebears or their own, early pioneering days.

It is not intended as a history book, rather a collection of stories about those who contributed to our history.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be entrusted with the recollections of each of the Authors represented here, as their stories all help to paint a picture of the ingenuity, inventiveness, intelligence and indomitable spirit that has been a part of the foundation of Central Queensland.



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WAR MEMORIES

By Avian Jacobs, Rockhampton

"Do your bit for the War Effort, enlist now!" was on the posters all over the city of Brisbane, so, at the age of 16 I enlisted in the Australian Women's Land Army in 1943. It was the only Women's service I could join, as one had to be eighteen to join any of the others.

Australian Women's Land Army was formed to replace men who had to leave the land to enlist for war. We came under what was called 'Manpower' and not 'Defence Forces' as others were known. Hence we received no benefits or gratuities after the war ended.

I joined the Land Army with no experience of farm work whatsoever as I was Brisbane born and bred and everything was new to me so I was in for a few shocks, but I was determined to succeed.

We had to go to Enoggera Army Barracks for our medical and as we walked through, the soldiers would chant, "You'll be sorry". Well how far from the truth they were! Maybe they were sorry they had enlisted but I had no regrets whatsoever.

After we were accepted, we proceeded to the Army Disposals where we were issued with a very small amount of new gear and some second hand army clothing. All my uniforms had to be altered at my own expense and oh, that ghastly woollen underwear which became harder the more one washed it. Nevertheless, I was walking on air the first time I boarded a tram in public in full uniform.

I was always very proud of my uniform. Starched them 'til they were stiff and shiny, even though starch was scarce and hard to get. Sometimes we would cadge the water in which the rice had been cooked and use it as starch. To do this you had to get on the right side of the cook. Our shoes were highly polished with heated boot polish and Metho.

We had strict rules regarding behaviour whilst in uniform:

- Hats will be worn flat on head with brim turned up at back and slightly tipped at left hand side with metal badge in centre front of hatband. No alterations to shape to be made.
- Hair must be one inch above the collar.
- Uniform dress must be exactly 14 inches from the ground and must at all times be kept immaculate. Belt ends must be fastened and not allowed to hang loose.
- No jewellery whatsoever except wedding or engagement ring and wrist watch.
- Moderate make-up only and no nail colour permitted while wearing uniform or A.W.L.A. badge.
- No member in uniform will be permitted to enter any public place where alcoholic liquor is for sale or consumed.
- Neither will she be allowed to swear, smoke, eat or chew in a public thoroughfare or a public vehicle if wearing uniform or even the badge.
- Land girls must remember their calling is one of dignity and that the uniform they are wearing is the property of the Commonwealth Government and therefore the King's Uniform upon which no discredit must be brought.

My wages whilst fruit and vegetable picking were 3 pounds per week, less 25/- for board, and 3/- tax. This was in a camp of 20 to 30 girls. We worked at least 48 hours a week and sometimes more, packing well into the night. Girls on dairy farms worked long and odd hours.

I first went to a Rookie camp called Samsonvale for training, where we learned to milk cows and various other farm jobs. With a different batch of girls every few weeks, I often wonder how those poor cows let their milk down with new girls pulling on their teats and learning the rudiments of milking.

My first real posting was to Thulimbah in the Granite Belt, picking fruit and vegetables. We were all camped in the local hall with a Matron (Sparrow Legs) and a cook. There were no home comforts in the camp, just a fold up stretcher and a Hessian bag that we filled with straw, for a mattress. Our few personal possessions were stored in our kit-bags.

Each day the local farmers picked us up and returned us after our hard day's work. We took a packed lunch from the camp, but the farmer I worked for always allowed me to sit at their table where his wife had prepared a hot dinner for me. Not all girls were so lucky. These same people gave me an extra week's wages as a bonus when the season had finished and also applied to have me back the next year.

On Saturday, out came the uniforms to wear to the local dance. Partners were scarce as most of the local boys were away serving in the forces. We girls soon learnt it was o.k. to dance together. With only one late night out a week, we thoroughly enjoyed the local dances. Other nights were 9 pm curfews or a closed camp, which meant that nobody was allowed out at all. These nights were spent letter writing home or to pen pals or relatives in the forces.

We picked beans 'til our backs nearly broke, picked and packed apples and stone fruit. At times we would put our names and addresses in the vegetables, as we knew they were going to the Army Camps. Sometimes we got replies to our notes and this always caused a bit of excitement in the camp.

From Thulimbah I went to Theodore picking cotton. Here the townsfolk were very kind to us, lending us a wind-up gramophone and a ping-pong table complete with bats and balls. They also invited us to their Sunday school picnic where I won the ladies flat race with a prize of 5/-. We didn't have to pay to go to the dances or pictures either, these people were so thankful for the part we were playing for the War Effort.

At Theodore we were camped in an old sawmill on the banks of the Dawson River, it was June and it was c-c-cold! A truck would arrive at the camp just after breakfast and we'd all pile in and coming home, as tired as we were, we'd sing all the war songs all the way home. The cook would have the coppers full of hot water ready for our longed-for baths in galvanised tubs. There was always a mad rush for the first tub. This was a really happy camp and we would make our own entertainment on closed camp nights.

My first experience away from the camp life was on a private billet at Bli Bli. The private billets occurred when a farmer applied for a Land Girl and he was expected to billet her in the house with the family. We worked hard picking beans, pineapples and bananas and once again Saturday night was dance night and we'd walk miles to the Bli Bli dance on the Maroochy River forgetting all about our aching backs.

Barmoya, via. Rockhampton was my final billet. I did everything there from clearing land, grubbing stumps, cementing, picking tomatoes, rockmelons and watermelons. This was the hardest work I had ever done and was really more than the limits of a young teenager. One could say I was compensated for all my hard work, as it was here I met my future husband (the Boss's brother). I looked forward to his visits on a Wednesday night and meeting at the local Caves dance on a Saturday night. This was the norm for courting couples. We married 18 months later and had 52 wonderful years, rearing 3

children. I was like so many other Land Girls who either married the boss or his relative or one of the local boys, never to go back to the city again.

I made some wonderful friendships from my army life, so although the war brought lots of sadness to many, it has left me with wonderful lasting memories.

Avian Jacobs: In Land Army Uniform, age 16.



Posters displayed in Brisbane

MY BRUSH WITH FAME

By Isabel Hoch, Rockhampton

One of my earliest memories concerns Errol Flynn. At that time I lived on an isolated sheep property in northwest Queensland.

In the twenty first century few people would remember Flynn, but in earlier decades he was a famous Australian who made his mark in Hollywood as a prominent movie actor. Before going to America he travelled in his own country, gaining a reputation along the way as something of a charming cad.

In the early 1930's, he reached our area and became engaged to a daughter of our neighbours. While there, he attended a birthday party for me when I was a young child. He was accorded the honour of making a little speech and said I was "A bud that would one day blossom into a rose".

That blossoming is long past and the old rose is faded now but the memory of that man's handsome face is bright as ever. I had never before seen anyone who looked as beautiful as that and he made a great impression with his charm.

Alas the cad part of his nature was soon revealed. When he found that his fiancée's father did not own the large station but was merely a manager, he made a rapid departure.



Errol Flynn

Editors Note: The following five stories cover two generations of an entire family and cover a period from 1914 up to present day. The sequence of these stories is as follows:

Jim Brock, married to Dorris Brock and then their son – Ernie Brock.

Alice Horspool and her daughter Joy who married Ernie Brock.

JIM BROCK, GOOVIGEN

Editors note: This story has been transcribed verbatim from an oral tape.

Landed in Australia from Suffolk, England on March 16th 1922, and worked in Victoria for 13 months for the State River and Water Supplies. Decided to leave the job with Dick Farrell, in April 1923. We had a few days in Mildura, Bendigo and Melbourne.

Easter Show was on in Sydney, and there was no accommodation available. Went to Brisbane for a week, then on to Maryborough, having been told we might get a job in the Butter Factory

Had no luck, so tried Rockhampton next, no luck again. Stayed a week, then on to Mackay to try the sugar cane, but found there was nothing doing there until June when the cutting started, so back to Rockhampton.

We had 5 pound between us and landed a job house painting. After about six weeks saw an advertisement in the paper by Mr. Renis Neilsen of Dululu for cotton pickers, so got a job. Found I could earn over 1 pound a day.

When the picking was over a chap by the name of F.T. Berger offered me 25 acres of land to stump out and grow a crop of cotton. I did this and got it growing nicely. One day the manager of the Cotton Ginnery and the Bank Manager came around and looked at the crop and predicted I would make 25 pound an acre.

Another young fellow, Tom Byrnes, an Irishman had a piece of ground under cotton, and as we were getting short of cash by this time, we decided to look for a job.

In the meantime Dick Farrell had got a job as a Blacksmith at Theodore. He wrote and told me I might get a job there if I came up, but all I could get was about a week cordwood cutting. Stopped there about three weeks looking for work.

When any one wanted workers they sent to the Labour Bureau in Brisbane for them even though there were so many in the district looking for work. In the finish the Police from Banana rounded us up into a truck and dumped us in Rannes. Went on to Dululu and found the cotton still looking good, but not yet ready to pick.

Tom Byrnes and I decided to go to Biloela and look for a job, we got a mile of fencing to do, came back to look at the cotton and found it loaded with grubs. Instead of getting 25 pounds an acre I only got 16 pounds off the lot.

So went to Callide Valley and landed a job picking cotton for Noel Mullally. The dingoes were very thick. It was nothing to see twenty at a time, they would howl under the water tank, mostly at night.

There was a block of land lying idle along side of his, which I selected. It was standing scrub with no water or fences, so we put up a tent, bought an axe and brush hook and started falling scrub.

We used to plant cotton between the stumps after the fire had been over it. By falling a patch of scrub each year and working at planting cotton and other jobs for neighbours, I gradually got the place cleared, grassed and fenced, and started dairying on it.

I was a bachelor farmer for ten years and got married in 1934. We reared eleven children all living at the time I recorded this story. All attended the Goovigen School.

We are now retired, having sold the farm to three of the boys. At the time of recording my story Mum, three boys and I are still living on the farm.

*Note: Jim's story was taped in 1976 and is written exactly as he taped it.
Jim passed away on the 19th July 1997 aged 94 years.*

EARLY BEGINNINGS

By Dorris Brock (Nee Porter), Goovigen

I was born on May the 18th 1914, the youngest of a family of six boys and two girls. We were living on the North Western outskirts of London in England, when the First World War broke out in August 1914. My father joined the Army and fought in France and Belgium, where he was killed in 1917.

After the war ended my mother married again, and in 1919 I started my schooling. In January 1924 my mother died and as she knew she was dying, she had made arrangements for my youngest brother and I to come to Australia to live with our older sister who had married an Aussie Soldier. In May 1925 our stepfather put us on a boat called the Osterly and after six weeks voyage under the care of the Salvation Army, we arrived in Brisbane on the 13th of July.

Our sister met us and took us to her home in Coominya in the Brisbane Valley. I can remember how nice it was to be in the fresh open country after being in such a small area in England. I started school in Coominya where there were only about sixty children, one teacher and a teacher's aide. In 1927 I passed the Scholarship Examination and in 1928 went to Ipswich Technical College for one year. I enjoyed my schooling days and made quite a few friends, one girl in particular I still keep in touch with after all these years.

During 1929 I stayed with my sister and helped with the housework and caring for her young children. Sometimes I was able to go and stay with a friend who lived on a farm where I learned quite a lot about farm life and the chores that had to be done there.

In October 1930 I came up to Rockhampton on the train that was known as the Rocky Mail and my brother and his friend met me at the Station. They brought me to Goovigen, which is about 60 to 70 miles south of Rockhampton. This area was in the early stages of development and there were only one or two houses there as Goovigen was a very small township. Most people lived in humpies made of corrugated iron, or tents. My brother's home was a hut with cotton bales opened up and sewn together for walls, with an iron roof and dirt floor- no boarded floors in those days, yet I found it very comfortable.

After living with them for about two years I went to work as a domestic on a neighbouring property where my wages were 7 shillings and sixpence (75 cents) a week and my keep. In those days a farm labourer was paid only 10 to 15 shillings a week, which is equal to \$1.00 to \$1.50 of our money now,

and his keep. I was fortunate enough to have a bed in the house, but the labourer had to sleep in one of the sheds. Life was pretty hard, but everyone was pleasant even though there was no such thing as electricity. The cooking was done on a stove fired by wood and we had either kerosene or carbide lamps for lighting.

In 1934 I met and married my husband Jim, who was also a farmer. We lived in a corrugated hut where we raised our first six children. In those days we milked the cows by hand and I used to feed the young calves with milk in a bucket. We also grew cotton, which had to be picked by hand, and in the cotton picking season lots of men came into the area looking for work in the cotton fields.

In 1946 we bought a neighbouring property, which made our acreage bigger and had a wooden house. We had five more children making a large family of eleven- seven boys and four girls. The children either walked the 2 miles to school in Goovigen or rode their pushbikes, while we took the 6-gallon cans of cream to Goovigen, at first by horse and sulky and later we bought a utility truck. The cream was put on the train, which delivered it to the Butter factory at Wowan. I used to make our own butter by pouring the cream into a 5lb Syrup tin and shaking it until it turned to butter, but later we bought a churn, which was wound by a handle that made the job a lot easier. The skimmed milk was not wasted but fed to the pigs we kept to sell as ham and bacon.

Just after we moved to the wooden house we bought a second hand 32-volt lighting system and a few years after that we had 240-volt electricity connected along our way. This enabled people to install such equipment as stoves, refrigerators and freezers and we were able to milk the cows by machine, which made life a lot easier even though it had to be done twice a day every day so someone had to be at the farm every day.

The farm belongs to the three boys now and is no longer a dairy but they raise beef cattle and grow grain. I am still living here and thoroughly enjoy life on the farm, although it hasn't been easy. Although I am 88 I still love to do the cooking and other jobs around the house. I still think country life in Queensland would take a lot of beating as I have lived here for 77 years, 68 of those years being on this farm. I have a very good family of whom I am very proud.

I WOULDN'T SWAP IT FOR QUIDS

By Ernie Brock, "Jacarango" – Gracemere

I was born in Wowan in 1934 in a large old home converted into a type of bush Maternity Hospital for country mothers to have their babies. There were no doctors there only midwives. I was a big baby, no one really knew how heavy I was because the scales they had there only weighed up to 9lb and I was off the scales. At 4ft. 6in. my mum was very tiny so I must have been a bit of an effort, but she went on to have ten more children all two years apart.

My first home at Goovigen was a hut made of tin walls and roof. Our lighting was kerosene hurricane lamps because we did not have electricity. It started off as two rooms, a kitchen and bedroom and as the children came along a second bedroom was added. It had a dirt floor, which my mother would sprinkle with used wet tea leaves to keep down the dust, before she swept out.

There was always a chook or two sneaking in on the table to steal food and my mother was forever chasing them with the broom. My first bed was made of jute bags with poles threaded on the sides and propped up at each end on crossed poles. We were always warm as we had a wood stove and our mother made eiderdowns using duck down from the ducks our father shot for meat. Once she didn't have enough down so she used Ibis feathers. We all avoided that eiderdown as it stunk like dead fish!

Later my parents bought more land and a larger wooden cottage came with that so we were a lot more comfortable.

From an early age, before and after school, we were expected to do a lot of the farm work as we had a dairy and the cows had to be milked morning and night, every day – never a weekend off! At first, I walked the four miles to Goovigen School then, when I was five, my parents ordered a 24-inch frame bike for me. Picking it up from the railway, they found a huge adult bike had been sent in error. There wasn't money to send it back so I battled it out, determined to master this monster of a bike. I did.

Even though money was scarce and we were a big family, we always ate well. We had a big vegetable garden and plenty of fresh cream and milk and we made our own butter. About once a month a 5-pound (\$10) order for non-perishable groceries was mailed to Davis and Sons in East Street in Rockhampton. This was then sent by rail to Goovigen Railway Station and we would travel the 4 miles by horse and cart to collect it. While in Goovigen we would pick up the luxury of a little meat and some perishables and, as we had no refrigeration or icebox, this was cooked immediately on our return and then just kept in a meat safe. My father always shot ducks and pigeons for our regular meat. Sometimes during drought years when the vegetable garden would fail, our mother would cook up pigweed that grew wild in the paddocks.

During the war years because most of the farmers went to fight, food was scarce and we were issued with ration tickets. We didn't always need all of ours so we sent them to an Aunt who in turn knitted us lovely warm jumpers. We loved looking at the toy catalogues that arrived but our toys were made by ourselves, usually things like whistles and shanghai s whittled out of wood with our pocket knives. The shanghais were a 'v' shaped piece of wood with bands made of old car tyres and we used stones to shoot pigeons for the family to eat. When times were good, we would be given colouring pencils and a book for birthdays and Christmas.

My mother and father helped each other a lot. Mum helped with the milking and kept lots of chooks from which she sold up to two hundred dozen eggs a week to supplement our income. She was an excellent cook making bread, cakes and biscuits as well as wholesome meals and beautiful desserts. My father did a bit around the house and loved looking after the babies. We all ate our meals together at a big long table and my father would always have a baby on his knee, getting them used to solids by feeding him/her from his plate.

I had a few health problems as I was growing up and had my tonsils out which seemed standard in those days. One day I woke paralysed down the side. At first my parents thought I was trying to get out of school but when they saw me stumbling and falling, they took me the long distance to Biloela Hospital by horse and cart. The doctors thought I had rheumatic fever but were never sure and after a long stay at the Hospital I just got better by myself.

We had Chinese neighbours who had a market garden not far from us but they were very timid people because in those days Australians did not like the Chinese coming to Australia and some were given very cruel treatment, so they would keep to themselves. Our family also had very little social contact, at times we would see relatives and sometimes we would go to neighbours or they would visit us, consequently I remained a shy person all my life.

Although my growing years may seem harsh and boring by today's standards, I think I had a very happy childhood and wouldn't swap it for quids. It was excellent grounding for my later life. I have never been out of work because I didn't mind what job I took and I expected to work hard at that job.

Note: At the time of his retirement in 1999 Ern had been a first- aider/lecturer at the South Blackwater Mine for 21 years.

STORIES MY MOTHER TOLD ME

*Recollections of ALICE HORSPOOL of Rockhampton.
Written on her behalf and in her memory by her daughter
Joy Brock.*

Alice was born in 1906 in a house in a back street in Rockhampton, which at that time had no name. She was the third child of a family of six with two older sisters, one younger sister and two younger brothers. There was no medical reason why, but the last baby Frank weighed a whopping 13 pounds at birth. As it was a home birth with limited medical aid, Alice's mother suffered serious complications and was confined to bed after the birth. Except for visits to the bathroom, she was bedridden until she died some years later.

As a result of this Alice and her two older sisters Ida and Hilda had to take on the responsibility of running the house and caring for the three younger children, Elsie, Percy and Frank. They would rise early in the morning to do the baby's washing by hand, prepare the breakfast for the whole family and make school lunches and then make beds and clean up the house.

While their mother was still alive, she would sew all their clothes and make beautiful doyleys by hand while she lay in bed. She could not see very well however and the girls had to thread up a large number of needles, all in different colours and leave them in a cushion beside her bed to keep her going until they came home from school.

An Aunt came in to tend to the pre-school children and their mother during the day. After school the girls would come home and bring in the washing and prepare dinner for the family. Saturday was a big washing day, all done by hand and a cleaning day for the house.

Sunday was spent at Church and Sunday school, as Alice's father was a foundation member of the first Baptist Church in Rockhampton and also a Lay Preacher. Somehow they managed to prepare and eat a big traditional roast dinner in between morning and evening Church service.

The only time Alice was able to play was in the lunch break at school when she would play such games as Hopscotch, Beam ball and chasey.

She had a strong memory of hating the one doll she had because just before Christmas while shopping with her father, they looked in a toy shop window and saw the most beautiful 'girl doll' all dressed in frills and laces. Alice really wanted that doll so she was excited when her father told her to wait outside while he went in to buy something. When he came out with a wrapped box in his arms, she just knew he had bought that doll for her for Christmas. However, come Christmas when she opened her box she found instead of her beautiful girl doll, an ugly boy doll. It was put in the back of a cupboard and stayed there until I came along and was old enough to play with it.

Another of her favourite memories was when the street she was born in was named after her. Alice and her sister Elsie were at their front fence when a man approached them and told them he was looking for a name for their street and asked them theirs. As he already had an Elsie Street, he said their street would now be Alice Street and it remained that, until the Council did a big re-name and Alice Street became Hardachre Street, just off Baden Powell Street.

Alice's father wanted a bigger home for the family as they became older, so they moved into a large old Queenslander in Wandal Road. She had many fond memories of that old home, one of which was the practice sessions by the Rockhampton City Band. They were held there, as her father was a

the practice sessions by the Rockhampton City Band. They were held there, as her father was a member of the band and played trombone. People would gather outside and sit on the railway line that then ran past the house and listen to them playing. She said that when her father played in competitions, the children would sit and suck lemons in front of competing bands, making the players mouths water and mess up their playing.

Alice had a very close and loving relationship with her father and she loved to tell me of his sense of humour and the way he would trick and tease her. He first worked as a professional fisherman and the children all had turns to go with him during the school holidays. While she said she loved the river and camping out, she hated the tinned meat and especially the instant eggs and mashed potato they had to eat, saying it was like eating hot glue. When the fish were scarce Alice's father would sell pots and pans door to door until he was lucky enough to gain full time work at Walter Reid and Sons in Quay Street.

Alice and her sisters were too young to take over full responsibility of caring for the family when their mother died, so their Aunt moved in with them as housekeeper. This was frowned upon by the Church in that era, so they were married but she still remained the Housekeeper and kept to her own room. The marriage was just to keep up appearances and the good name that was expected then. Alice said that her Aunt looked after them and loved them as if she was their own mother.

In her era, boys were boys and dabbled in mechanics when cars and motorbikes began to appear on the scene or did wood work while girls were girls and did fancy work and sewing. Alice however was a bit of a larrikin and loved to fish with the boys and actually rode motorbikes!

When the family grew up and moved on, Alice's father built a smaller gable style home in Pattison Street on the river. Alice spent thirteen years in Brisbane to further her career as a Seamstress then returned to look after her ailing father in the Pattison Street house. She remained there, married and raised two children and spent the rest of her productive life in that house except for the last two years when she became so frail she came to live with me. Alice saw many changes over her years, from Billy Cart transport to surfing the net on the computer while living here. She passed away peacefully in 1999 at the age of 93.

HAPPY MEMORIES

By Joy Brock, "Jacarango", Gracemere

I was born in 1949 just after the Second World War had been won, one of the last of the "Baby Boomers". My birth took place at what was then the "Lady Goodwin" ward at Rockhampton General Hospital and from what my Mum has told me, even though she was a private patient, conditions were primitive and she gave birth with only a whiff of Ether at the last minute. Mum spent the standard 10 days in bed and then another few being allowed to walk around before she was allowed to take me home.

Home was a big old gable style house on the banks of the Fitzroy River and a wonderful place to grow up. My older brother and I spent the days playing together while Mum, worked at home sewing curtains, bedspreads and eiderdowns. Modern doonas are nothing in comparison to an eiderdown and I still have mine.

To make the eiderdown, Dad would go out shooting and bring home lots of ducks. We helped pluck the ducks and could only keep the soft down from the breast. The eiderdown was so named, as the original down came from the Eider Duck in England. I always maintained they were so named,

because the down proof material was so slippery, it was 'eider' down on the floor or sideways on the bed. I soon learned to throw a blanket over the eiderdown and tuck it in well.

Mum spent many days sewing the eiderdown and piping all the sides. We ate the ducks – Yum! Next, she would spread it out on a huge table Dad had made her and she crawled all over the table tacking out a beautiful pattern to keep the down even. It was then machine sewn and eyelets placed at each corner of the pattern.

We grew up tough because we were not allowed to disturb her unless there was a *serious* emergency or we were about to die. When we used to cut our fingers from sawing up pieces of wood to make little boats, or hammered fingers from adding nails to our boats for sails, we learnt it was much less painful to put up with our injuries than to disturb Mum.

My parents' roles were well defined in those days. Mum's role was to rear us and care for us, cook and sew and do all the usual household chores. Monday was washday, done in an old wood fuelled copper and the clothes were pegged out on an adjustable line stretched across the back of the yard. Every Saturday morning she baked cakes and biscuits for the week. She was expected to have a meal on the table at 5pm when Dad came home or he was grumpy. On some days when she was running late, my brother and I were quickly told to set the table at 5pm so it looked like it wasn't far away and this always seemed to work.

Dad's job was to provide and to earn money; he worked two jobs at once at the Meat Works and the Council. Fathers were not expected to contribute to household jobs and to allow a Father anywhere near a birth was completely taboo so they did nothing for the babies when they came home from work and had very little to do with us as we grew up.

I was about 12 months old once when Mum was so sick she had to ask Dad to bath me. He left me alone on the table and naturally I fell off and banged my head on the old wireless. After that, Auntie looked after us when Mum was sick. Dad had a huge vegetable and fruit tree garden covering a whole allotment next door. I can still taste those home-grown vegetables and strawberries. He also kept bees for honey. Mum preserved most of the fruit and made beautiful jams, pickles and chutneys.

We were considered upper class, as we owned a car and a house. The house was Mum's inheritance and very few had such luxuries. Without it life would have been pretty rough as our parents earned very little money. She did however, own a vacuum cleaner, one of the first Electrolux. My brother and I were trained at a young age to use it and to do the dusting and other chores like collecting the eggs from the chooks so she could earn money sewing. The eggs were sold to produce income also.

Horse and cart delivered our milk and bread and our street – Pattison Street - was just gravel and stone. Dad would drop the weekly grocery order at the corner Grocers on his way to work by bike. The groceries were packed into a box by the Grocer and delivered to our kitchen table. For ten pounds (\$20) then, we would buy the equivalent of about a \$200 order today.

Childhood was fun and games playing cricket, rounders and football in the street with neighbourhood friends. We had mango fights, stole nuts and Guavas (usually full of maggots) from neighbours trees allowing for a quick exit route if we were spotted. When we became old enough for school, we were allowed to swim in the puddle hole and fish in the river.

We loved making mud pies out of dirt and water and one morning we decided to use the eggs we had collected to bake proper dirt cakes just like Mum. We soon realised the error of our ways and hid the evidence under Dad's tool cupboard. After Mum worrying for days that the chooks had stopped laying, Dad finally smelt our hidden treasure and we were given *two* floggings with the strap. One for

the lost revenue from the sale of eggs and the other for hiding our evidence. A similar fate befell us when we hid one of the prized Bentwood chairs after cutting a deep slit in the back of it by using it as a support to saw our wood. Mum fretted for months over the mystery of the missing chair. Dad eventually found it and out came the strap again with one for the damage and one for hiding the evidence. I've been pretty honest all my life thanks to those lessons.

We used to have many big family teas with relations, friends and neighbours. They were always big baked dinners with yummy homemade desserts followed by a singsong around our old piano. I gained a lot of confidence from those sing songs as we were encouraged to take part. Television soon ruined all that and Bar-B-Ques have replaced the beautiful dinners.

They were really good, carefree, stress-free days for us to grow up in as children. I have very little other than happy memories of my childhood.



Photograph courtesy of GW & A Gladwell



Thomas Moore with his T Model



1928 Flood, near Goovigen. Photo courtesy of E & J Brock

YUM !

Merril Smith, North Rockhampton, ex. Mt. Morgan

All children and their Mums and Dads who lived in Mount Morgan in the late 1930's and 1940's, would remember the tinkle of the little bell that heralded the arrival of the ice cream man, my Dad, Bill Luitz. His horse and cart delivered these special treats. A small pink cone cup cost one penny (1cent), an icy slice in a flat cone cost four pence and a double cone cost sixpence (5cents).

Sunday was a busy day at our house because while Dad was out in the ice cream cart, customers would come to the side fence with their good glass bowls. I would take the orders and Mum would measure a pint dipper into these bowls at a cost of two shillings per pint (equal to about 20 cents per litre). There wasn't electricity in those days and the ice cream was churned with a petrol motor and kept iced down with ice from the ice works and coarse salt and care had to be taken to ensure not one grain of that salt fell into the batch.

No electricity also meant no electric lighting to the ice cream shed, so Dad's light was a carbide lamp. It was a horrible smelly thing that gurgled and popped. It was made from galvanised iron and blocks of carbide were placed in the bottom of a cylinder. A second cylinder was placed down over the outside cylinder to about one inch from the top. A brass tube with gas jets at the top was added to this cylinder. Water was poured into this top space and when it seeped down over the carbide the combination formed a gas which passed up through the tube and into the jets which when lit, gave a clear light, not unlike a neon light of today. I was so scared of that lamp, I was always afraid that it would blow up. Production ceased temporarily during the war years when the main ice cream ingredients, cream and condensed milk, were in short supply.

One day a little boy awaited the arrival of the ice cream cart and ordered a penny cone. He told my Dad his sister was having an ice cream too but she had dropped her penny in the creek. "She's in the creek now, looking for it," he told Dad "but keeps going under the water". My Dad had to rush to save her from drowning.

During the winter months Mt. Morgan can get very cold and the demand for ice cream dropped off and Dad had to find work elsewhere. Part of his working life was spent droving cattle but in the winter of 1949, he was employed at Warry's Sawmill at Raspberry Creek. Bill Luitz was killed at this sawmill in one of the most horrific accidents. Even today when they talk of Workplace Health and Safety, this accident is recalled.

As the memories come flooding back, I can still remember the taste of my Dad's special ice cream. It was unique and no ice cream I have tasted since, has quite come up to it. I'm quite sure there are some other 'Mounties' out there who remember it too!



Dad's Ice Cream Cart

THE FIRST 100 YEARS

Extracts from THE FORDAY STORY

Written by BILL FORDAY

Extracts are reproduced here with his kind permission.

Please note: Italic print is editorial commentary.

The above book was written by Bill Forday to coincide with a family reunion held in Rockhampton in 1998. It details the story of Lee For Dai who was born in the Lee village of Nan Long in Zhongshan City near Canton (now called Guangzhou), in the Province of Gaungdong, China, in 1887. It details his arrival alone, at the age of 11 in Cooktown under the tonnage system in 1898, his subsequent marriages, businesses and children and their marriages, businesses and children. These selected excerpts help to paint a picture not only of the difficulties experience by early immigrants, but also of an era and a way of life.

...In 1855 the Colonial Government permitted ships to carry one Chinese for every ten tons of cargo and levied a Poll tax on each Chinese of 200 shillings. By comparison, Europeans were only taxed one shilling. In 1857 the Chinese also had to pay a resident's licence costing one Pound, which had to be renewed every two months. It was a lot of money in those days. Lee For Dai came out under an increased 500 tons to one immigrant restriction, in 1898. On the voyage to Australia, the captain of the ship when filling out the landing papers, made his own work easier by giving For Dai an English given name of Willie and a surname Forday. As For Dai could not speak much English he was not able to point out that his family surname was Lee and his given name was For Dai.

Gold was discovered in Australia in the 1870'S and by 1874, the word has spread around the world. The Shanty- town of Cooktown was then officially named and soon became the liveliest seaport on the Queensland coast with ships from all over the world arriving daily. The port had 65 overseas ships in the first month.... There were about 18,000 Chinese living in the Chinese section of Cooktown at the height of the gold rush.

Willie Forday as he was known from then on, went to work for his uncle who had started a merchant store..... The business supplied and transported food, mining equipment and provisions to the gold miners at the Palmer River gold fields, a rugged 160 kilometres in and from this port.....So difficult was the journey, that freight to the gold field cost 20 pounds per ton by bullock train and pack horses.people using the track were likely to be attacked by aborigines, thieves and bushrangers.....The Chinese were not allowed to travel in a party of whites but had to follow behind....The Palmer River clan of aborigines "the Merkin" was strong, warlike, fierce, crafty and cannibalistic. They liked to eat Chinese people as they reckoned their flesh was a lot sweeter than of white people ...

Despite many difficulties...and conditions of hardship and harassment, Willie Forday continued to work hard, support his mother, brothers and sisters in China, save what money he could and taught himself to speak and read and write English....so that by 1915 at the age of 28, seventeen years after arriving in Cooktown as a boy, Willie with his friend Ah Chong, was in a position to buy out his uncle.

From this point on through his own hard work Willie Forday prospered. As his first two wives died, he was to be married three times and produced 13 children (not all of the children survived infancy), and in the early yearsbecause he was registered as an alien in Australia and was not allowed to own land and property there, he used his money to buy property in China. It wasn't until 1937 that Chinese were at last allowed to own property in Australia but still only if held under trust of the local people.

Willie Forday moved to Rockhampton in 1923. At that time, Chinese were only allowed to buy a business from another Chinese and they bought from Jack Kee on the corner of Archer and Murray streets..... The business was only allowed to sell fruit and vegetables. Because Chinese opened their shops longer hours, worked hard and opened seven days a week, they were not allowed to sell groceries as they were thought to be unfair competition to stores run by Australians who did not work on Sunday. The store was timber, galvanised iron, flattened kero tins and packing cases. Furniture was mainly packing cases and facilities were primitive or non-existent. It required hard work and long hours to make a living all the while having to put up with considerable open hostility from the section of the community who, believing in the White Australia Policy, thought the Chinaman was fair game.

Willies children were growing and attending local schools – Miss Gerraty’s private school on the corner of Talford and Cousins Streets and the Hall Girls State school and the Leichhardt Ward Boys State School where it is said of Harry -... Having to put up with a lot of hassles and racial prejudice at school only drove him on to show what he could do and he earned the respect of some of his school mates. Harry matriculated at the end of 1939 and applied for a position in the teaching profession but was knocked back as “It would degrade the teaching system to have a Chinese teaching white Australian children.” The fact that Chinese could not get important jobs even if they had the education, influenced Willie and Kim Sing away from the necessity of higher education for the rest of the family.... Most of the Chinese were self employed or employed by other Chinese. It did not matter that a Chinese was very talented, they still could not get a job on the open market.

Willie always cut the children’s hair but once when Harry was getting to the age where his appearance and grooming was important to him he went down to the barber in the old Liberty building for a haircut. The barber flatly refused to cut his hair saying, “he knew all Chinamen were disease ridden.” Harry took offence at this and said so. Having mainly lived his life here, he was inclined to stick up for himself.

....1935 Chinese were at last allowed to sell groceries in their business but had to provide a partition for that section to be closed off after the normal hours of other Grocery stores. Inspectors were employed to go around to check on this.

.....All of the children were given jobs to do, they watched the shop and tried to serve, they filled up the baskets of potatoes and onions. The vegetables that were getting old and could not be sold were used to feed the family. Willie was supplying a weekly vegetable order to the General and also the Hillcrest Hospitals and to the Benevolent Home. This he delivered in the utility and later the boys took over this role when they got bigger. A weekend job was to weight up sugar, flour and salt which was sealed in bags with home made glue. These commodities came to the stores in large sack bags and had to be re- packaged in 1 and 2lb paper bags. Kerosene, Shellite and Turpentine also had to be bottled.

....The horse and cart was still the main form of transport for hawkers and delivery men. The bakers took fresh bread around the streets each day, as did the milkman, ice man, fishmonger, fruit and vegetable hawkers and also the Chinese market gardeners. They had a set run each day and the horses got to know the route and where the customers lived and would automatically go to the house and stop. Another hawker who sometimes used to move fast was the fishmonger Henry Hart who very much disliked the nickname generation after generation of kids had given him. Henry used to go along selling his fish and the kids used to sing out “Poopy Hart did a fart and blew a mullet out the cart”. Henry was just one of those unfortunate scruffy individuals who bought out the larrikin in a boy

In 1937, wars were still raging in China and Chinese people from around the world were raising funds for aid. Many dances, raffles etc. were run by the Rockhampton Chinese to raise money. Chinese fried dim sims were sold at the dances and the public went mad over them. This was one of the factors why the Chinese run functions would make nearly twice the amount of profit than those run by other groups. The Forday kitchen was busy making many thousands of dim sims for each function.

November 5TH – Guy Fawkes Night was always a night to remember...The crackers were mainly made in China and with the war were getting harder to get. Kids used to make and put crackers in a dummy called a guy and push it around in a billy goat cart going from house to house and shops asking for a penny for the guy or for crackers. Cracker night was always a busy time for the fire brigade. The Forday kids were given 2/- worth of a mixture of throwdowns, tomthumbs, bungers, skyrockets and whirligigs and sometimes were given more if they weren't sold. One year there was a 3/- bomb left which must have been 15 inches high and 2 inches in diameter and would be given to us at 8 o'clock if it weren't sold. Someone came in and bought it at five to eight!

There were many men out of work in the 1930's with the country in the grip of depression and times were very hard. Out of work men roamed the countryside looking for work or just a feed for doing odd jobs. They carried with them a blanket, billy can, tin cup, plate, knife, fork and spoon. Any clothes they had were rolled up in a blanket and tied up to hang over their shoulder. This was their swag, their worldly possessions and they guarded it with their life. These swaggies or hobos as some called them camped by creeks, under bridges or anywhere else they could.

The unemployed were given ten shillings food vouchers they could exchange for food. Many a weird and wonderful scheme was tried out by these people on shopkeepers to try to make their vouchers go further. Chooks, eggs, vegetables disappeared from farms, house yards and shops and anything of value carelessly left around was stolen. Many men set themselves up as hawkers. There was resentment and jealousy by unemployed people who saw Chinese and other races who were mainly self employed, coping in these difficult times but most other races in Australia had to be self employed as the Australians would not employ them.

During the war, the late 1930's and the bombing of Darwin brought many evacuees to Rockhampton and in 1941 the American soldiers arrived. Rationing made supplies difficult to obtain. The Coles and Woolworths buildings in East Street became the PBX canteen for the Americans. The Americans had plenty of money and were generous with it and their supplies.....Education was a stop start affair during the war. At the outbreak of war, slit trenches were dug to zig zag through the schoolyard and practice air raid drills were held, much to the delight of all the pupils. We all had cotton wool to put in our ears and a piece of leather or block of wood to put in our mouth to ease the effect of bomb concussion. The teacher had a first aid kit.... The seriousness of the situation was lost on the pupils..... Trench drill was extra good fun after rain had put a few inches of water in the bottom and turned the clay to the stickiest mud available... As almost all the boys didn't wear shoes to school, a bit of mud between their toes didn't matter.

Willie Forday's family grew, married and each prospered and became well known and respected in their own way. Willie Forday was a true pioneer of this region. Part of his obituary reads

"Throughout his life, he maintained the tenets of ancestor reverence and imbued the members of his family daily with the principles of Confucian teachings. His strict adherence to the Confucian Analects, his strong voice and sometimes stronger backhand, laid a firm foundation for the future of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, thereby receiving from those who knew him, a fond respect and from his immediate family, a deeper affection,"

The Forday Story – The first 100 years, compiled by Bill Forday is available at the Northside Library in Rockhampton and is available at the Southside Library for reference purposes.



李伙帝

Lee For Dai

A BRAVE STEP

From Mavis Corry (nee. Crosthwaite)

My family has a long association with the Central Queensland region beginning way back when my Great Grandmother came out to Australia from England in the mid to late 1800's as a young lady trained as a nurse by the Florence Nightingale School.

It is unfortunate that back when I was a child, no one was interested or perhaps no one had the time, to relate family history in any detail and it is only now I wish I knew more than the few snippets of information I have of my forbears who were I suppose, amongst some of the pioneers of this area.

My Great Grandmother, always known as Nurse Neil settled for a time in Dingo and I do know that she started the first School in Dingo and ran it for some years even teaching two of her own children, until the Government built the Public School there. Eventually she practiced as a midwife for Dr. Parry in Denison Street. He ran a type of Maternity Bush Nursing Home, one of quite a few in Rockhampton in those days. The site became Cruikshanks Car Yard after Dr. Parry's building was moved to Hillcrest Hospital and used as the Children's Ward.

Her daughter, my Grandmother was Margaret Florence Carlos and she used to assist her mother occasionally as a midwife. I don't have any recollection of my Grandfather Charles Carlos as he passed away before I was born. He worked at a well-respected trade as a Hatter at Stewarts. Between them they had 7 children, my mother Clara, Grace, Margaret, Jack, Harry, Hazel and Kenny all now deceased. Grandmother was 80 when she passed away.

Clara married my father Alfred Charles Crosthwaite who was a sailor during the First World War and I only discovered recently that he was on a minesweeper, which regularly travelled between Thursday Island and Sydney, protecting our shores. After the war he was employed as Foreman at Thomas Brown, Merchants in East Street. My mother Clara was 95 when she passed away in 1993. Clara and Alfred had 6 children, Douglas, Ivy, myself, Robert, Reginald and Margaret.

As was normal in 1922, I was born at home with both a Doctor and midwife involved in the birth. I attended Allenstown Primary School and then Rockhampton Girls Grammar and on leaving school, was employed as a Laboratory Assistant at CQME for 5 years. The Friday night dances at either the School of Arts or the Palais were always something to look forward to and during the war there were many service men in Rockhampton to dance with. I eventually married Kenneth Thomas Corrie and we had a daughter Shirley. The Corrie family through my husband's grandparents were responsible for starting the first Anglican Church in Depot Hill.

Guides, Brownies and the Church played a large part in our lives and in 1952 I opened a Playschool in St. Marks Church hall in Larnock Street. It operated until 1974 and gave me much pleasure and satisfaction. Shirley is now married to Jeffrey John Moore, an army man, so they move around quite a bit.

The wheel has turned full circle for me because for the past four to five years I have gone back weekly, as a volunteer, to my old primary school at Allenstown, as part of their Granny Association.

It would have been impossible for that young English nurse starting out on the adventure of her life, to have had any concept of how much her single brave step would help to populate and contribute to the building of this region over the approximately 150 years that have passed since then.

THE SHOOTER

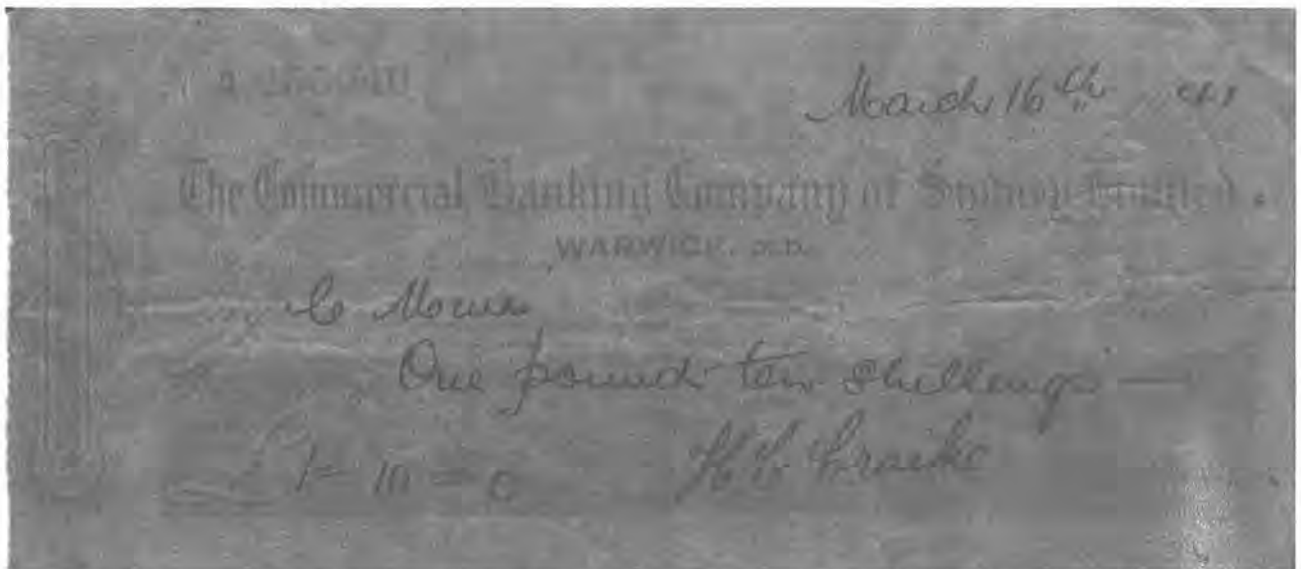
Merril Smith, North Rockhampton

Now when we shop we have our goods scanned and if the scanner records a different price from that which is displayed on the shelves we are entitled to the goods free of charge. I remember when the 'shooter' system was the method of handling payment for goods purchased.

A docket was written in duplicate by the shop assistant, then the money and dockets were placed into a small wooden cylinder, clipped into a holder or conveyancer, a cord was pulled and the cylinder was catapulted along a wire to the upstairs office. The duplicate was placed on a spike and the docket and change, if required, was returned via the wire.

I was one of the upstairs office staff and many was the time when we risked life and limb as we reached out over the office balcony to grab the cylinder if it didn't quite make it all the way up with the weight it carried. It would wobble and slowly head back down the wire. If our boss was the one waiting to send up her docket and money, our plight was made even more desperate!

The office staff were often given a treat by the shop assistant in the sweet section who would wrap our chocolates in grease-proofed paper and despatch them to us via the 'shooter' system.



OLD DAYS AT WINTON AND KYNUNA

Jean Toohey (nee Young)

I am 81 years old and the setting for the following story would be between 1928 and 1932.

The first car we ever drove to Winton in was a Chevy Tourer with running boards each side. Winton was our largest town, about 170 miles from Kynuna where we lived. Mum used to pack a hamper and it took nearly all day to get to Winton with no bitumen roads, just dirt.

We didn't have a thermos, Mum used to pour tea into soft drink bottles and wrap them in brown paper. We used to sit on the running board and eat our sandwiches and cake and drink our tea and think we were having a wonderful time.

The only time we had plenty of water was when it rained (which was not too often), and the Diamantina was in flood. The washing up was done in a tin dish, not a sink, and the suds were used for the plants. The same with our bath water, which we had in a big iron tub.

We had what was called a bough shed down the back of the house, like an open veranda really, with boughs on top, cut from the trees from the creek. We used to wet them and the dirt floor and it would be lovely and cool on the terrible hot days we had out around Winton and Kynuna in summer.

One day Dad and Mum and I went out in the dray to cut more fresh boughs. We cut some lovely fresh boughs and Mum and I decided we would sit in the back and enjoy the smell of the eucalypt leaves. All was well when we went down into the creek bed, but when the dray went up, Mum, me and the eucalypt leaves slid down into the creek bed off the back of the dray. Mum was calling out Ted, Ted and Dad looked back and saw us. He couldn't do anything for laughing.



*1936 12 HP Morris
Photograph courtesy of GW & A Gladwell*

VINTAGE MEMORIES

By Gower William Gladwell

It was in Murrumburrah NSW in 1918 I first saw the light of day. Dad was a Station Master on the Railway at Nubba where I've been told, the rail had a double line for the up and down express train to pass, half way between Sydney and the Victorian border.

Dad and his brother Harry came from England and Mum from Casino where Dad got his job with NSW Railways and he finished up at Nubba which was some 40 miles south of Murrumburrah. The main toys my brother and two sisters and I had to play with, were trains including a steam engine to pull the trucks and carriage etc., we also had some toy cars.

Dad resigned from the Railway and bought land on the Don River in Qld., 10 miles south of Wowan where he started a dairy. Uncle Harry also settled near the Don River and in the early 20's the Gold Mining Company in Mount Morgan was in trouble and houses were sold for as little as 10 pounds and my Uncle Harry got one and it was taken to his place on the Don. During 1926 there was a severe dry so Dad went 2 ½ miles west to manage another fellow's stock while the owner ran the hotel he also owned in Mt. Morgan. This property of some 1,200 acres was at the foot of the Banana Range and was divided by Prairie Road. It straddled the conjunction of the Don River and Callide Creek and it was only a few miles from where the Dee River joined it and it became the Dawson River. This will help explain why the water came to about 400 yards from the house in the 1928 floods. The gatepost to the property had a log archway at the entry and the watermark for the road at that point, was 7ft and there was water as far as the eye could see.

When the water receded, he had to get the cream to Wowan from the dairy and to get supplies, so Dad drove the buggy and pair and Kitty, (my sister, who was 2 years and 9 months older than me) and I had to ride two ex. Mount Morgan Clydesdales there and back, to help pull the buggy horses which were swimming in deep water. After the flood, the sandflies and mosquitoes were very bad during the day and we had to carry small tins of smouldering sandalwood chips everywhere we went, we also made smoke fires to keep the sandflies and mosquitoes away from the animals. It might be hard to believe, but this worked well. There were sandalwood trees growing at the bottom of the Banana range then, now they'd be worth a lot of money but they are all gone. We were doing school by correspondence, so after we came home from our adventures it was back to school lessons. It was 1927 when Dad bought a second hand Overland Whippet Tourer.

In 1930 another dry spell occurred and I had to chop the green leaves from the local Iron Bark and Morton Bay Ash trees for the cows to eat so they would survive.

Back on the farm, Kitty and I had had music lessons in Wowan and Kitty went on to become a highly qualified music teacher. In 1932 I purchased a second hand 1928 Whippet to take Kitty to Mount Morgan for her music. Things went well and I then got a new 1935 Ford V8 and in 1936 I started working in Carl Witt & Son's Garage in Wowan.

In Wowan, Lawrence Motors from Rockhampton bought a garage from George Preston, he also had a sawmill, and he then built a large hall for pictures and dances all with a 240-volt lighting plant. At that time, some 350 people lived in Wowan and there were 2 Hotels, 2 bakers, 3 general stores, a boarding house, 3 café's, Williams Ltd, from Rockhampton, a barber, a Post office, a 10 bed Hospital, a Doctor, a chemist, 2 police, 2 ambulance men, a men's shop, 2 church buildings, a Masonic Lodge building, a Returned Soldiers hall, 2 banks (CBC and NSW) with managers houses and there were 5 cream runs and a mail run as well as a combined Rawleigh traveller and children's wear outlet.

The mail run for the Don River area was over 100 miles round trip and Tom Adams started with a 30 cwt Chev truck and finished up with 45 customers, then a 1927 6-speed International 1 ½ ton, a 1931 2 ton International, and in 1935 he got a 4 ton Bedford with a special bus chassis. On Mondays he would have well over 600 gallons of cream (1 gallon of cream at 42 % made 5 lbs of butter). Pick up days for him were Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

In September 1940 during the war, I volunteered for the third time. I had finished Ambulance exams in the February of that year and was an honorary bearer so I asked to be posted to Red Cross or, because of my mechanical knowledge, to the army or air force workshops. Police Sargent Walsh who knew everyone in town had the job of telling me that recruiting had said no to my application because I was more valuable on the farm producing food and cotton which we were growing then, as cotton was vital in the manufacture of explosives. During the war around 30 Land Army girls camped in Deeford Hall while they worked on the land in place of the men who were away fighting. A 30 cwt truck with seats bolted down the sides used to come and collect the girls and deliver them to and from their respective farms for work each day.

Also around 1940, came rationing of petrol, food, clothes and dress material etc. The girls used to use curtain fabric to make dresses for dances and balls. We had to make curtains as dark as possible so as not to show light at night and car lights had to have special covers with a strip open about 1 ½ inches by 1 inch wide, this allowed just enough light to drive at night. During rationing I found a 4 cylinder Chrysler with a charcoal gas producer made by Kingles Motors in Alma Street. I dug a pit 6 ft. by 2 ½ ft and 3 ft. deep to burn charcoal and soon found Iron Bark and Box, the older the better, gave 8.3 bushel bags of coal. A bag went 80 miles. A bottle (1/6 gallon) of petrol, and you were on gas. As Kitty had now passed exams which allowed her to teach violin, piano etc., with this economical fuel, I was able to use the Ute to drive her over 100 miles each week to give lessons and still be able to use it each week end for a Saturday night dance somewhere.

The Dances were great entertainment and were usually 2/- entry, started at 8pm and went to 2am with supper included and served around 11pm. Masonic Balls were dearer – 1 guinea (1 pound 1 shilling) a double or 15/- if you were a single man. Church, Show and Hospital Balls ranged from 7/6 to 12/6 a double. During 1942 when the Americans were in town, I often had to come in to Rockhampton for repairs to vehicles and I would stay at the Great Western. There was dancing 6 nights a week from 7 – 11pm at the Palais Royal with a band and singer and these dances were swamped by Americans and the girls said they used to like to have an Aussie to dance with and talk to for a change so I was never short on company.

When the Japanese took Malaysia, tyres were very hard to get. I used to go to old tyre dumps and get tyres that had been discarded but were still better than mine. I'd cut my worn out rubber off the canvass, do the same with the best dumped tyres I could find, and then, with about a dozen ¼ inch cup head bolts around the outside of the tyre, I'd bolt the better rubber back on to the canvass to make a full circle sleeve. I used some of these homemade tyres on the back of the Ute. After 4 years, the gas producer plant in the car burnt out so for power Kero was used at 1/6d. Per gallon. It was bought in 44gallon drums for the Fordson tractor.

This rationing went on for 9 years from 1941 – 1949 inclusive. There is an old saying that "they can't make 'em like they used to" and I agree with that. For instance, in 1938 we had milking machines driven by a 3 horse power Lister diesel engine for the plant and separator, it would run for 10 hours on 1 gallon of fuel. I'd like to know if anyone could find one like that today. I can't. A lot of older people will tell you that those were the best days of our lives during the mid 30's to the 50's. Ladies were treated with respect, there were few robberies and rapes were unheard of during this time.

In 1945 I went to Roma to relieve as the superintendent at the Ambulance station was unwell and I was the third man there for 5 months and stayed on for another 2 weeks because I had promised to take over in Monto so the bearer could take a holiday, as he hadn't had one for 2 years. During that time Captain Pike, an ex army Captain, who was General Secretary for Queensland Ambulance toured the state and I was offered more postings to Mackay and Rockhampton. I refused as it was another bad dry in 1946 and Mum and Dad were struggling because the hired labour would not work on Sunday and would only work 9 hours a day. My brother Harold got time off from his job in a big Garage in Brisbane and we all pitched in. We shifted the large irrigation plant we had, to water the grass near the house. It was turned on at 7am and ran until 7 or 8pm and that gave the equivalent of 1 inch of rain on the paddocks. The cattle were rotated through this pasture as too much green fodder caused bloat.

In February 1947 I went to Clifton on the Downs for a 10-week ambulance stint and it was there I first met Alice Filmer who would eventually become my wife. I managed to get back to Clifton twice more, the first time because Ducks the bearer broke his leg and the second time he had been fired because of a 600 pound discrepancy. Both times I had to stay until they could get a replacement. I was married to Alice in January 1949 and we only had a 3-day honeymoon because I had to get to Goovigen Ambulance as they were in trouble. In February 1949 there were bad floods again and we were stuck there for some 5 weeks till Bob McCubbin was able to get back.

QATB cars were converted sedans with the back seat out and we used to load patients through the boot and there was space for a passenger at the side. Clifton and Goovigen then had new 1946 Chevrolet's they were 80 M.P.H. cars and were very good on the road. Roma had a 1938 Pontiac and Monto a 1937 Studibaker Sedan, all of which were converted.

Some of the prices I remember from those earlier days are: in 1928 Dad purchased a pure bred Jersey Bull from Wondai for 100 guineas (110 pounds); a 1927 T model Ford for 220 pounds; around decimal change-over time a new car battery was 3pound 10/6d. and petrol was a fixed price at 3/3d. a gallon. During the 1940's when the Americans were here if you could get cigarettes, Craven A's were 20 for 1/6 and Capstan 10 for 6d. but the troops could get 200 Raleigh or Old Gold cigarettes for 2/6 and Camel and Lucky Strike 200 for 3/- so there was quite a bit of black marketing happening with cigarettes. I tasted Milo for the first time at an American canteen and if you saw a girl walking down the street at that time wearing real nylons, you knew she was going out with a 'yank'.

The farm on the Don River was sold in 1964 and we moved to Rockhampton where I worked in a few places including a Mobil Oil service station, which had been closed for 6 weeks, and we worked hard to bring it up to a good service station. We coped with the change to decimal currency in June 1966 and took some time to get used to the fact that a 'browney' (1d.) was now a cent, a 'tanner' (3d.) was now 2 cents, a 'zak' (6d.) was now 5 cents, a 'bob' (1/-) was now 10 cents, 'ten bob' (10/-) was now \$1, a 'quid' (1 pound) was now \$2, a 'fiver' was now \$5 and a 'brick' was now \$10.

I bought a taxi licence from Fred Steadman in Rockhampton then another service station in Mackay and finally paid \$3,000 to purchase a taxi licence in Roma in 1969. This was only the licence without a vehicle, and it had the TAA passenger and freight rights, which included delivery of mailbags and parcels. My car at the time was a 1963 Chevvie Belaire with a black baked enamel exterior and red interior with a top capacity of 125 miles per hour. It was a pretty good-looking car and people in Roma liked riding in it. We became part of the Yellow Cabs organization and of the 8 taxi licences in Roma, we ended up owning 4. We had some interesting times as taxi operators - once I had to drive passengers who had landed en route to Brisbane and then couldn't take off again, all the way to Brisbane where I didn't know my way around and my longest ride was taking a lady from Roma to Meriden, in W.A., this was approximately 150 miles east of Perth.

We retired back to Rockhampton in 1989 and now in 2002, I live on a property at Coowonga. My love of old cars has continued through my involvement in the Vintage and Veteran Car club where I have been a member for 12 years and I currently drive a 1936 Buick, 30 horsepower, 840 model and Alice has a 1974 Leyland P76 Executive.



Gower William Gladwell



Converted QATB Ambulance 1946 Chevrolet

The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England.
AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

The St. John Ambulance Association.

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QUEENSLAND
CENTRE
FORM B

This is to Certify that GOWER GLADWELL
has attended a course of Instruction
at the WOMAN Branch of the Association,
and is qualified to render "First Aid" to the Injured.

[Signature] President of Centre.
[Signature] Inspector.
E.E. Wilke LSA-RYM Empire Examiner.
[Signature] Branch Secretary.

No. 11804 Registered at Brisbane, December 1952

A LITTLE BIT OF LES

*The following story has been compiled by the Editor from biographical notes, newspaper clippings and conversations with
Mr Les Duthie O.B.E., O.D.A.S*

Leslie George Duthie was born in Mount Morgan, in October 1912 in a nursing home conducted by Nurse Edwards on Jubilee Hill. His parents were James Mitchell Duthie, a young emigrant from Aberdeen, Scotland and Sophia Ann (Sissy) Green, born in 1892 in Mount Morgan. They were married in the early part of 1912.

Les's grandfather Peter Green, had emigrated from London in his teens and his grandmother Annie McCormack, had come from County Connel in Ireland. They met in Mt. Morgan and were married in 1887 and Sissy was their second born daughter. They established a home on Red Hill and over a century later, it was the only remaining home in that part of what had once been, a very prosperous city.

Les had a normal childhood in a very good family environment. He attended a convent primary school in Mt. Morgan and got up to all the normal pranks, all of which were very mild compared to modern times. Although good at his schoolwork, when the Nuns attempted to teach him to play the violin, he had no natural concept of music and they became very frustrated with his lack of progress. After many scoldings and 'cuts' across the back of his knees, all attempts to develop him into a musician were abandoned.

Sport was big on the agenda as his Grandfather was an icon of sport in Mt. Morgan. He had been an outstanding rugby player and eventually became a coach, manager and referee as well. He also trained students in boxing and began competitive foot racing, which became a big attraction in the Mount's sporting history. Mt. Morgan had a population of approximately 16,000 then and it ranked amongst the best sporting centres in Australia. Peter Green retained his involvement with sport all his life was still the caretaker of Mount Morgan sports arena when he passed away in his seventies.

Les, his parents and two sisters, Madeleine (born 1916, now dec.) and Dorothy (.born 1918, now dec.) were fairly prosperous by this time and had acquired the latest form of domestic conveyance possible – a rubber tyred sulky – and they used this to travel into the country for picnics and visit friends, and life was very comfortable and enjoyable. One of the families the Duthies were acquainted with at that time, was the McKinlay family and Les played often with the granddaughter of William McKinley who was credited with discovering gold at the Mount.

Regrettably, from 1919 onwards, Mount Morgan Mines did not have the same degree of success it had enjoyed in previous years. As an aftermath of the war, returned soldiers brought to Australia Bubonic Influenza, which seriously infected the whole nation, but particularly Mount Morgan. The majority of the underground miners had some extent of infection from dust in their lungs, and that left them very susceptible to this type of influenza and hastened the approach of Miners Thysis, a type of Tuberculosis which badly affected miners in their later life.

To add to its problems, there was serious industrial trouble with many miners on strike. Then the mine caught fire and was unable to be worked, so, very quickly, from excellent prosperity, the general situation reverted to one of despair and the population left the town in droves searching for work. Homes were sold for very little and moved away to virtually every part of Queensland and, where once hills were covered in houses, they were now sparse, with no buildings whatsoever on them.

Coinciding with this disaster, the Dawson Valley, which had been developed for closer settlement, commenced to grow cotton, providing some alternative employment for people prepared to hand pick. Many Mount Morgan people moved to this area, the Duthie family amongst them.

Jim Duthie became impressed with the development at Dululu and moved the Duthie home there, converting it into a shop and dwelling and it progressed well. The children all adjusted to country conditions, attending local schools and at the beginning of the twenties, commenced an entirely new way of life. They participated in the erection of a hall called the School of Arts, erected to provide some amenity to hold dances and any other form of function or meeting and subsequently it expanded to provide a library for the local population.

Les had taken a football given to him by his Grandfather, to Dululu and he took it to school, where the game quickly caught on. Very soon the sport was not only adopted by his school mates but by the young farmers in the region who formed a football club, set up a football ground and competed quite successfully around Central Queensland and this supported the degree of social life which had begun to formulate into something worthwhile. By this point in time, two other children had arrived, Noel (born 1922 and still living in Dululu) and Beryl (born 1924, currently living in Gladstone).

A very efficient young English teacher named Len Callow arrived at the Dululu School and he very quickly improved the education standard, in later years he went on to become Headmaster at Allentown School. In subsequent years he was able to nominate promising students for an award to attend the Grammar School and Les and 5 others passed scholarship and were able to apply, so in July 1926 Les was duly enrolled and commenced his grammar education at the Rockhampton Boys Grammar in Rockhampton.

The fates were not kind to the family however, as just one month later, fire destroyed their shop and dwelling in the middle of the night leaving them with nothing and two weeks later the sixth child (Norma, born 1926, now dec.) was born to the family without benefit of even the layette that had been prepared. They were dependant to a very large extent, on charity for clothes etc. All shop records were destroyed and there was no way to recoup monies owed.

Jim joined some of his old mining colleagues and went to Theodore for work and to help construct irrigation channels which were being developed as part of a huge irrigation scheme that was to become a bonanza for small farmers. It was intended by the Government of the day to be supported by the planned Nathan Dam, not yet constructed.

After just 12 months at the Grammar School, Les was obliged to leave, to assist his Mother and family while his father was away. He helped with the younger children, picked cotton, felled scrub and learned to drive a fourteen-horse team hauling mill timber. He became a very good horseman, adept at all farm work. He had no trouble obtaining employment and, working daylight to dark, could pick more cotton than most and do it repeatedly day after day. During the weekend, he would venture into the softwood scrubs where turkeys were plentiful and he'd shoot eight or ten of them to compliment the family provisions and stretch the family budget.

In 1928, possibly the greatest disaster ever experienced in the Dee Valley happened during April. Around 1600 mm of rain fell in the headwaters of the Dee and part of the Don Rivers. It swept down the Dee taking three feet off the top of the larger Mount Morgan Dam, rendering havoc in its path. At the junction of the river at Fletchers Creek, it was 20 ft. deep over the cultivations. It swept away a family of 6 comprising Father, Mother, Grandfather and three little children of the Williams family and the owner Laurie Muldoon. The bodies of all but a small child were subsequently recovered some as far as 20 miles downstream at Dululu. The water was as high as twenty feet deep over some of the flat country and when it receded, cattle were found hanging as high as 60 feet from the ground

in some gum trees along the lower banks of the Dee River. Houses, haystacks, cattle, horses and any animal not able to find higher ground were just washed away, killed or drowned.

1928 was just two years after the fire and the Duthie family were renting a house at the rear of the school on the flats at Dululu at that time. They got woken at 6 o'clock in the morning when the water was 6 inches deep and they quickly trekked across to a point near the Railway Station on higher ground from where the children were carried across raging water to the Railway Station which became a depot for evacuees. Les crossed that particular part of the water on the back of a horse behind an aboriginal stockman.

In due course, Jim returned from Theodore, worked for a time on the railways in the vicinity of Dululu and subsequently selected land at the back of the Railway Station at the back of Dululu, which he and Les cleared for cultivation, then Brigalow scrub in the vicinity of Gulliver's Waterhole was selected. This land had recently become available because of the success of Cactoblastis which cleared all the prickly pear. The scrubland at Gullivers was cleared and planted with Rhodes grass and subsequently developed into a dairy farm. Later more land was selected along the coach road towards Lanson's Lagoon and used for traditional grazing purposes.

When possum season opened, which was not very often and it only lasted for a month or two, Les and his father shot possums. These skins were a valuable addition to the incomes that could be earned at that time and in fact, a number of very substantial graziers of Central Queensland at the present time, had considerable assistance toward improving their herd in the early days, through extra money earned from possum shooting. Conciliation Creek on Redcliffe Station west of Baralaba, in addition to the ranges on the northern side of Dululu towards Mount Morgan and Westwood were good possum areas.

The Duthie children were gradually growing and contributing to the communal effort. Les selected a square mile of scrub land on Pheasant Creek and at that particular time a J.C. Williamson play called '42nd Street' was all the rage and his sister gave it the glamorous name of 42nd Street. It never became quite as glamorous as that, but it did develop into a very fine property.

In 1934 a hotel at Dululu burnt down and the owners did not intend to rebuild. Les' mother, with the assistance of the family, elected to buy the land and the licence and to establish a temporary bar which they did quite successfully. In due course, they bought a very large building in Mount Morgan called the Railway Boarding House and had it removed to Dululu and re-erected as a hotel and his mother operated it very successfully until 1948, when she died prematurely at the age of 58. It was subsequently taken over and owned by sister Madeleine and her husband Bert Peacock who ran it for approximately twenty years before retiring to Rockhampton. This hotel under Duthie and Peacock ownership, was renowned for its hospitality and care of people who used its facilities.

In 1936, during the Depression, Les turned his hand to selling insurance. He joined the field staff of the Prudential Assurance Company. Battling dirt tracks in a 1929 Chevrolet, he covered the entire Central Queensland region. He says a lesson he learnt from his boss back then has stayed with him. He said "Never write business for the commission, always for the client and the commission will look after itself" Les says "I still believe in that".

On his endless rounds selling policies Les met Emily Elizabeth King who was visiting her father in Moura. Despite the tyranny of distance and the lack of many phones, a romance flourished and they were married in Rockhampton on May 4th, 1940 and in 2002 celebrated 62 years of marriage in what has become a mutual admiration society of two people who not only care greatly for each other but are each proud of the achievements of the other.

Les joined the RAAF in 1942 and served in Darwin, New Guinea and Biak and when peace came he was back in civvies within 6 months. He and Emily moved to Rockhampton with an army payout of 60 pounds in their pocket. Les again began selling insurance very successfully and his relationship with Prudential Assurance Company was to stretch over the next 30 years. During this time he also expanded his business activities into Real Estate, merchandising, wine and spirit merchants and property development including both city and suburban development.

In the early 50's he was instrumental in following new legislation to commence a cooperative building society and subsequently, in an honorary capacity, oversaw the beginnings of another five of these. The basis of the cooperatives was a 30 thousand pound grant which was sufficient to finance 20 houses at an average of 15 hundred pounds each with very low cost and affordable repayments for the owners.

In 1957, the building now known as Duthie's Building was purchased. In 1960 the Leichhardt Hotel was acquired and progressively developed into one of Australia's largest and most modern provincial city hotels at the time of its completion in 1975. Emily's hard work and influence in expanding the city's social life will long be remembered and Les says of his wife "She worked like a galley slave and had such integrity. She's a person without prejudice, who will do anything for anybody."

Les and Emily Duthie's story certainly does not end at this point as their influence in the growth of the City of Rockhampton and their generosity toward both individuals and organizations has been felt for many years and well documented in other areas. Les is particularly proud of his association with the Iwasaki Foundation Ltd., which he helped establish in 1982 with a capital of \$2.4 million. This foundation was established to give holidays to aged, disadvantaged, infirm and needy people from all over Australia. To this point, some 11,000 people have used this facility, usually in groups of around 55 to allow time, safety and care to be given to each guest. Around $\frac{3}{4}$ million dollars are spent each year to achieve this and with careful management, capital is now standing at \$8.2 million.

Les and Emily have been given many accolades and awards they are proud of, not the least of which was the awarding to Les, of the O.B.E. in 1980 and The Order Of Distinguished Auxiliary Service in 1990. This Order, much rarer than the O.B.E. is the highest recognition the Salvation Army confers on a supporter. In 1990 there were only six recipients in Australia and only around 200 worldwide.

Les and Emily would tell you these awards pale into insignificance alongside their greatest achievements, their son John (dec.) and daughter Meredith and their three granddaughters.

Les & Emily Duthie's Wedding Day, 4 May 1940.



LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

Story from a retired Meatworker

I was born in 1922 and have lived all my life in the Village at Koongal and now at the age of 80, live in a house just a short distance from where my parent's home used to be.

In my young days the holding yards for the meatworks looked a lot different to now. There was a big piggery over there with a big homestead. As well as cattle, there were sheep and sheep pens too. Four stockmen used to take the sheep up the hill at the top end of Cooper Street to graze during the day and then brought them back at night and locked them in the pens so the dingoes wouldn't get them. There was good grass all around here then, not like now. You could bank on good rain during the wet then, for at least 3 or 4 days a week. We stopped getting good wet seasons around 30 years ago.

Lakes Creek Road looks about the same now as then, maybe a few more houses. One difference is that the swamp has been drained where Thozet Creek is and up at Kalka there used to be a big dump. We would go up there and get parts for our bikes to keep them going. You couldn't afford to go to town and pay for new pedals or other parts. You'd go to the dump and find enough good bits for three bikes, all for nothing.

When we went to school at Lakes Creek Primary, we used to cut through the paddocks and McMahons had a big ram in the paddock up near the corner of Cooper Street and Rockonia Road. You had to be very careful of this ram. Coming home from school one afternoon, if he was out and he saw you, he'd put his head down between his two front legs and he got you. There used to be two trees in the creek across from where I live now and they were easy to climb up because we had a tommyhawk and we cut these notches in so we could shinny up if the ram got you. Sometimes we might be there until 5 o'clock when McMahon came down to lock the ram in and then we'd come down the tree and go home.

We weren't really bad when we were kids, never broke or damaged anything or did anything really bad, but we did get up to a few pranks. The Gracemere pineapple carts used to come around here and they used to yell out "Pineapples, pineapples, 4 for a bob" and we used to go up and ask Mum for a bob and she used to say "I can't give you a bob, go and get sixpence worth and don't eat them all at once", so we used to get sixpence worth but then we'd sneak along behind the cart and pull off the ones on the back. That way we'd get another bob's worth for free. We did the same thing with watermelons when we were a bit older. We had motor bikes then and we'd go down to the farm at Parkhurst and send our mate in to talk to the old feller who grew the watermelons and while they were talking, we'd put about six melons into the side-car then we'd go home and get into them and eat the lot.

Sometimes we'd also pinch a few mangoes that grew up at "Rockonia", the big house at the end of Rockonia Road. "Rockonia" was one of the houses built by the Meatworks for their managers. They've still got some mangoes there but nothing like they used to have. At picking time, we used to get sixpence a day and a free dinner to help get the crop in. We used to have a ton of fun up there picking mangoes. Anyway, that's about as bad as we were when we were young.

While we were still at school, we'd get the message that the 'firies' (fire tail finches) were at the falls (near "Rockonia"). We'd set traps before we went to school and then we'd all get 'sick' and have to go home early. Then we'd go up to the traps and collect the birds. There were quite a few varieties of finches. To catch them you had to make sure there were no snakes around, put the traps out with pannikin seed in them (you buy it today as mixed bird seed). We used to buy a flour bag full for

sixpence and that would last us 12 months for trapping. We made cages to keep them in at home and we would breed them to sell. We'd end up with hundreds and we'd get 1/9d. a pair for them. We'd put an old tin pie plate down full of seed and give them fresh water every day. It was better than sitting doing nothing. Kids today say they haven't got anything to do, but we used to find plenty to do.

There was a dam on Lakes Creek which was our favourite swimming hole. All the sailing boats got their water from it. It was right where they used to load the meat from the Meatworks on to the smaller boats to take out to the Mother ship and they'd fill up with water and then hand pump it in to the Mother ship to go to England with the meat. We'd just hang around and watch them.

There was an old water supply dam right up near "Rockonia" as well and we used to keep our old tin canoes up there. We'd wait for a good storm to come and over- fill the dam and we'd go and 'ride the rapids' from there all the way down Lakes Creek to the bottom dam and then haul our canoes all the way back up and do it over again. Anyway, one kid made a canoe and he used to keep it up there. His father came looking for him and I said "He's up trying out his canoe" and his dad said "What canoe?" There was a barbed wire fence going across the creek and that was the stopping point where you got out of the canoe and his dad found him there and he took his canoe and stomped all over it, whacked his son and sent him home. We spent days trying to straighten out that canoe. The canoes were made out of roofing iron, plain iron if you could get it. People sometimes had plain iron for their fences and we'd ask for it and most people would give it to you because most people were pretty generous then.

Everyone made everything themselves then, toys made out of wood or tin, letterboxes, except for our meccano set, we spent a lot of time playing with that, but for anything else you wanted, you made it. When I was older, I built most of my house myself, with a bit of help.

I remember when I was around 12 or 13 and living in the old house just across from where I live now. We had big kerosene lamps upstairs with a wick. They had glass tops and a chimney up the centre. Mum used to trim the wick and look after the lamps; we never touched them only filled them up with kero for Mum. Downstairs we used to use hurricane lamps. We had an ice chest and paid 6d. a block for ice and the night cart came around. It was around 40 years ago all that changed with power arriving. We were on the outskirts of town so we were the last to get power and it was only 40-watt bulbs, not 100 watt like now.

My Grandfather used to say that we were the 'unlucky crew'. There was the big depression, then the war and then no work after the war. We had no shoes for school; we kept a pair of sandals for going out. Dad and everybody were all on relief work that's why picking mangoes and breeding finches were good. We were able to help by handing Mum in a few shillings for the week. We never raced to the shop to buy an ice cream or anything. We did have an ice cream cart that came round. Otto Anderson made the ice cream in the back of a shed near here. He had a funny little truck with a canopy on it and he used to come round ringing his bell. It was homemade ice cream and it had a huge top on it and we thought it was great for a penny. Then later Peters and Pauls came to town. Their ice creams were a penny and threepence. A lady down the street used to make her own ice blocks in her Westinghouse refrigerator and sell them for a penny each and we used to go and get hers.

I started work at the Meatworks when I was 13, almost 14. It was pretty rough and ready then compared to now. You turned up and worked in your own clothes and no one thought a thing about pollution, all the floors were just hosed off into the river. There used to be hundreds of hawks and crows down that river. The new pollution regulations came in about 30 years ago I think. Now

they've got holding ponds to collect all the fat and they tell me that the hawks and crows are coming back again looking for an easy feed.

There were a lot of people worked there then, I think there were about 50 in the canning shop, about 80 in the preserving room and a lot in the freezing room, that was the biggest, maybe around 300. Of course the numbers varied and the slaughter yard was dependant on the available kill. The workers used to walk up to the Lakes Creek Hotel for a feed and then walk back to work. There was a benefit fund available for workers who got sick or hurt and had to go to hospital.

There used to be a lot of photos once because the manager used to take a photo every time a sailing ship berthed at the wharfs and he had them up on display all around the walls, some of those wharves are still there today. When they built a new house, all those photos were dumped which is a shame. There are a few photos still on display at the Lakes Creek Hotel.

A lot of the meat was shipped out. It was frozen and the mother ships had ice and something else like ice, it might have been dry ice and that kept the meat until it got to England. A lot of the meat was smoked stuff and a lot of it went in barrels. It was in tins as well so it was well protected against damage. A lot of salted brisket went out, it was in brine in barrels. The cans were originally made by hand in the canning shop and the ends were soldered on. When the canning became automated production was much quicker. During the war years we worked all night and 150 cans a minute used to be produced for the Army. There were 6's, tongues, ham cans, bully beef, 2lb tongues, lots of cans.

The company brought in a providence fund and everyone was very suspicious of it because they thought it was some sort of rort. It was 10/- for 10/- into the bank to start off with, so that when people retired, they had some money. It came in too late for me to really benefit and when I retired after 52 years I only got \$1600. I got sick leave and holiday pay but I was too late for the Providence fund.

Things were very different when we were kids growing up, we made our own fun and had to be enterprising but it was a very free and easy way of life and it's good to remember the good times.

Taken from an oral tape.



1938 – 1948 Sixpence

SPIRIT OF THE OUTBACK

By Grace Stewart (nee. Moore), Gracemere

I'm sure that the older residents of Rockhampton have happy memories of eating delicious Moore's Pineapples. This is the story of the establishment of this thriving industry in Gracemere by the Moore family.

Just after 1900 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Fanny Emily Moore and baby son Tom, arrived as assisted migrants in Central Queensland aboard the P & O Liner "Omrah" from Scotland. Nominated migration was facilitated by someone (in this case Fanny's Aunt and Uncle Mr. & Mrs. Ben and Emily Berry, a builder living in Mt. Morgan) recommending that you were suitable people as immigrants. After you had been in Australia for 2 years, you could then nominate someone else to emigrate. In this way, whole families were able to eventually re-settle from England.

Thomas, Fanny and Tom settled in Mt. Morgan where work was easily found in the thriving gold mine. In Scotland, Thomas had been a partner with his father in a very successful coach building business, earning 5/- a week as the blacksmith. At the gold mine, he earned 48/- for a six-day week. At that time it was known as '8 hours work, 8 hours play, 8 hours sleep and 8 bob a day'. Thomas felt that this was wealth untold. It was no time before he bought a house in Mt. Morgan for 60 pounds.

In those days the Government was handing out blocks of land in a ballot system where if you were fortunate, your name was drawn out against a nominated block and this young adventurous couple really desired to own land of their own. The Archer Brothers had begun establishing their holdings at Gracemere from 1853 and the small township of Rockhampton was just being established by 1857.

At about the time Thomas and Fanny were looking for their own land, the Archer Brothers cut 2 blocks from their holdings in Gracemere and gave them back to the Government for re-selection. Thomas put his application in for one of them and when his envelope was drawn out it contained the card "accepted", for the smaller of the two blocks. This block was 165 acres covered in prickly pear; hence it was listed as a Prickly Pear Lease, to be reviewed in 30 years, meaning that the owner must clear the prickly pear by then. This 165 acres was just a piece of scrub – no fences, no water, no anything, not even an empty jam tin to give his dog a drink of water but it was the pride and joy of Thomas and Fanny, to actually own their own land! They named it "Jedforest" after their hometown in Scotland.

Where to begin? There were so many 'first' things that needed to be done, so to make a start he felled the first trees to split by wedges and mallet for the hundreds of fence posts required to fence it.

Thomas tried to sell his house at Mt. Morgan, but after receiving no offers, he got the carpenter at Gracemere to cut the house in halves and rail it down on the "rack" from Mt. Morgan. A horse drawn jinker carted it down to Jedforest. He often praised the carpenter for rejoining the house – the roof never leaked.

A big flood hit at the end of June 1912 and they were expecting a baby. Fanny couldn't get to either Rockhampton or Mt. Morgan so a neighbour, Granny Bunker came across and delivered a boy - George, born 30th June at Jedforest. George died at Jedforest in 1980 following a massive heart attack. Thomas soon found what wonderful neighbours he was amongst, as neighbours in those days were true to that name.

Thomas bought a horse, cart, harness and moldboard plough and his day of work and others like him, started before daylight and finished after dark. After ploughing his first piece of ground, he bought

100 suckers of Mr. Buxton's 'McGregor' rough leaf pineapples for 5/- and that was the beginning of his plantation that was to become huge as the years went by.

Thomas planted patch after patch of pineapples and other fruit trees and vegetables. He had learned the art of cultivation by dry farming and the plantation was all dry farmed. To give protection to the plants, grass was grown and harvested, then spread over the tops of the pineapple plants to stop them getting sunburn and to retain moisture. In later years when the boys were all away at the war, I assisted with all the farm work including this harvest.

On December 15th, 1922, he lost his wife 3 days after a gall bladder operation. He was left with 7 small children – Tom (16), Ben (14), Emily (12), George (10), Jim (8), Bill (6) and myself aged 3.. There was no Government help in 1922 but the Education Department gave permission for Emily to leave school to help rear the family. Gracemere had a Rural School then so Thomas paid for Emily to learn dressmaking, millinery and cake icing to better assist her with her task.

There was still the task of clearing acres of prickly pear so during each weekday, Thomas would snig logs into heaps so that on the weekends he and his sons would grub the pear and cart it on top of the heaps of wood and burn it. This was long before the advent of Cactoblastis. All this was done while the sons were only young boys. He constantly said to his sons "Boys we will rise and fall together". Each year he planned to buy something important. He needed water, so he sank a well and struck a strong stream of excellent water. The next year he bought a hand pump and trough that allowed for water to be laid on. Next came a windmill and a galvanised bath replaced the tub we all bathed in. The old tub used to be brought out, warm water carted in, in cut off kerosene tins with handles, and one by one, cleanest one first, and we would have our regular bath.

The creek that runs past Jedforest had a weir built into it and the water was trapped and sent in a big pipeline across to the Dunganweit Lagoon at West Rockhampton. Mr. Roderkirchen was in charge of the pumping station and that was the supply of water to the small township of Rockhampton until in 1926, water was brought down from Yaamba.

Also in 1926 a little wooden bridge was built across the creek at the weir, which allowed easy access to the area. Thomas and all the farmers at Fairy Bower brought Model T Ford Trucks and progress went off at top speed. Produce was carted, two loads a day then. The little wooden bridge still stands today in Fairybower Road, in a very forlorn state.

Thomas had fulfilled his conditions for the Prickly Pear Lease and the Government granted Freehold title deeds in 1931, entering his holding in the archives of Queensland. What a pioneering task!

For the next 6 to 8 years it was magnificent to see acres and acres of hillside plantation. The ambition of one man and his family and his promise of "We will rise or fall together" had been achieved for Thomas Moore and Sons.

In 1927 Thomas bought a 3-valve wireless from Mr. Bryce Beg's shop in Denham Street. It was a PI circuit, earth return and was the first wireless in Gracemere. Important meetings held at Jedforest by groups such as the Pineapple Group Committee and the Progress Association now had to start earlier so as to finish business by 8pm when the wireless programmes took over, as there was only nighttime reception then. I remember listening to King George V's birthday celebrations on June 3rd, 1927

As we children grew older, our entertainment was very much centred on the family. Thomas built an excellent tennis court near the house and groups of friends would arrive on weekends for tennis parties and we enjoyed local dances and socials where a lone pianist provided all the music we needed for a good time.

Age has now claimed most of the original Moore family and the last 12 years of drought, each year worse than the last, has destroyed the dry farming plantation and not even one pineapple plant exists in Jedforest today. So Jedforest returns to the wilderness that existed just 100 years ago.

The memory of the family remains with me. Bill with his singing and association with the Rockhampton and Queensland Eisteddfod and the years with the Musical Union. How he bought Dame Joan Sutherland to sing in the Old City Hall in Bolsover Street in 1949 and all the musical productions he took a part in. George, Jim and Bill promoting the game of Croquet when in 1982 Bill represented Queensland in Perth W.A. in the Australian Championships honouring the Maroon Blazer. Bill excelled in the love of his church and will be remembered by his association with St. Andrews in Gracemere. And who can forget Ben with his wonderful stories and his longstanding programme at Radio 4YOU called 'The Golden Oldies'

I am proud to tell my family's story of "The Spirit of the Outback", the story of one of Central Queensland's pioneers – Mr. And Mrs. Thomas Moore of Gracemere of rough leaf pineapple fame.



Thomas & Fanny Moore



*Thomas Moore & Moore Boys
1927*



*Emily & Grace Moore
1927*



Grace during war years



Emily & Grace at JedForest in Gracemere

CLOSE SHAVE

By Enid. G. Bryan (nee Pigram), Barcaldine

During the war years there were many deprivations, as most of the farmers had gone to war, leaving the women and children to take care of the land. This led to a food shortage so we were issued with coupons for certain food items and clothing, meaning we had to cut back on everyday items that we were used to.

Substitutes were not always to our liking. A rice pudding made with barley kernels was nice, but a poor substitute for rice and was not what we were used to. Baked beans were not at all well accepted in place of our usual sausages, mince and chops, the latter all only available with coupons.

Leaving the food chain for a bit, we go to another commodity that was not only in short supply but also of very questionable quality. This was my Dad's pipe tobacco. As he couldn't buy his delicious smelling plugs or the Havelock in little squat tins, he had to change to a cigarette and holder and finally at one period was forced to accept a cheap bulk-packed brand of "pipe" tobacco called Hillman. It left a lot to be desired with odd things such as twigs, leaves, dirt and what else in it. It made a very poor substitute to that which Dad was used to and produced a drama as an end result.

On a trip "way out west" in our old Chrysler Utility in which we travelled over pretty bumpy dirt roads at a nice pace of 30 to 35 miles an hour, something quite unexpected happened.

We were driving on the Mitchell Grass Plains, between Aramac and Barcaldine. They were covered with heavy, waving, curly Mitchell Grass back then. It's now been replaced with a renegade introduced grass.

We were making good timing with Dad puffing away on his cigarette holder filled with the aforementioned Hillman tobacco while I, as a teenager, was happily dreaming of what I might do on our trip away and wondering if we would be setting up a roadside camp because we probably wouldn't make it to the next town that night. Suddenly Dad gave me a hard slap on the thigh and yelled, "Quick girl get out of here we're on fire!" I never argued with my Dad, so as he pulled hard on the hand brake, lurching us to a halt, I was out on one side and Dad on the other. I could then see a spiral of wind driven smoke on his side. Dad was busy issuing orders as he wrenched his port from the running board of the Ute. "Get the water bag (this was a canvas bag hung on the Ute and the process of evaporation kept the water cool) grab some soil, my port's on fire!"

In those days our luggage consisted of a large Globite port each. I had made covers of wool bale, which was a heavy weight Hessian, to cover the ports and protect them from chaffing and dust because they were strapped outside to the running boards, one on each side of the Ute during our travels.

Well Dad's was on fire! A 'Hillman' spark or two probably from a bit of twig or leaf, had found the wool bale cover and fanned by the southerly wind as we breezed along, it had burst into flame. We were both applying water and sand to the smouldering cover, then Dad dared open the lid of the port to view the consequences and as soon as the air hit the contents, a tin of smouldering boot polish erupted and burst into flame. In a flash the lid flew off with a mean retort.

Dad was like a mad man, frantically hurling some of the contents as far as he could as if they were his worst enemy. Two coffee jars of extracted cordite, used for re-loading cartridges when gun powder

was in short supply, several packets of .22 calibre cartridges, packets of wax Vesta matches, Vaseline shaving requisites, personal belongings and some more of that wretched Hillman tobacco.

Fortunately in those days passer-bys were few and far between and on this particular occasion there were none, which was just as well, as it was a rather dramatic scene when we finally got it extinguished, a sorry sight of charred goods. Had any one passed our way I am sure they would have thought we had gone quite mad.

Dad stood and cursed, "That blasted Hillman tobacco a man's smoking." ('Nuff said!) He had but a few singed coupons left, his port and cover being a complete write off. From then on, Hillman tobacco became a 'No-no'. It didn't make him give up smoking, he settled for a fine cut cigarette tobacco, with no twigs or leaves, which he didn't even really like after that.

Thankfully the Downs Mitchell Grass didn't catch fire, just enough water, loose dirt, common sense and quick action saved the day, which was just as well as the graziers back then didn't want their country on fire as it was quite hard to contain. I helped my Dad put out a big fire once but that is another story. The one I just wrote stays fresh in my memory even though I am 79 years old.



Our Overnight Camp Beside the Road



1935 Ford Ute

Photograph courtesy of GW & A Gladwell



A 'good' Piece of Road on our trip

KOONGAL MEMORIES

*By Mrs Stella Millar
A resident of Koongal for 85 years.*

All suburbs change over time but it seems to me, as a long time resident of Koongal, there has been more than usual movement of businesses within the boundaries of this particular suburb. As part of the original 'village' area supporting the meat works, this probably has something to do with the fortunes of the meatworks over the years but newer residents in this area might be a little surprised to hear of some of the businesses that have disappeared from their neighbourhood.

I think it was during the 1940's that there was a **Pineapple Cannery** operating in what is now Rockonia Heights. Then there was the original **Open Air Picture Theatre** on Lakes Creek Road near Beak Street, it was blown down by a cyclone and a new theatre, **the Imperial**, was built in Stenhouse Street. Both were owned and operated by the Cole family. It ceased to operate during the 1950's and was pulled down in 1975.

The 50's must have been lean years as I remember another four businesses, which ceased to exist during that time, although to be exact, the **Fish Shop** situated in Beak Street met its end because people complained about the fish smell. It was owned and operated by the Griffith Family. The building had previously been Todd's Drapery Store in Musgrave Street and was moved to Beak Street and converted to a Fish Shop. It was later moved again, this time to Water Street.

Another **Fish Shop** situated on the corner of Harbourne Street and Lakes Creek Road was owned and operated by the Glover Family. Brian (son) now operates Fitzroy Funerals with his wife Carol. Before it was a Fish Shop, these premises had previously been run as a **Grocery Store** owned and operated by a Chinaman Lu Fu. When you paid the bill he would make a paper funnel and fill it with lollies to give you.

A **Chemist**, owned by Row & Co and situated in the Imperial Theatre building in Stenhouse Street and a **Doctors Surgery** operating from the private home of Cecil Bohan and situated on the corner of Rose Street and Stenhouse Street both closed during the 50's. The doctor from the surgery, Dr. John O' Duffy, later specialised in Paediatrics and moved to Brisbane.

In the late 1960's, a **Butcher Shop** and a small **Grocery Store** both of which were situated at the entrance to Lakes Creek Meatworks closed. The butcher shop was owned and operated by CQME and the grocery by Brian & Glynn Dillon. **Valencia Orchard** in Rockonia Road near Horton Street operated by Mr. & Mrs. Carrier, selling fruit and vegetables, also closed in during late '60s

The exact operating dates of other business now gone are a little unclear in my memory, but it might be of interest to list them. An **Electrical, Hardware & Drapery & Clothing** store owned and operated by Clive and Marion Shepherd was in Stenhouse Street. **McKenzie's Store** on Lakes Creek Road and Pilkington Street corner was a Grocery Store. Col Campbell renovated it and lived there for a time. It's rented out now.

The **Butcher Shop** in Thozet Road near Rockonia Rd ceased to operate in the 80's I think. It is now a hairdressing salon. **Sellars Concrete Plant** operated on Lakes Creek Road and there was a **Men's Barber Shop and Pool Hall** operated by Evan James who is recently deceased, situated on Lakes Creek Road across from Billmans Store. The building was later sold to Saint Vincent de Paul Society and a **Second Hand Clothing Store** operated there but was closed down some time later. The **Koongal Railway Siding** was closed and removed.

Another **Butcher Shop** situated on Lakes Creek Road near Saint John's Hall was condemned and pulled down and **Wiggington's Butcher Shop** used to be situated next to what is now Billman's Store. Billman's was originally Wiggington's Store.

The **Koongal Hotel** was on the corner of Pilkington St and Lakes Creek Road and was owned and operated by Joey and Billy Spence and **Heenan's Market Garden** was situated half way between Rockonia Road and Lakes Creek Road and I remember being able to buy 6d. worth of vegetables there.

The movement has continued through later years and through the 80's and 90's. **Shepherds Store** on Rose and Stenhouse Street, owned and operated over the years by Jack and Nell Shepherd and son John and his wife Phyllis and then John's son Glen and his wife Maree finally closed, eventually to be re-opened as a **Takeaway Store** by Merv and Dianne Case, finally closing again in 2001. **Koongal Post Office** in Stenhouse Street and run originally by Phyllis Shepherd and then others, also closed.

The Sisters of Mercy ran **Saint Anthony's Catholic Boarding School** on the corner Beak and Lakes Creek Road. Later it was moved to Feez Street. The **Saint Louis Boarding House** was in the same block as the school. **St. Nicholas Catholic Church** was also in the same block as the school. It became unsafe and was dismantled.

The Kersey Family originally ran **Kersey's Nursery** in Thozet Road. Other people operated it after them but it closed finally during the '90s and **CIG Gas** was moved from Horton Street to larger premises on the highway and is now BOC Gas.

The original **Central Hotel** was owned and operated by the Neill Family and when the old **Ulster Arms Hotel** was pulled down, two houses, one at 397 Stenhouse Street (Millar Family) and 399 Stenhouse Street (previously Young Family) were erected from its timber.

The Bottle, Rag and Bone Merchant operated from the flats, which are now owned by John Stowe, situated on the River bank. His name was Pinder. We used to get a big sugar bag and collect all the bones from the paddocks and we got paid 6d. for a bag full.

Phil Harth operated a **Bakery** at Kalka. It was the best bread ever made. On Good Friday morning, your Hot Cross Buns would be delivered to your house in the early hours of the morning.

Now, everyone just expects to go to large shopping centres for their needs and the choice is wonderful. I remember however, a slower pace, more personal service, more conversation and a closer-knit neighbourhood



1930 Storefront (vicinity unknown)

A NEW START

By Hazel Mingham, Zilmere

I was born in Middlesex in England in 1939 and I started my schooling in England. In 1947 after the war, we were the largest Migrant family – two adults and six children - to migrate to Australia.

We arrived in Australia in July 1947 aboard the ‘Orion’ and I turned eight that August. I have a vivid memory of my father having to carry me on to the ship as I had never seen coloured people before and I was terrified that the black workers on the ship would eat me up.

The ‘Orion’ was a lovely ship with two swimming pools, a games room and other activities to keep us entertained during the six week voyage.

We went to an Uncles farm at Jambin, south of Rockhampton and there I met all my Australian country cousins, one of whom became my best friend and here, in the year 2002 we still have that relationship. We moved for a short time to Goovigen and my father worked at the Biloela Hospital for a while. We left there and moved down to Brisbane. There were no Television sets, takeaways or other luxuries that people have nowadays. We went to the movies once a month if we were lucky, because most things were still on rations in the aftermath of war.

We made our own fun and because of it I think we probably had a closer family life, going on picnics to the gardens and playing games at home together. My father was a wonderful cook so even with rationing and shortages, we never went hungry and we always used any food left over.

I only wish we could go back to the days gone by, when things were so simple and my young life was so happy and carefree.



V.E. DAY

By Grace Stewart (nee Moore), Gracemere.

This story happened on the night of V.E. (Victory in Europe) Day on May 4th, 1945.

From all reports, it became evident that V.E. would occur in the first half of 1945. I lived at "Jedforest" at Gracemere with my father Thomas Moore, brother Bill and sister Emily on our well-known rough leaf pineapple farm.

Dad had told us all about the bonfires celebrating Queen Victoria's coronation in England and we thought this would be a good way to celebrate V.E. in Gracemere, so, from the beginning of 1945 Billy, Emily and I carted dead branches from citrus and other trees, which had died from neglect during the five and a half years of war.

Bill, with Molly the horse and a mole-board plough, ploughed a big area of ground just out from the house

Bill opened three potato bags lengthwise and stitched them together to form a wonderful big carry all. We constantly piled up the carry all, Bill on one side with two corners and Emily and me, with one corner each, on the other. We had a mountain of rubbish by the time we'd finished.

We lit the pile on the night of V.E. Day. What a huge bonfire it was – perhaps the biggest around Rockhampton. We danced around it singing war songs along with friends and neighbours.

4RO's announcer of the time Mr. Prince, was out and about describing activities around Rockhampton and he warmly and often, described this huge bonfire he could see out towards Gracemere where he could see people dancing around it as it burned on well into the night.

What a memorable and exciting night we had. People spoke of Moore's bonfire for a long time afterwards. It was a truly historic occasion.



*Moore's at JedForest, Grace at right
Jedforest*



1957 Pines at

RATIONING

By Merril Smith, North Rockhampton

Although I was raised in Mt Morgan, I was born in 1933 in Clermont while my Dad was out that way Droving. I remember receiving my only doll when I was four years old. It was a "Baby Betty" doll and I treasured her. I also remember that at school instead of the exercise books and computers used today, we started off with slates and slate pencils and when we progressed to lead pencils, instead of the lead being encased in wood, it was wrapped in wax paper.

Those of us who remember those difficult war years through the 1940's, will also remember when rationing was introduced and tea, sugar, butter and clothing were only available with coupons. As the clothing coupons were allocated in relation to your height and weight, if you breathed in maybe, just maybe you would reach the next required height or even if you were a little stouter, you qualified for that extra coupon. Families did things like clubbing together to pool their coupon allotments to help a bridal party dress for their special day.

My first job at H.F. Rowe & Son's grocery store in Mount Morgan in 1949, was pasting the coupons to sheets and my wages were 29/3d. per week, (approx. \$3). This wasn't bad pay considering families of apprentices had to pay the employer to train their sons in those days. One coupon was equal to 1lb of butter and sheets of 54 coupons bought a whole box, and 70 were required for a 70lb bag of sugar. Tobacco was also rationed. Customers were kept on a list and as their tobacco was collected each week, the customer's name was marked off.

In 1949, Butter was 1/8d. (about 17cents) per pound and was sometimes on special at 1/7d. Even though peace to end World War 2 was signed in 1945, rationing was still in force four years after the war finished.

As I walk into shopping malls and supermarkets now and view the displays of food and clothing, it is hard to imagine how the children of today would deal with circumstances as austere as those the war bought with it.



A BIT OF BULL

From Ron Bull

I've lived here all of my life. When I was 21 I went to Gladstone for a year then I came back here and built this house in Rockonia Road in 1949 and I've lived here ever since. I'm in my 70's now. I've done a bit of everything, worked at the meatworks, worked with cattle and horses for most of my life.

.....I went to Lakes Creek School. War was pretty full on when I was in scholarship year and they picked out four of us and we had to go and dig the air raid shelters in the paddock at the back of the school. "Smith, Bowles, Bull and Robinson" every morning "Get your mattocks" so we started digging, it was hard ground and we had blisters on our hands, and we got down about a foot and then we'd lay down and read comics. Florence was the name of the head teacher, he was tough, anyway one day he thought we must be getting really deep by then and he snuck down and caught us. I was 13 and that's when I left school because I thought I'd be better off earning money.

I got a horse and cart and I was carting pine, making 10/- a load and delivering 4 loads a day. In those days everyone had chip heaters for hot water and the meatworks had a box shed where they made the boxes to put the tinned meat in for transport to the army. They allowed the public to have the off-cuts and I built up a really good little business helping war widows and others by carting and stacking this wood for them. A load would last them around 3 weeks, which made for cheap hot water. I was doing OK at 10 quid a week; the best meatworkers were only earning 8 quid. I used to save money by shoeing my own horses; you could buy a set of shoes for 1/-. Anyway there was an old pensioner doing the same thing and he could only do 2 or 3 loads a day so he got sour and dobbed me in to the Coppers.

The upshot was I had to take a job. I went over to RCC and did a couple of weeks there and I didn't like that. 17/6 per week working 8 – 5 with no overtime, so I snuck back and did some more pine deliveries and the Cop got me again and I went to Walter Reid driving double horse lorries carting things. They were draft horses, they were big and I was only a little bloke so just getting their collars round their necks was hard, but here I got 27/6 per week. I stayed there for 18 months until I got my holidays. They used to only give you ½ holiday pay to make sure you came back then. While I was on holidays, I applied to the meatworks for a job. The money was pretty good there: 2 pound 15/- on day shift, 3 pound on afternoon shift and 5 quid on midnights. They were doing 3 shifts a day then because it was called essential services because they were feeding the army. Each machine did 23,000 tins of bully beef per shift. 69,000 tins each day for soldiers rations.

I got the job and when I got on afternoon shift, I could do two loads of pine in the morning and the Copper couldn't stop me because I was working and working in essential services at that. So 5 quid a week on pine plus my 3 quid at Lakes Creek, that was how I saved up to get this land. I bought this block of land for 45 quid and then I had to go around and get the stuff to build. You couldn't get iron or anything, except on the black market. I was 17 maybe 18 when I was getting the building stuff ready.

A lot of the blokes at the meatworks were in their 70's because of the shortage of manpower and they didn't want to have to go and do other labouring jobs as well so they used the fact they were already working on essential services and used to get up to all sorts of tricks like putting a wet rag under their knees and tapping their knees with wood to make them swell up when they went for their medical. Another fellow I knew swallowed some silver paper so it looked like he had a spot on his lung when he got X Rayed. There were some things going on I can tell you!

.....It was the early 50's when cattle started to be brought to the meatworks by truck. Before that the drovers and stockmen brought them to a holding paddock called Bordons Flats, it's where Diamonds butcher shop and Mount Archer School is now. There were only about 3 houses around there then. A couple of aboriginals slept up there at the top end of Thozet Road, at Frenchman's Lane where the church is now, and they would hold them there and bring them through in the morning. The packhorses were left on the flats while this was happening. The head stockman would count them through the white gates in Rockonia Road. Wiggingtons had a slaughter yard at Nerimbera then.

They came from Waverley Station, Glen Prairie, Banksia, Fitzroy Vale, everywhere really. There were Black Polls, Herefords and Red Baldys. There were plenty of cattle going to slaughter. Trains used to bring them in from the West, but nowhere near as many came by train as used to come in through here on foot - 2 - 3,000 at a time, that was because they didn't have loading facilities everywhere. As a drover I brought cattle from Fitzroy Vale to the meatworks and kept doing it for quite some time even after transports were in service. Transports and droving worked together for a long time. I'm pretty sure that Alf and Stan Cook were the ones who held the contract for the trucks for a good many years.

It was after the 70's when they stopped bringing live cattle from Bordons Flats, up Rockonia Road way. They had to stop doing it eventually because there was bitumen on the roads by then and there was so much wet manure on the bitumen, a motorbike rider slid one day and injured himself when he tried to brake and traffic was getting too heavy for droving. The cattle were breaking a few fences around private properties too, so it had to stop. You've got to have a special permit now to take any horse or horse drawn vehicle on the roads because of the hazard to traffic.

.....The Stenhouse family used to live behind the Lakes Creek Hotel, the house is still there although its appearance is altered now. They used to have the horse buses that ran up to town. They were Hansom cabs with 4 wheels, some with two horses, some with one. They were like a sulky thing with a hood on it and the horses used to wear straw hats with their ears sticking through and tied under their chins to stop them getting sunstroke. In town, they used to stand in front of where the new courthouse is now. There were trees there and hitching posts that they were tied to with a hook that stopped the horses from getting away if the owners left them alone.

.....They used to dredge the river because almost everything came to Rockhampton by river. They were still dredging around the 70's. They had a big dredge called the Fitzroy; it went down to Gladstone when they stopped dredging. Every year the meatworks would only work for 6 - 8 months of the year so I would go to the Harbour Board and help them run the boats to go down the river to do the beacons that marked the channel in the river. They were 15 - 20 feet apart and if you kept them in line, you could get safely up the river even at night. They were painted white so you could see them clearly in the daytime, I think there's still one or two left down there today. The barge would dredge the silt up through big pipes and then deposit it up on the banks.

It was in the 50's I did the lights on the river. They were on a platform on top of three big poles joined together. You'd have a big bag slung over your back with a clean glass in it because you couldn't clean the glass while you were up there, and you'd have a watering can full of kero in one hand. You'd have to tie your boat up, shinny up the ladder, blow out the light and then get the glass out being very careful because it was hot. You'd have to re-cut the wick in an oval shape because when it was square it smoked badly and dirtied the glass. Then you'd fill the reservoir from the watering can, put the fresh glass on and get back down. It was a bit tricky because you only really ever had one hand free. There was a false bottom with a tank in the boat and we would pump the kero from there. You could only really do it on a high tide because some of the lights were on the banks and at low tide there was too much mud to get the boat near.

When it was low tide, we'd take supplies to the people on Sea Hill Island. They had the contract to take their boats out to the big buoys and to maintain them and clean them up, get rust off and paint them. These were on the shipping channels to Port Alma. Of course there was no road in to Port Alma in those days. Rail was used to take the wharfies down there. The Harbour Master used to go by car to Bajool then from there he'd use those rail trolleys to get down to the port. If you were a boss you got a motorised trolley, anyone else had to use a pumper.

The old wharves in Rocky used to be where the old morgue was, in Quay Street and everything used to come in by ship. Barbed wire, sugar, potatoes, you name it, came by boat up the river and had to be unloaded. During the war years around 1940 when man-power was scarce, the wharfies who were normally finished unloading by around 11am, and people like the meatworkers who worked shifts, had to go and report for other jobs, mostly with the merchants like Walter Reid. There, stock had to be unloaded, or orders from the properties out west had to be packed and loaded on to double horse wagons and delivered to railway stations or back to the wharf.

.....There were hawkers in horses and carts who came round selling everything, Richarts bakers with bread, fish, pineapples, everything. One really funny thing that happened, it wasn't a hawker, it was the night cart. It was a cart pulled by two draft horses with a pole up the middle between the two horses with a strut coming across stopping the cart hitting their rear when going down hill. They had stopped in Norris Lane, which runs between Stenhouse and Rhodes streets, while old George Golightly went in to get a pan from Grandpa Bull's house. Bill Tippert lived on the hill and he had beehives. While old George was inside getting the pan, the bees swarmed and got on the horses and they bolted up the road and one went each side of a light pole and smashed the cart to bits. It was on that day, it was kapoo all over the road!

.....Another funny story from around here is the time a local was coming home really under the weather from a day at the races on foot and he cut across the paddocks and got himself bushed, so he stopped, sat down on a log for a smoke and a rest. He took off his waistcoat and hung it on a branch sticking out from the log and got his tobacco pouch out of one of the pockets and rolled himself a smoke. He reached around the back, put the tobacco pouch back in and even though his brain was fuzzy, he thought the pocket felt a bit furry. He looked around in time to see a wallaby taking off, and you guessed it, the tobacco was in its pouch.

.....There used to be about 500 goats in that paddock just off Cooper Street they were wild goats and they just bred and bred. Some used to sleep with their horns in the ground and the Dingoes would get them by the throat. They'd go over to the Lakes Creek dam in the morning to drink, then to the state school and raid the rubbish bins and if the bins were out in the street for collection, they'd knock the lids off and eat the rubbish. 1946 the goats were all there because after the '46 strike, a lot of people lived on goat meat and goat milk to survive. The council came down one night and put wire netting across Norris lane, chased them down there and killed them all and threw them in a truck and took them to the pig man.

Sharky Jacobsen used to come down the river by boat, send his boys in to pinch some goats, tie their legs together and put them in the boat and take them on to McKenzie Island and the goats went wild down there. McKenzie Island is right opposite the mouth of the river and Sharky lived cheap by fishing and using the goats for eating and milking. He had an underground tank for water and fish traps round the back. He was there for years and years. He used to bag the sand off McKenzie and bring it up and sell it to Bouldemans soap works for sand soap. The Davis family were the last to own the lease there; the Heritage mob and Environmentalists have claimed it now.

.....One of the things I remember that was a bit of a lark, was during the time the 'yanks' were camped down near AMH. They had a paddock where they kept horses for coming in to town on leave

there and old Ernie Richter down the road here would go out and buy all these frosty faced old horses, didn't matter if they were browns or blacks or bays, then he'd use boot polish to colour the grey hairs on them and sell them to the yanks at a great profit.

.....I was doing fishing or breaking in horses when I was a kid, never worried about toys or anything much although I guess we sometimes would pinch an orange hanging over a fence or take and eat a hot watermelon and be sick for our troubles, but trouble, no, I was more interested in trying to get a bob somewhere for pocket money to go to the pictures or something because times were pretty hard and there wasn't ever pocket money or even money spare for treats. A fish or a crab or a pound of prawns could earn you 2/6d. It was 1/3d to go to the pictures and 6d. to buy a soft drink while you were there.

We though nothing of putting the row boat on the dray, travelling 3 ½ to 4 hours to the mouth of the river to push the boat in. There were plenty of fish and crabs then. You could just go down there with a net and it was nothing to bring up a sack and a half of prawns. Sometimes the nets were too heavy for a bloke to pull in because it's half mud and half sand and your feet would slip.

Taken from an oral tape.



Droving Days

THE MARTINS OF EMERALD

*Extracts from the history of the Martin Family
Compiled by Robert and Marie Martin*

*Extracts reprinted with the kind permission of Georgina Yarrow
(nee Martin, granddaughter of George)*

Please note : Editors commentary printed in italics.

This history, released to coincide with a family reunion in 1992, records a piece of Queensland's history forged by the Martin family who played an important part in the development of pastoral Queensland, and who took their risks that in the main, outweighed the promise of reward. In the foreword to the book, Hon. Russell Cooper pays tribute to a family "who, from humble beginnings, have made their mark in a substantial way and, at the same time contributed to the colour, quality and character of people that have become true Queenslanders and great Australians."

The story begins with the emigration from England prior to 1859 of James Martin. He was probably escaping the hardship, overcrowding and disease rife in England for the poor and uneducated people of that time. It is believed his early days were spent in NSW as a shepherd and by 1862 he was living in Rockhampton and working as a stock keeper.

In 1853 wages per year, were 40 pounds per person for a married couple and 30 pounds for a single man, this may have prompted James to take a wife who was unknown to him....because in December 1862 James married Marcella Duffy in the residence of the Roman Catholic Clergyman in Rockhampton. It was just 38 days after her arrival in Rockhampton. . As an assisted passenger on the "Prince Consort" she was one of 439 passengers, 336 of whom were Irish. One can only assume that with such a large number of single Irish girls emigrating to the Colony, and Marcella marrying an Englishman from London and not an Irishman, so soon after her arrival, that the Irish Priest, Patrick Duhig, may have arranged the marriage. James was 28 and Marcella's age was 23. James signed his name but Marcella made her mark with an X

Marcella was an Irish immigrant and a staunch Catholic. Following her birth in Ireland in 1836, Ireland suffered greatly from disease, famine and persecution. Dominated by the English, Catholics were not taught at state schools, they were forbidden to buy extra land and were kept suppressed. There were only 14 Catholic marriages at Rockhampton in 1862, Father Charles Murlay, a young Frenchman, was appointed as the first parish priest and remained there for 20 years. While he was in Rockhampton, Father Murlay baptised the first three children born to James and Marcella, Joseph (b. 1863), Mary (b. 1865) and Frederick (b. 1868). In 1879 the then Dean Muraly acquired land in William Street for the future Cathedral.

By 1865 James had become a shepherd on Fairfield station in the Banana district. Shepherds were one of the largest groups of employed people in the outer districts and by 1865 a married couple's wage was roughly 50 pounds per year and keep. Their rations were a standard 10 lbs of flour, 10 lbs of meat, 2 lbs of sugar and ¼ lb of tea. This became universally known over the whole of Australia as ten, ten, two and a quarter. His rations were delivered weekly and his home was most likely a small bark hut. *The work was hard and monotonous and the responsibility was great because if there were losses, the cost would be deducted from his wages. Aborigines were hostile to white settlers and were notorious for killing the sheep and sometimes the shepherd and his family as well. Mary was born while here with only James and a Mrs. Lyons to help with the birth.*

From there the family moved to Springsure where Frederick was born in 1868 and James had become a Shearer. Springsure had a population of 1098 people, one of the largest districts in the state. It was a very masculine society with only 250 women residing there. Stations of the day had large populations of some 50 – 60 people and took on village proportions. Meteor Downs was a huge property with some 300,000 sheep and this was one of the places James worked. 1871 saw James in Gainsford where a large population had assembled at the end of the newly formed railway line. Son William was born here in 1871.

Westwood was the next move. This town came into existence when a contract was let in 1865 for the building of a railway 30 miles from Rockhampton. Historians have claimed that this railway was built because of pressure on the young colonial parliament by CQ pastoral representatives. This is feasible because Westwood had a railway eight years before Brisbane. Westwood became the centre for an extensive network of mail coaches and carrying services and it was here around 1875 that James and his eldest son Joseph obtained a small selection of 160 acres each, named "Sugarloaf"; this is where he registered his first cattle brand "Y7M". It is still held in the Martin family to this day at "Old Malvern", Capella. This selection was to be the first stepping-stone from which James and the Martin brothers would launch an empire of sheep and cattle properties.

As land around Westwood was in small selections, district communities were formed. These community areas usually had a dance hall, cricket fields and sometimes a racetrack. Some of these nearby villages were Wycarbah, Stanwell and Alton Downs. Here the local population could assemble at bush dances or play the next village at cricket. The brothers were involved in these sporting and community events and enjoyed playing cricket and were active in athletics.

In 1878 their second daughter Agnes was born. The following year a Mr Samuel Joseph Willis was appointed the new school headmaster and remained so for many years. As well as being the town's head teacher, Mr. Wills was also the district's doctor, dentist and midwife. Here at Westwood, the bigotry which Marcella had experienced in Ireland was again to surface. The new headmaster was English and refused to teach catholic children. Joseph and Mary would have been old enough to leave school but the other children were denied their education. *At best, because of the family's many moves, the children would only have received basic schooling.* George was born in 1881 and was the last-born. Marcella registered the birth with an X, so it could be assumed that she never learned to write. Agnes passed away in 1896 from asthma, aged 17 years.

Over the next decade James and sons slowly added country to "Sugarloaf" purchasing other selections of areas between 200 and 400 acres a time *to eventually make "Sugarloaf" around 4000 acres.* Over the next few years the older boys learned to blade shear and went far a field looking for consistent work. Marcella passed away in 1905 aged 67.

By 1840 wool had become Australia's dominant export with the annual wool clip more than 2 million kgs. And by the 1890's runs in Queensland covered huge tracts of country and the cry went out for shearers. *While shearing at "Alice Downs" in 1892 with the famous Jackie Howe when he broke the worlds record on 10th October, for shearing 321 sheep in a 7 hour 40 minute day, Joe Martin was the next highest tally, with 219 sheep. Frederick's tally was 142 and William's 136. The life of a Shearer was not the romantic notion of the poets and balladeers of the time. Work was hard, conditions even harder and payment for shearing was at the mercy of the tally master through the contracts shearers were forced to sign which were heavily weighted in favour of the wealthy and powerful squattocracy of the day.* From the early 1880's meetings and organized strikes were taking place among groups of shearers in various parts of Queensland. A shearers union was formed after the rate for shearing had dropped from a high of 20/- per 100 to 15/- per 100. The rate varied from property to property but remained under 20/- until things came to a head at Barcaldine in 1891 *with the now famous Shearers Strike.*

By 1893 machine shearing had come into the sheds in NSW, slowly moving into large western Queensland sheds and the central west. As each shed switched over to machines, there were less shearers employed and the Martins decided it was time for them to set up business and be able to work for themselves. *By 1897 three brothers were able to buy a small but choice property at Gogango called "The Pocket" it was registered in the name of George who was 16 at the time and by the latter half of the 1890's the Martins also had a butcher shop at Westwood, and in 1902 had purchased another at Mt. Morgan with the somewhat trendy slogan of NOT 2 B X L D, where they advertised that 'families and others would be waited upon for orders', that there would be 'civility and attention to customers' and only 'the prime of beef, mutton and pork' was to be obtained at the shop.*

Around 1901 with Australia in the midst of depression and drought the brothers purchased "Glendarriwell" near Emerald for 1500 pounds stocked, with plant and improvements and through this sale the brand "E.D.1" was transferred to their name and this property was stocked with sheep and over time the four brothers, now married, built their homes on this property. The Martin's method for success was to bring sheep from the west (mainly wethers) shearing them for some years, then fattening them for meat works along the coast. Because of the safe rainfall of the central highlands, they could usually buy drought-affected sheep from the west. It was a very successful recipe for making money which they repeated many times over the years to come.

James passed away at "Glendarriwell" in 1909 aged 77 and was buried in Emerald. From around 1914 the brothers with their wives began purchasing properties that would allow them to branch out on their own outside their partnership and the family went on to own vast tracts of land so that by the 1940's, *the four Martin families were very large land holders in the central highlands, owning approximately 500,000 acres between the four brothers and their sons. Other large areas were held by their sons in law, daughters and close relatives. From the very early days after buying "Glendarriwell" the four families were part of Emerald's growth. Through Emerald's early development, they contributed much to the towns progress because they had decided to make Emerald the focal point for their business and families education. It must be remembered at this time, Emerald was still a very small town. Most of the second generation went to school there and were taught by the Presentation Nuns and the families all had homes in Emerald which became the focal point for parties and gatherings.*

They were called upon on more than one occasion to 'assist' local business and their support of the Catholic Church both in Emerald and Rockhampton is marked by two white marble statues, one of Jesus and one of Mary which were imported from Italy, and their cost, and the cost of their erection, was met by Frederick and William Martin's descendants. They stand outside the Rockhampton Cathedral as a tribute in recognition of all the family for their contribution to the Catholic Church in Queensland.

From small beginnings, the sons of James and Marcella had accumulated large tracts of land. With the death of the youngest son George in 1968 there was the passing of an era when men, through sheer hard work and very little education could amass large numbers of stock and the land to form a pastoral empire.



30,000 one mark wethers yarded on Isis Downs

I'D RATHER HAVE WORKED ON THE LAND

From Eric and Beryl Schneider

Eric : My first love was working with cattle and horses and I'd much rather have done that for a lifetime but it wasn't to be and I worked for Queensland Rail from 1954 'til 1996 and the railways certainly gave my family the stability it needed to raise five children.

I was born in 1932, grew up and went to school at Ambrose, near Mt. Larcom. When I left school I went out to a station west of Springsure called Buckland Plains and that's where I met Beryl. After I left there and came back to Ambrose, I ended up going back out to Springsure for Beryl's sisters wedding and I wanted to stay for a few weeks for a holiday so I looked for a job out there for 3 or 4 weeks and I got a good job in the traffic branch as a Porter with QR. There was then an opportunity for a permanent job and I could see at that stage that money in the Railway was a lot more secure than working the land, so I stayed. I was 20 and Beryl was 16. Wages were around the 6 – 10 pound mark I think. I know that on the property I worked on it was 10 pounds a week and keep.

Beryl : I was born and bred in Springsure. Buckland Plans was a sheep and cattle property and I worked there helping in the house and with the kids and as a general offsider. My last job before I left Springsure was back in town at a baker shop and I was getting a reasonable wage for that time of 3 pound 18/- per week.

Eric : We were married in 1956 and in 1957 we transferred to Emerald. Beryl was not enjoying the best of health and had to go to Rockhampton for medical treatment and the Doctor said she needed to come closer to town so I resigned and we moved back to Ambrose where I immediately got a job ... back with Queensland Rail, this time in track maintenance, looking after about 13 – 14 km of track. I stayed with track maintenance from then on. The greater part of my time was spent in major gangs relaying tracks and other major work. Eventually I came up to Rockhampton and looked after a portion of the yards in Rockhampton.

Beryl : Eric was asked to take a position with a relay gang laying tracks at Stanwell for 6 weeks. We had 5 children by then, one a new baby and the oldest was 7 and I wasn't really well so Eric said he would only go if I could go too. The only accommodation we could have was two bondwood huts with a sort of roof connecting the two. They were actually single men's huts with sleeping accommodation for two men in each hut with this roof section in between and the galley alongside of that with a wood fire stove in it. They had little or no facilities. They used to fill a tank at the edge of the railway line and we were pretty flash, we ran a hose over to the edge of the hut and hooked the hose up so we'd have running water, otherwise you had to go with your bucket (galvanised, and supplied by QR) and cart the water. The shower room was a separate little room with a bucket shower with a string pull. We had camp stretchers to sleep on.

As they were single men's quarters, they weren't expected to want to bake, so they were equipped with a second hand wood-burning stove ex. a station masters house and they all had the oven burnt out. After being issued with 3 over time, all with burned out ovens, the inspector in charge took pity on us and slipped a new stove for his quarters in Westwood through the system, and gave it to us. We went home each weekend and we'd shop Saturday morning in town, then bake everything for the following week until we got that stove.

Eric : The six weeks, turned into 4 years beside the railway tracks, first at Stanwell, then Westwood, then Gogango, then Edungalba. The gangs usually numbered around 25 – 30 and everyone lived on site during the week. The huts could be pulled apart and re-assembled at the next job. Ours was

always set apart from the men's huts. Beryl was the only woman and she and the children didn't have anything to do with the men.

Beryl : After 4 years, we had two kids in school and the next shift was Gracemere. It just became too hard, so I said 'enough' and moved back to Ambrose. It took a few months before they released Eric. Our oldest boy who had 4 shifts of schools remembers hating it, but then he just hated school anyway, the others don't seem to have minded, or were too young to remember much.

Eric : I moved back into ordinary track maintenance in 1966. Any work on the tracks had to be carefully planned around daily timetables and schedules with lots of checking with the control. Sometimes I think we erred on the part of caution too much and a lot of valuable working time was lost. It was labour intensive work, and just between Gladstone and Rockhampton, Yarwun had a 6 man crew, there were 5 at Mt. Larcom, 4 at Ambrose, 4 at Raglan, 4 at Marmor, 4 at Midgee and Bajool was a 6 man gang, and that was just for normal day to day maintenance and track safety, not major work. Besides that, each district had a flying gang of at least 12 men to do major jobs. Maintenance is much more sophisticated now, but because of that, employs far less people.

I stayed there until 1973 when we moved to Rockhampton to take over one of the two gangs at the yards, then in 1980 I got into training and mainly did that until retirement in 1996. The last job I helped with was a new track auditing system for QR. I was seconded to help start it off and partly through that I travelled pretty near all of Queensland rail centres.

The little towns like Ambrose where I grew up evolved mostly because of settlement but were reinforced by rail. As a kid, the Ambrose area was mostly mixed farming of around 160 acre blocks, producing dairy, fruit and vegetables. It all used to come into little central rail stations to go to the markets, the cream to Gladstone where the major butter factory was and the produce to Rocky and Brisbane. A neighbour of ours even sent most of his tomatoes to Sydney. All this without refrigeration, there was a knack to picking fruit and vegetables at just the right point so they would travel and get to market in the right condition.

Ambrose was well settled when I was a kid and there were schools all over : Ambrose, and Langmorn school, then around the other way with Hut Creek, Machine Creek, Bracewell, Cedarvale, East End and then back to Mt. Larcom. They were all one-teacher primary schools with about 10 – 18 at each school. Secondary students mostly boarded in Rocky with friends or family until the weekly rail motor from Gladstone to Rocky commenced but that was a lot later.

There were dances and pictures in Mt. Larcom. At one stage there were three picture shows there. I can just remember going to the open air pictures, then they were in the Dance Hall and another theatre built after the open air one closed and then another one started up in the pavilion at the showgrounds. Cricket and tennis were also popular.

Mt. Larcom was the central base for the district. Everybody went on Friday to do shopping. There weren't that many cars around, most transport was horse and sulky and going to Rocky or Gladstone was a big occasion. On Friday the people who grew fruit and vegies lined up with their vehicles in the street and you could buy directly from them. There were 2 baker shops and two butcher shops there and there were even two butchers in Ambrose.

Beryl : It stayed like that even after we were married and about the only difference was that people had cars in those days. In later years, the bakers had gone and bread used to come 2 – 3 days a week from Rocky. When we eventually moved to Rocky, my kids said they were never going to eat day old bread again in their lives!

Eric : Although I was only young, I have strong memories of the war years because Mum and Dad had come from Germany. There were a number of Germans settled around Ambrose and they all lived in fear because people from that area were taken away and interned in Victoria somewhere, all because they had said the wrong thing at the wrong time. My step-aunt's husband had a heart attack there and never came back and one chap came back but was so badly affected, he committed suicide. The possibility of German settlers in that area communicating with Germany was being monitored all the time. The police used to come out and check your radios to see you didn't have transmission equipment. We weren't allowed to have a rifle. All firearms were confiscated from Germans. We borrowed a rifle from the neighbour because we had free-range poultry and the only way you could catch them to eat them was to shoot. The Police took that rifle back to the neighbour and gave him official notification we weren't to have it. He could come over and shoot for us or we could arrange for the police to come and do it.

Although we had spent our early years speaking German, it was imperative that my sister and I learn to speak English before we went to school and it was taboo for us to speak anything but English or to speak out of turn for fear of making it look like we were sympathetic to Germany in any little way, so the war years were a tense time for our family and others like it. It had an effect on people, mostly adverse, some could cope but not others.

Having said that, generally the community was supportive, there were a few kids who, in the middle of an argument would taunt me with my Germanic background and a few adults who distanced themselves slightly from the family, but that's all I remember.

Beryl: My major memory of war years in Springsure was the 'yanks' having a camp the other side of Springsure and they were cheeky and used to fly their planes down low over the town. The school had a great spire up in the centre of it and how they never hit that spire, no one knew, because they would just go within a few inches and everything would shake. I became absolutely terrified of planes, I used to scream. I'm still terrified to this day. You'd be walking to school and they'd just swoop, so we used to walk under the power lines all the way to school until we had to cross the road and we'd rush across to the safety of the power lines on the other side.

The horror of planes was confirmed for me when there was a big crash out near Rolleston and a lot of air force people were killed. The undertaker lived at the end of the street and the bodies were brought in by truck, to be put in lead lined, sealed coffins to be shipped out to Rocky and then presumably, to the States. They were all piled up at the end of the street. They took them from Springsure by truck and my Uncle Harry drove one of the trucks. Anyway, that was the final straw for aeroplanes for me, I didn't have wings, and so I wasn't meant to fly. I did make one trip to Europe in later years, but I'll never do it again.

Air raid shelters were dug in the school grounds and we had practice in them and even at home, we had them. On the Returned Soldiers Hall at the time, they had a big platform and that was a lookout, manned the whole time of the war, looking out for planes. I'm not sure what they hoped to achieve, but it was manned all the time. On the day war was over a resident rang the rope pull church bell all day. He must have been exhausted by days end, but he was so excited, he rang it all day!

Eric: I did get to do some work with horses and cattle. We had our own little farm with horses, cows and the best dog ever. I broke a few horses for myself and a few for my neighbours and helped anyone around the area with stock work to get the horses used to it. I worked weekends on properties with horses and cattle until we came to Rocky. As I said at the start, it was my first love and I'd rather have done that permanently, but the railways gave my family stability for years and an interesting life.

Taken from an oral tape.

RAIL REMINISCENCE

From Brian Smith

I was born in 1934 and commenced work for Queensland Rail in May 1949 as a Junior Clerk in the payroll section. Looking at the computerised systems of today, the complexities of the system we worked with, would seem almost inconceivable to a payroll officer today. Not only were there no computers, there were no calculators as we know them. Most payrolls were done manually. Time sheets were hand written, some pay sheets had names of employees, their depots and gangs, typed on a long carriage typewriter. There were accounting machines, but not all pay runs were done on these. Some had to be done manually. That is, details entered on pay sheets by typewriter then entries balanced with a pay summary which also had to be balanced. It was all done in your head. It was essential to meet deadlines, as pays for outlying areas had to be sent on certain trains so employees received them on the days allocated. Money had to be drawn from the bank and manually counted into the employees pay envelopes etc. Pay dockets also had to be written and, as biros were in their infancy and some times unreliable, most of these pay dockets and time sheets were completed with indelible pencil.

The central division covered an area from Bloomsbury north of Mackay, south to Bundaberg and west to Winton as well as the Callide and Dawson Valleys, down to Monto and the Springsure and Clermont branches. Employees of QR whether they were clerks, station masters, fettlers, drivers, guards, porters, workshops etc. were entitled to their pay to be in their hands on the set day. It was a lot of work, but employees who had much lower educational standards than today maintained it efficiently. I only went to Scholarship standard. Around the mid '50's accounting machines were updated and this streamlined the system a bit. It wasn't until 1968 the first computer arrived. I was taxation clerk in those days responsible for all the tax in the central division. When it came to June 30th, I had about 3 girls who used to sit at typewriters for around 4 to 5 weeks continuously, day after day, typing up the group certificates for around 20 – 21,000 employees. When the computer was installed, I had every certificate for every employee in my hand within about half an hour – it was amazing.

I've always thought it amazing that no one ever worked out how to become very rich in a hurry during the '50's and '60's, because the amount of money transported between the CBA in East St and the pay office on Denison and Stanley on a regular basis, especially at Xmas time was huge. The workshops had about 12 – 13 hundred employed at that time and their pay alone probably would have been about 1 million dollars and that was a lot of money then. It was only ever delivered in the back of a station wagon with one policeman as an escort.

I worked for a period in the Transport area in QR. The first coal train to Gladstone with coal to be shipped overseas didn't come out of Moura, it came from the Nipan-Kianga area up through Mt. Morgan, because there wasn't a direct short line between Moura and Gladstone in those days. When the coal was running at its highest in that area, probably mid '60s, there were five trains each way (10) per day, it was all coming from Moura, the trains used to be pulled by the old Bayer Peacock Garrets and the running time for just one section between Bundaleer and Moongan which was on the old Mt. Morgan deviation, used to take around 45 mins to run 12 – 14 km. Hard to comprehend in today's Tilt Train era. Even before the Mt. Morgan deviation, the old rack engine pulled up the trains. You can still see remnants of the rack railway system on the old road up through Moongan.

There used to be a train run every day to take the workers to and from Rockhampton and Mt. Morgan with about 400 passengers. On this particular day, there were shunting operations at the top of the deviation at Moongan and a string of coal wagons got away and they were coming down the deviation as the passenger train was coming up, approaching Kabra. There was no direct radio contact with

drivers then and there was great concern until they rang a chappie by the name of McAvoy who had a property at the foot of the range just the other side of Kabra and he ran across his paddocks and flagged the train down and stopped it for everyone to get out, thus averting what could have been a major disaster.

In the '50's and early 60's when road conditions were not as they are now, there was a regular rail motor between Gladstone and Rockhampton which allowed people to come up to the Base Hospital for medical treatment because there was little at Gladstone then. Rockhampton to St. Lawrence ran about 3 times a week and there was a regular service between Emu Park, and Yeppoon and Rockhampton bringing workers up Monday to Friday, to arrive around 8.45am. Saturday and Sunday there were 2 – 3 trains a day taking people for picnics at Emu Park and Bell Park and to the dance at Myola Hall in the main street at Yeppoon. There must have been 1000 people at those dances sometimes. Those weekend trains used to be chock a block. There's only a goods service to Yeppoon now.

The Medway creek train disaster in February 1960 was probably the worst ever experienced in this area. It happened in the early hours of the morning after very heavy rain had caused a tree to wash out and come down and hit the pylons of the Medway Creek Bridge crossing, weakening them. This wasn't known of course and as was normal, the Alpha ganger had 'run the road' and found it safe to go ahead. The first crew of 2, the more senior, swapped places with the second crew because they had better local knowledge, and when they got to the bridge, the leading C17 engine made it across before the bridge collapsed, killing the senior crew and five others and injuring around 22. The fireman on the first engine, Len Wilson, ran the two miles into Bogantungan, to alert the authorities. Neville Helmuth, a good mate of mine was in the second engine and was killed in that accident, through the hand of fate.

Heavy rain also caused a cadet train taking cadets to camp at Canungra in 1960 to come off the rails. Wet weather had caused the line to spread between Port Curtis and Midgee and the Bayer Peacock Garret ploughed into the mud. Luckily, no one was seriously injured. There was another big train smash in about 1947, down at Marrawing where they have the drags now, near Benaraby on a crossing loop between Benaraby and Iveragh. It was an American Garret bought out during the war years that collided with a B18 ¼ - both good trains.

Taken from an oral tape.



Cadet Train Accident, Canungra



American Train Accident, Marrawing

A HAPPY FAMILY

By Margaret Moore, Marlborough

When we came to Marlborough to live we made a big change in our lives, coming to a one-teacher school after larger schools in Rockhampton. It became part of our lives as children to walk the three miles to school always getting a ride home in the sulky three times a week when Dad brought cream from the dairy to the railhead for transport to the factory.

We didn't have very much money and bread was 5 or 6 cents a loaf. We had a permanent order for 4 loaves a week and in between times existed on damper that Dad used to make. We lived off the land with homemade butter, fresh eggs, meat and vegetables from a lovely garden. Much of the food was rationed and making our own butter was an arduous task. We all took turns beating the cream to bring it to butter.

Daily chores consisted of helping to get cows in for milking on the dairy farm, getting enough wood to start the fire in the wood stove each morning and filling the kerosene lights each day before dark.

Entertainment was provided from a wind-up gramophone with pre-war records and as a special treat Dad would take us for a moonlight ride in the sulky – really lovely!!

If we had a head cold all old rags were cut into handkerchiefs and burnt after use. Good handkerchiefs were always washed and ironed with great care.

We were very happy and united as a family and never looked for anything else as many commodities had a very long waiting time to acquire; three to six months was normal.



MY MEMORIES OF THE SANDHILLS

From Clifford Warkill

(Known as Cliffy, Bookon or Man Abraham)

(1st descendent of the Australian South Sea Island Family)

I was born on the 14th September 1930 just a bit to the right from where the cemetery is on the banks of the swamp at Sandhills, now commonly known as Joskeleigh. My mother's name was Emily Tatow-Warkill and her maiden name was Johnnie. She was a first generation Australian South Sea Islander and her mother's name was Granny Upkett. My mother married William Tatow first and raised eight girls and three boys. When her first husband died she then married my father Thomas Warkill.

My father was a blackbirder from New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) brought here to cut Cane at Yeppoon. He died in 1931 when I was about a year old. I don't remember him much at all, but my sister Millicent tells me that my father was good to the Tatow family and provided for them as well. My mother died in 1938 when I was about seven and my stepsister Gladys looked after my sister and I, she married Frank Youse. At around 14 I started working on a tomato farm at Jarvisfield near Ayr where I had moved to for a while. I also used to load cane on Saturday mornings.

When I was 17 years of age, I came back to Sandhills and I worked as a labourer for Fitzroy Shire Council then at Martins Sawmill in Wowan and at 19 I worked as a Ringer first on Frankfield Station in Clermont then Dungabulla Station owned by Vestee's from Lakes Creek and I celebrated my 21st birthday there. I moved back to Rockhampton in 1954 and worked on roads for Theiss Brothers and then Main Roads Department and finally retired in 1993.

I married Lulu Olivia Vea Vea in 1955 at St. Barnabas Church off Little Musgrave Street and we raised a family of 4 girls and 4 boys. We lived on the flat "Kanakan Town" at Creek Street for a few years. We bought our first house in 1966. Lulu passed away in 1981 and I remarried Glenda Wovot in 1985 and we lived in Yeppoon until Glenda passed away in 1997. I now reside with my daughter and her family in North Rockhampton and have 23 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

When I was a young boy on the swamp at the Sandhills, I remember there were a lot of old South Sea Islanders living around us. Jim and George Cuff owned all the land. A couple of the houses were built from timber and tin and others were made of blade grass. Some of the grass houses were huge. The old islanders used to have gardens surrounding their houses. They grew peanuts, sweet potatoes, watermelons, taro, yam and bananas. There were also plenty of fruits, oranges, mandarins, custard apples, mangoes and bush lemons and wild gooseberries.

Living on the swamp with my Mother before she died was hard living. My Mother used to make her own bread. She would set it the night before using hops and yeast and throw a cloth over it that night; then it would rise and she would put it in the wood stove the next morning. To wash our clothes, there were old copper boilers or some people had old kerosene tins. People used to buy the kerosene to light their lanterns or glass lights because there was no power, no fridges, irons or washing machines.

I can recall watching mum when she boiled the clothes. She had kerosene soap, long bars of it and small pieces were cut off and thrown in the boiler. When the clothes had boiled enough, she'd take them out (very, very hot) and let them drain. Then she'd use a knob of blue to rinse them in blue water. When the clothes were dried, she used to starch the whites, ready for ironing. This was done with irons heated up on the wood stove.

A lot of our food was cooked in camp ovens. The old south sea men had open fires where they'd salt a lot of their meats like corn meat and fish. There was no refrigeration so anything they wanted to keep for a while they used to hang on wires over the fireplace to smoke. It would last for months treated this way. If they wanted to cook it later, they'd soak it for a night to get rid of the smoke taste.

To grow peanuts, there were wooden stakes put in the ground and the peanuts grew in stooks. When the bushes turned brown, they were pulled out and hit on old bed netting wire, which would hold all the peanuts, and the old people would pick out the good ones and bag them for shipping to Kingaroy.

At Josko, Old Bob Bong was known as a medicine man. He mainly used Taro Juice as his medicine. I had it once when I was sick, it was terrible. All the lining in my stomach seemed to go into a ball, and the next day I was running! He also used different juices from the weeds to put on sores. Whatever he used made me well and fixed me up.

When I was a young fellow we used to call Keppel Sands – Little Beach and Joskeleigh was Long Beach. Sandhills was known for its wild fruits. There was Burdekin plums, wild apricots, damsons, prickly pears, lily pillies, birds-eye and the fruit from a big wha-wha tree. There is still one wha-wha tree I know of in Yeppoon today.

Pop Youse had bananas growing along the bottom of the saltpan about four rows wide. We used to have about four 44 gallon drums and we'd cart bunches of bananas up to the house in the spring cart. Pop would cut the hands off the banana trees and line around the inside of the drums with the trees, leaving the centre empty. He'd then fill the drum to the top with hands. Then, a tin of carbide was placed in the centre and it was all covered with sack bags to keep in the smell of the carbide. That was how to ripen bananas which were sometimes sold in town and at Christmas, we sold them from a cart to holidaymakers.

There was a well at the front gate with shell grit on the bottom which was filled with lovely spring water for drinking. Sometimes on a king tide, the salt water would come right over the top and we had to bail it out until we got to the shell grit and the good water. King tides used to bring in plenty of mullets (fish) to the saltpan and we caught them for food.

PopYouse had cows and horses and a big old dray, he also had a spring cart and sulky. He had watermelons planted and in the early forties, the Americans were camped in Strubbers Paddock. They used to come and get truckloads of melons.

I used to help with ploughing the ground with two horses pulling the plough that had one blade and two handles out of the back. It was hard work. We'd then hook the horses on the harrow which was like a flat metal with a dozen or more spikes sticking in the ground. This would level the ground and rake all the grass up. After planting we carried water from the swamp before and after school and we kept this up until the melons started running with big long stems that ran along the ground.

In a hollow in front of the house, we had cotton growing. And there were plenty of custard apple trees as well and Mr. And Mrs. Simpson had rows of passim trees growing, it had a big yellow fruit.

Keppel Sands had a few stores : Pheely, Davison the Baker, Horry Twinee at the Post Office. After they went Eric Limpus had a store at Pumpkin Creek and Cedric Warcon had a yard built where he used to hold rodeos. Dingwalls had a shop at the Joskeleigh and Keppel Sands turn off.

That's some of my many wonderful memories of the Sandhills. They were hard days but we never went hungry with the abundance of all kinds of fruit, vegetables and seafood.



*\One of the First Kanaka Family Photos taken in Joskeleigh
(Warcon, Warkills, Cora, Roberts and Parter families)*

I DIDN'T REALISE WE WERE POOR

By Veronica Schwarten

Being born in 1927, I grew up in the Great Depression years, then World War 2 years. I was one of twins, the other being my brother Jeremiah (Joe).

As a child, I didn't realise we were poor in those days, but on reflection, we were, as were many others. My father, who was a labourer, was employed at McLaughlin's Brewery until the depression hit, when he was made redundant. I can only remember him doing relief work for a few miserable rations until I was 12 years old, when he got a job with the City Council and on the first payday a couple of bottles of soft drink were bought for us all to celebrate.

My mother did washing and ironing for a chemist's family, walking from Bolsover Street to the Range in order to do so. She got seven shillings and sixpence for the day, which was immediately taken to the landlord for our weekly rent. Mum also took in washing.

Dad grew our vegetables, as much as he could produce, and we had an orange tree and bush lemon tree. Other fruit was brought in the form of "speck fruit" – big bags for three pence and six pence. But despite this poverty my mother was able to produce all sorts of tasty food using little meat and a lot of ingenuity. We never went to bed hungry, even if tea was just fried bread and dripping. Our clothes were made of hand-me-downs from the chemist's family; turned inside out and remade in styles children could wear - shirts for the boys from men's shirts and for us girls, suitable dresses. Shoes were a problem and holes in the soles were covered by inserting whatever cardboard and paper could be found.

We all played happily enough in the neighbourhood with all sorts of improvised toys such as dolly pegs dressed in scraps for dolls. Any bottles would form a "class" for "teaching" by us. At night mothers would take their chairs onto the footpath and we children would play in the lamp light of the street - races, tiggy, images and others. Sometimes we went to play in the council park where the Town Hall is now; mothers accompanying us. For all this, neighbours were good friends helping each other out with whatever they could, if needs be. There was a loving friendliness that doesn't exist any more. Trust was given, received and honoured then.

When war came we were pushed into jobs; my first at 13 was working a week for an elderly lady for seven and sixpence. I had left school earlier in the year because of my mother's failing health, to help at home. Then I had a couple of other better paying jobs, before being employed at Lake's Creek meatworks, which was C.Q.M.E. in those days.

Life became a bit easier with incomes coming in and each of us paying our share in board. We had our sadness, as some family members died during those years and our mother passed away before the war ended. Dad died just five years later.

I'm very grateful to have been given the gift of life. I wished things might have been a bit easier for my mother and that I'd had a better education. But those years have stood me in good stead for life's trials and I am so lucky to have always had a good sense of humour and a childhood that was so wonderfully supported.

Although we did all play happily together, we also got up to our share of mischief, for which we were punished. A man of Greek origin lived next door to our place in a disused shop and he used to perform at various shows as "the human fish". He could sit at the bottom of a tank full of water,

without breathing apparatus, for quite a while. In order to do this he practised daily. When we were home from school and lemons were in season, we would all climb up on things so we would be level with the rim of the tank. He would be there calmly sitting on the bottom and we would be eating the lemons and spitting the seeds into the water. He would have to surface because, as he told our mother, it made his saliva glands work overtime and he couldn't concentrate. But we still kept doing it at every opportunity; poor man was so frustrated by it all.

When Wirth's Circus used to come to town and set up on the flat land behind us, we'd all hang around there. Some of the lady performers would come and use our "Potts" irons to freshen up costumes and we often scored a free ticket into the performance. And a couple would sneak in on the quiet while the doorman was busy, or else get in under the tent.

Outings had to be free as there just wasn't any spare money for entertainment or treats and a long walk to the Gardens on Sunday afternoon was indeed a good outing.

Growing up in the war years was good, even though these were my early teen years. We went to dances and picnics and my parents always had a few American servicemen stay whenever they had a pass. They were really decent, companionable young men. Mum and dad would play cards with some of them, or just share a meal and some home life. One such man is still corresponding with me today, even though he and his wife are well into their eighties and were married even back then.



RECOLLECTIONS

By Evan Swarten

I was born on 19th April 1921, in a home conducted by a midwife nurse in Linnett Street, North Rockhampton. My sister, Jean Margaret (Peggy), was born at the same home on 9th December 1922. This home was merely the residence of the midwife, with rooms set aside for the births. I doubt they would have stood up to the health regulations and standards of today.

We lived at the residence of our widowed paternal grandmother at 64 Bolsover Street in the city. This was going to be a temporary arrangement until my parents obtained their own home. But this was not to be, as the cruel hand of fate decreed otherwise. Shortly after, my grandmother developed rheumatic arthritis and became bedridden. It must have been in the early 1920's, as I have no recollection of her ever walking. My father and mother were to spend the rest of their lives living at 64. As my father was working, the workload of nursing my grandmother fell on my mother. How she managed to raise us children and care for my grandmother escapes me.

The only movement my grandmother had was limited to her hands; she even had to be hand fed. I slept on the verandah adjacent to her bedroom and when she called my mother several times during the night, I would knock on the wall so she knew she had been heard and then go and wake my mother. My grandmother remained in that state until her death in January 1940 at the age of 85.

I can recall only two occasions when my mother was away from that house; once in 1928 when we had a family holiday at Yeppoon and about 1935 when she visited her sister in Mackay. On these occasions my grandmother was transported by ambulance to her daughter's home at North Rockhampton. The old lady never showed any gratitude to my mother and willed the house co-jointly to my father and my aunt.

It would seem that while my father had work, we were reasonably well off. He was employed as a patten maker – moulder at the Lakes Creek meatworks and travelled to and from work on the Purrey Car, a sort of tram adapted to railway lines. My sister and I would meet him at Archer Park Station and walk home with him.

I can recall we had good clothes and went to both the Central Infants school and John Knox Presbyterian Sunday school wearing shoes and socks. East Street was the hub of all business activity. As it was only a short distance from home, we would accompany our mother when she went shopping.

We would always be given treats of fountain drinks at E.N. Symonds Chemist Shop and ice cream sundaes at one of the many cafes in East Street. Foreman Bros. Grocers would deliver our order each week and the highlight of this was the cone-shaped packets of boiled lollies neatly wrapped in newspaper for us children.

I can recall going to the Winter Garden theatre on Saturday afternoons to see the silent movies. I don't remember much about them except there were lots of cowboys: Buck Jones; Tom Mix; Ken Manyard and William S. Hart. Of course, there were the Keystone Cops as well. The admission was 6 pence and I was always given a penny to spend. The Great Depression brought an abrupt halt to all this

As the depression worsened, we found ourselves going to school barefoot and wearing clothes other people had grown out of. Money was scarce and to go to the movies we would collect bottles; a dozen would return sixpence for the fare. It was difficult to find enough of them and for a short time a mate and I got on to a great source. On our way home from school, we passed Harrup Bros. Soft drink

factory. One day we discovered a hole in the fence where their empty bottles were kept and each day we would take a few. On Saturday morning we would take them to Spence's second hand bottle store in a billy cart. Alas one day we found the hole in the fence had been repaired.

Spence's was situated in Quay Street off Derby Street. On our way home we would gather pine from broken boxes left in the lane by various warehouses and shops. Sometimes we could get a few pence for it, as it was good kindling for wood stoves.

Old newspapers were another source of money. Butcher shops would give you three pence for a bundle. Then there was the horse manure from both Richart's Bakery just up the lane from our place on the corner of Albert Street, and the local butcher shops. However this was hard to sell, as people just did not have the three pence to give you.

My father taught all the kids in our neighbourhood to swim in the river adjacent to Victoria Park near the Alexandra Bridge. This became our own swimming pool. We could all swim across the river at ten years of age. There was never a thought of sharks, crocodiles and jellyfish. We played cricket in Cambridge Street, near where the hotel now stands. The Drill Hall was our football field.

Earls Court in those days was an open-air picture theatre. In the lane nearby there was a disused building with a gable roof. We could climb on the ridge board and look over the galvanised wall and watch the pictures. Sometimes it was hard to find a place to sit. It was ironic that in the early 1960's I had the job of demolishing this building. I paid ten pounds (twenty dollars) for the salvage rights and later made a tidy profit selling various bits and pieces from the demolition.

The Hippodrome was another open-air theatre, on the corner of Archer and East Streets. Vaudeville shows would be performed here and I can remember seeing Roy (Mo) Rene perform there from a nearby tree.

As we grew older, the search for work began. We would call at shops to see if they needed message boys. Some of my mates were successful. The job paid seven shillings and sixpence (about 75 cents today) for 44 hours work.

I was most fortunate in gaining a job with a building contractor, with a view to becoming an apprentice, which I did after two years. I received twelve shillings and sixpence to start (about \$1.25 today).

The war came and I joined the army in 1941, survived and met Bonnie in 1946. We married in 1947 and built our home in Park Avenue, where we have lived ever since.

They were tough days for growing up, but in some respects good, because of the mateship that existed; alas gone today.

The most tragic recollection I have of the depression days is of the thousands of young men – fit, able and willing to work – who were forced to tour the country in search of non-existent jobs. To prove they were looking for work they had to keep moving and could only stay in the one town for a short time. This was then, only way they could obtain dole payments; fortnightly and in most cases ration tickets and not cash. The total payment was about fifteen shillings (\$1.50 today) for the two weeks.

Where Eventide now stands was the City Gaol and near the railway line was a deserted house that had once been a mental asylum. It became known as the "giggle house". At any one time there would be hundreds of young men camped there. Not having any money, their mode of travel was to get into an open wagon on a train. This became known as "jumping the rattler".

Where they camped was ideal, being close to the railway line and Archer Park Station. Many was the time we watched the following procedure: Heading north the train would depart the station at about 8pm. Sympathetic train drivers would drive as slow as possible along Dennison Street, thus allowing the "hobo's" as they were known, every chance to get aboard. The local policeman was delegated to ride his bicycle parallel with the train until the Alexandra Bridge to see that nobody jumped the rattler. He would ride level with the engine and could thus say that he saw nobody climb aboard!

The policeman would then ride to the Three Crowns Hotel (where the community health building now stands), outside of which we boys would gather to talk. He would send us off home and go into the hotel and have a few drinks. We later discovered that the publican would provide these drinks free as a reward for allowing the hotel to remain open after hours and also for the SP bookie to operate from there.

After my father lost his job at Lakes Creek, he found little employment, as was the same for thousands of others. A system of relief work was introduced providing work to married men according to the number in the family. The work was in city parks and chipping weeds in the street and other similar tasks. Under this scheme, he received one and a half days work a fortnight, for which he received one pound, six shillings (about \$2.60 today). This was wasn't much, but without it people would have starved.

The State Government developed a series of public works projects, among them the Court House in Bolsover Street, the Allentown School and the Dental Clinic. Unemployed, both tradesmen and labourers, were employed for a period of three months.

My father got a start on the Court House. All the foundations were dug by hand with picks and shovels. Men who had been unemployed for so long found that their hands had become soft and I can recall my father's blistered hands - the remedy to harden them was to urinate on them. He also worked on the Dental Clinic building.

When the Rockhampton City Council was granted funds to start the sewerage system, this did a lot to reduce unemployment. But this too was hard work as everything was done by hand. My father finally gained full time employment with the City Council.

The area from Archer Street to North Street and Bolsover Street to Dennison Street abounded with shops. There were at least 8 general stores, a bakery, butcher shop, ice works, butter factory, a newsagency, a produce store and a small drapery store.

In the Central Queensland University library there is a large photograph of the staff of Richart's Bakery. In this picture may be seen a small flat bed truck. Every afternoon this truck would be loaded with bread wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. This bread was delivered to Archer Park Station, to be loaded onto the train and dropped off by the guard at various sidings along the line to Mackay. Bread was six pence a loaf and could be bought the next day for half price. The residents of the giggle house were good customers.

In Cambridge Street, between Alma Street and the railway line was a butcher shop, ice works, butter factory, a produce market and a soft drink factory. This was a co-operative business set up by two men - one Nuttall and the other Christensen. There was a rail siding into the butter factor and trains delivered cream from the dairy farmers in the Ridgelands area. (The line is still there.) The workers at the butter factory would give us buttermilk taken from the cream. The same went for any broken pieces of ice.

Only the butcher shop (rebuilt) remains today and is conducted by the grandson of Christensen. The rest fell victim to the depression and were vacant for a long time. The butter factory building is still there; it became a furniture factory for a time and now houses an office equipment business. Where then The Rock Building Society now stands in Archer Street, there was a small shop, which made and sold home made lollies. This too became a victim of the depression. In this case the people just moved away, leaving behind shelves full of large bottles filled with various lollies. It didn't take us long to find out that a door had been left unlocked and we therefore had treats for some time. Until one day, we found that the whole of the shelves had been cleaned out. But it was good while it lasted.

Where the Cambridge Hotel now stands, near where we played cricket, a Chinese man had a store. A Chinese friend would call several afternoon's a week. He had a horse and cart and would tour the city selling fruit. On his arrival, the shop would be shut and, after some time, we would help ourselves to the fruit on his cart. Later he would come out and get on to his cart; to all intents he would fall asleep and the horse would go off. We could never work out why and it later turned out the pair had shared an opium pipe.

On the corner of North and Bolsover Streets J.M. Headricks, who were merchants in the city, had their stables. Stabled there were some 30 odd Clydesdale draught horses. On Saturday afternoons these would be taken to paddock to graze for the weekend. They must have enjoyed being set free, as they did not need to be driven; they merely followed the same route each week, with the drover on horseback just following behind. Sunday evening, just before dark, they would return and it was sight to behold.

There were many hawkers of fruit traversing the city in horse drawn carts. Some sold Gracemere pineapples, calling out: "Six for a bob!" (One shilling). One Greek man would call out: "Bananas 40 for a bob!" On the side of his cart he had a drawing of a dead dog, with the caption: "Trust is dead, tick killed him", meaning that all sales were cash. The only problem in all this, very few people had the bob and would buy as to their financial circumstances.

In the mango season there were plenty of mangoes to be had and we would go out early of a morning, before school and gather what we could. Sometimes we would walk to Thozet Road where there were plenty of trees with many varieties. There were ju-ju trees also. We would return home with as many mangoes as we could carry in a sugar bag. In the area where we lived there were some tamarind trees, the fruit of which made lovely drinks when boiled.

Up the river, near Pink Lilly, was a deserted farm with both mango and citrus trees. One of our mate's fathers had a dinghy moored near Tannachy rocks and some Sunday's we would row to this place and return with as much fruit as we could gather.

The dinghy was also used to go and gather logs washed up on the banks of the river. These were taken home in the Billy cart and cut into short lengths with a crosscut saw for firewood. This was also a source of revenue. We also used the dinghy for fishing, sometimes with success. This would have been when we were twelve to fourteen years of age, but we had no fear of the water.

Rockhampton not being sewered in those days meant that the sanitary man called weekly, delivering sawdust at the same time. It was the custom to give him a small gift at Christmas time. One time a neighbour of ours had a rooster locked up in his lavatory ready to kill for Christmas day. The sanitary man called early in the morning and took the rooster, thinking it was his gift.

Toilet paper was unheard of and newspapers were cut into squares, with a bundle on a string hung on a nail ready for use.



Tom Mix



Humping the Bluey

HOLIDAYS

By Joan "Audrey" Barr, Mackay

Holidays at the beach for many families pre WW2 in the '20's and '30's were very different from today's standards. I was born in 1923 and I can remember one such holiday when I was about six years of age. We lived in Townsville and my Mother and I took a holiday in Ayr with my Aunt and Uncle.

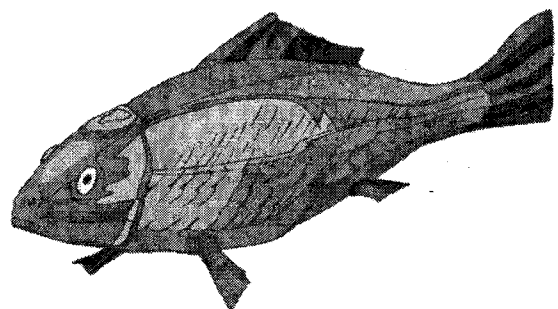
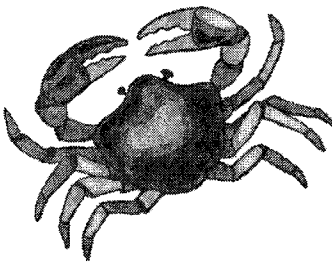
Instead of today's tents or caravans, saplings were cut and dug into the ground and tarpaulins would be spread over the top, then other 'tarps' would be draped down the sides for walls. Short saplings would then be cut and driven into the ground to form a frame for a bed which would be made out of sugarbags. Some people in popular places would build slightly more permanent shacks but they were eventually compelled to remove them to comply with council by-laws.

Cooking was done on an open fire and there were plenty of fish and prawns, crabs and oysters. Most of these were cooked on an open fire in boiling water in a kerosene tin with heaps of salt.

The men would drag the creek and set the nets and leave the crab pots before going to bed with no worries about leaving them unattended. The children would roam freely along the shore and over the sand hills, coming back to camp only when they were hungry, then off they would go once more, to swim or play. There was one rule - we were not allowed to swim too soon after a meal. No one was actually taught how to swim, somehow you acquired the knack by just doing it.

At the end of the day, everyone would gather around the fire for tea as the evening meal was called at that time, sitting on the ground or a log or an up-ended kero tin or anything handy. There would be plenty of things to talk about, tales to tell and songs to sing. The children loved these times and would often fall asleep while it was going on.

They were not expensive holidays, often costing less than if they'd stayed at home. Everyone would return fit and healthy, the children grown strong and bursting with energy, the adults rested and relaxed and ready for the toil of hard work once more.



WE WERE NEVER BORED

From Brian Smith

I was born in 1934 and grew up in Rockhampton. As a kid we lived down near the old jail until 1939, which is where Eventide is now and it was always a threat "If you don't behave yourself, you'll end up there". It must have worked because, although we certainly got up to some pranks as kids, there was never vandalism and destruction like you see today. It would just never enter your head to wilfully damage property belonging to someone else.

Strong memories from my childhood include the creek and the waterholes. My cousin and I built a little canoe, we got some old corrugated iron and we flattened out the ends and nailed some timber together and put a back on it and we got some tar off the road and melted it down and blocked up the holes. Moore's creek was in flood and we put the canoe in up at Rennies crossing (at Dean Street) and we went all the way down to where the North Rocky Bowls Club stands now. That was fun. Then there was clay-bank it was about where you go between K Mart and Shopping Fair and it was a big clay bank with a swimming hole. It was a beauty in the wet; you could slide down by the seat of your pants into the hole.

And Browns water hole up the end of Kerrigan Street, the Americans blew that out by tossing a hand grenade in there and we were very grateful because it made it into a great swimming hole. There was First Turkey and Bogey Hole at Kalka Shades too. There was a statue of Madame Thozet up near Thozet creek. Her husband erected it because she drowned there. We never went near there, someone had died there and it was taboo and scary. You used to be able to see the white statue from Lakes creek Road and the railway once but I believe it has been removed to Broadmeadows rather than have it vandalised.

We used to catch the crawchies in a good hole behind the Scout Hall on the corner of Berserker and High Streets, big fellas with black nippers also out at Red Hill which extended over near where the BP service station and Betta Electrical are now, it was a good hole there with a sandy bottom and you'd get blue nippers out of there. Great fun, all of it.

Behind where Berserker School, is there used to be Chinese market gardens and we'd pinch mandarins and oranges and strawberries. There was a Chinese Joss house there too and it was taboo to go anywhere near it because we were sure it housed evil spirits that would come and get us.

I also have great memories of the old Ju Ju trees; Kalka shades was a great place for them and Moore's Creek at the corner of Clifton and Ford Street, down on the flats, there was another. We used to know where all the good ones were. I don't know how many kids got sick eating Ju Ju's. Then of course, the Guava's, a lot of Guava's. You always had to break a Guava before eating it because you never knew what mysteries were inside. The tamarind trees too, they were a rich tarty sticky gooey thing and just the other day I spotted a tamarind alongside St. Josephs Church.

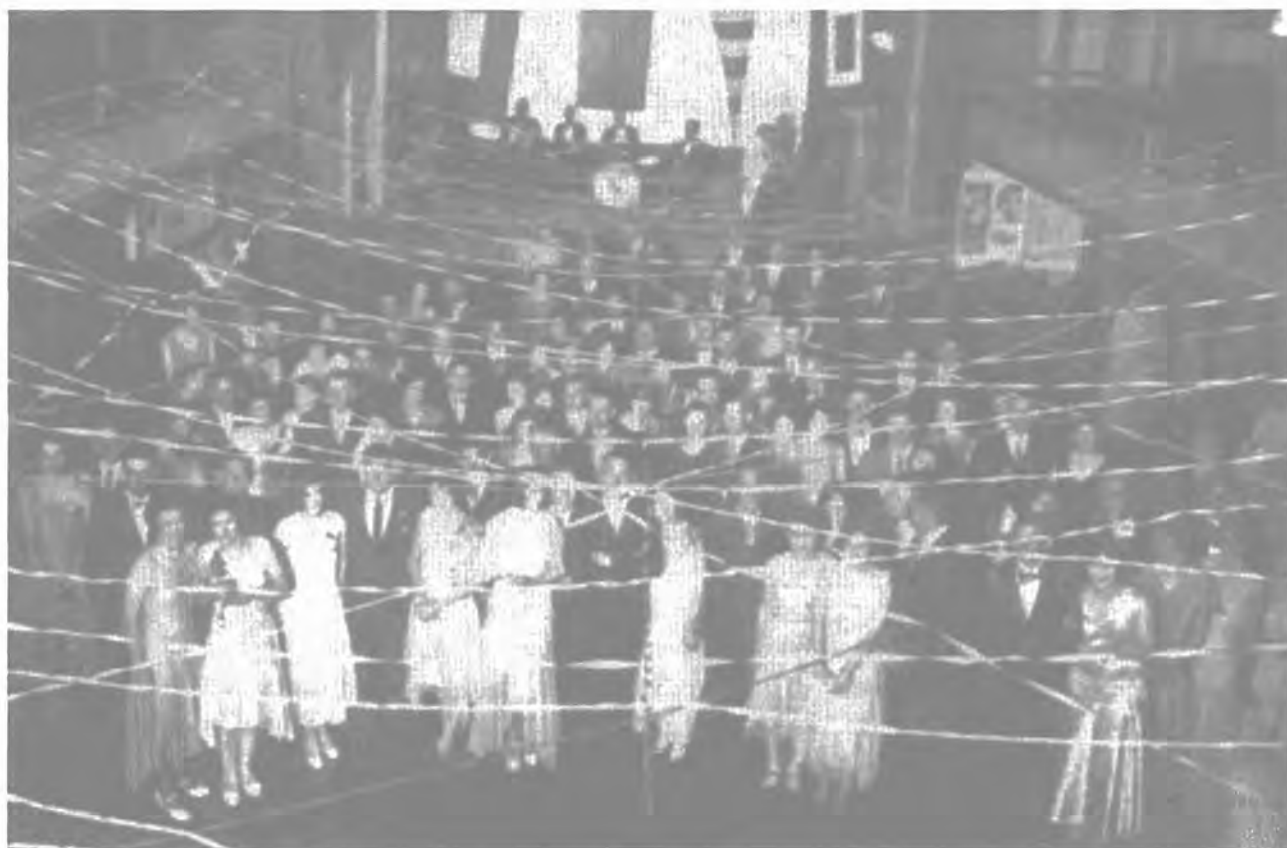
As kids during the war, the Catalina flying boats used to come in and land on the river and we used to go and watch them come in. When the construction started on the new bridge, we watched the pylons and all the early work being done while I was at the North Rockhampton primary school on the river there. There were around 1000 kids at that school. The old pylons were visible for a long time but I think they got rid of them eventually. There was a big carnival on the bridge in 1952 when they opened it and the powerhouse on the same night. It was a big night.

Rocky used to have plenty of theatres to go to, there was the Tropic at Park Avenue, the Rex on Yaamba Road, the Imperial at Lakes Creek and over town the Gem at Wandal, the Embassy at

Allenstown, Earls Court was absolutely beautiful, it seated around 900 – 1000 I think, with beautiful gardens and fountains on the outside. There was the Wintergarden, Liberty, Tivoli, the old Victory in East Street; they all had picture shows in town. I remember there were dances every night except Sunday in the mid to early 50's. There was no alcohol allowed, of course you had to be 21 to legally drink then anyway, but all drink was barred from dances. Even for big occasions and balls, special permission was required and there were stringent rules and regulations.

Around 1957, I remember that where North Rocky High is now, was the end of the town. It was still just scrub from there. As kids we used to go trapping finches in that area, plenty of them – double bars, chessies and firies, they were beautiful birds. We'd think nothing of going for a walk up to the top of Mt. Archer and back before lunch, just for something to do. They were the things we used to do as kids and we were never bored.

Taken from an oral tape.



A Good Time

THE FIRST 21 YEARS

By Pam Craig

I was born in Mount Morgan in the late 30's and was raised on a farm three miles from Wowan. I am the eldest of six daughters. We often had to help with milking before we went to school and as we got older and went off to Boarding School, the younger sisters had to take our place and they don't ever remember that we had to help, but we did.

As we got older, my next sister and I had two ponies, I had Micky, a small black pony who often reared up and Joy had Tibby, who would either stop suddenly at a wet mark from a cow, or would veer suddenly into the bushes on the left. Either way, Joy and Tibby always parted company. The ponies would mostly only go as far as the gate to the dairy and then stubbornly stop. This always brought on tears because Dad would come with a leg rope and give them a quick wack. You can imagine what happened – they shot off and we had to hang on tightly to the saddle or be left behind!

My birthday was in the late January so I started school at 6 years of age. For the first year the neighbours' son, who was a year older than me, doubled me to school. I will always remember sitting on the bar of his bike and as his left leg rose, so did I, all the way to school.

When I reached Junior, I decided to be a teacher. I went to Kelvin Grove in Brisbane for two years. I remember a lecturer telling us that we wouldn't really know where we would end up and he pointed to me and I don't know why, but I said Wowan. He wasn't impressed with my choice, but that's where I ended up and to get there, I rode my bike for a year. The Principal at Wowan was Mr. Neale and he'd been there for 30 years.

The next year I was transferred to Westwood. To begin with I was boarding with a young couple who had a young baby who was unwell with fluid on the brain. My boyfriend from Wowan came and picked me up on Friday afternoons to take me home and then back late Sunday afternoons. I had only been there for six weeks when the baby had to be taken to Brisbane urgently, which meant I couldn't stay in their house. The Principal couldn't help me with board so I asked the policeman and Mr. N. for help. Mr. N. discussed it with Mrs. N. and she said I was welcome there. They had a son teaching at Woorabinda and thus were sympathetic. Those two people were like parents to me. When Mrs. N. heard I liked hot damper and syrup, she made it for us on Friday nights.

Unfortunately, five months later I was sent to Duaringa. I needed to board again because young girls didn't have their own cars in those days; (I was only on eight pounds five shillings), and the Principal there said there would be no problem with board. My boyfriend Peter said he would be my taxi again.

The lady to whom I was directed was very upset. Apparently the previous teacher they had boarded had been a young man who played records loudly at midnight and put his feet on the table, so her husband said – no more! She had prettied the room up and was looking forward to female company, but her husband wouldn't relent. What to do? I needed a place to stay. The Principal was playing tennis and unavailable so I went to see the President of the P & C and I was given their second room and their three children slept in the sleep out. Next to the house was their butcher shop and because they were busy, I often did cooking for them on Sunday mornings. Westwood had been a rather quiet small town, but Duaringa was much livelier.

In May 1959 of the next year Peter and I were married and I had to resign because in those days, married teachers were not accepted. After my experiences looking for board, I vowed I would always board the young teachers who needed it. It was probably just as well I had to resign, because at the

rate my postings were taking me west, I was glad to know I wasn't going to end up at Boulia or Birdsville!

After twelve years and having a family of four children in five and a half years, there was a shortage of teachers so I went back, but that is another story.



School Days

Editors note : Although this booklet was intended as a salute to the early pioneers of Queensland, the following stories have been included as stories too valuable to omit in this celebration of "The Year of The Outback".

EARLY SETTLERS AND PIONEERS

By Eva Elizabeth Moore, Gracemere

Emma Ward was born at Dover, England and arrived in South Australia in 1850 aged seven years, having accompanied her mother Sally and two brothers and four sisters on a voyage of eighteen weeks aboard the 'Abberton'. Her father Charles Ward and an elder brother had migrated the previous year also aboard the 'Abberton'. Mother Sally kept an account of day-to-day events of the 1850 voyage and a copy of the log is lodged in the archives of the Adelaide Library of South Australia.

At age 21 Emma married Donald McLaren aged 23, who, with his parents and family had disembarked at Port Adelaide in 1855.

Emma and Donald spent the first 30 years of married life in South Australia and raised eleven children on Canowie sheep Station which was famous for its merino rams and merino wool. Horseback riding provided transport to the school some twelve miles distant. The journey, in relays, entailed several school goers setting out on foot ahead of those riding tandem on the one available animal. They alighted to give place to the trekkers, at an overtaking point. Emma's childbearing covered an age span of 22 years and when, in 1895 it was decided to leave South Australia, two family members were already married and settled.

Nine family members sailed with Emma and Donald from Adelaide to Fremantle where they were accommodated in tents pending agricultural employment and allotments. Times were hard and Emma took up mid-wifery in Perth. She had already experienced some nursing practice in South Australia.

Family members were industrious and, in time, contributed to the growth and prosperity of West Australia. Donald McLaren died in 1915 aged 74. When Emma died aged 92 in 1933, she was survived by her seven sons and four daughters. The aggregate life of those eleven children was 913 years – an average age of 83 years.

Eva Elizabeth McLaren

d.o.b. 16.7.1915

married

J.C. Tann 1950 – 1972

W.H. Moore 1983 – 1999

47TH descendant of Donald McLaren and Emma Ward

A DAY AT THE RACES

By Margaret Keane, Rockhampton

The particular Cheshunt Picnic Races I remember best were I think, in 1946 and I was about 8. There were more young men around than had been previously, so I feel it must have been just after the War.

When I was a little girl we lived on a property up in the mountains of North Eastern Victoria. About nine miles from our property was the tiny hamlet of Cheshunt. It consisted of the Shire Hall, a one-teacher school and the Showgrounds. It didn't even have a shop or a Post Office. During the year it slept at the foot of the mountains, practically unnoticed by the local inhabitants and missed altogether by travellers. One day each year though, it was a different story. Cheshunt woke up and seethed with life and colour. This was the day of the annual Picnic Races.

It was far more than just a race meeting. There were wood-chopping events, competitions for the best cake, jams, pickles, produce etc., races for the children and of course, the horse races.

Preparations started weeks before. Hopeful contestants nurtured their precious vegetable gardens with loving care, hoping their tomatoes, beans etc., would win a prize. Housewives made gallons of pickles, jam and sauces, new cake recipes were tried to find that one perfect prize winning cake. Axe men from all over the State honed their axes to razor sharp perfection. Children could be seen practising for the three legged race, the egg and spoon race and the other children's events. Horses on all the properties round about were raced around the paddocks and brushed and groomed until their coats shone like silk. News outfits were ordered from the stores in Melbourne. Excitement mounted as the great day approached.

On the evening before the races, Dad filled the big copper and boiled the water. Mum brought out the big tin bathtub and placed it in front of the kitchen stove and we were all scrubbed shiny clean and put to bed. We rose early next morning and great was the flurry and excitement as we rushed around getting ready. Nanna helped us dress in our new outfits. Mine was pale green with a border of red, blue and yellow stripes. It had a matching cardigan and beret and mum had spent all winter knitting them. Mum packed the picnic hamper with all sorts of goodies for our lunch, then she sat me on the table and brushed, combed and plaited my long, thick hair and as she was in a hurry and none too gentle, wails of anguish filled the air. Eventually, we were all ready and piled into our funny old Chev truck and started off down the mountain.

When we arrived at the Showgrounds, such a spectacle of colour and excitement met our gaze. Around the track, tents had been set up – a bar tent for the men, a tea tent for the ladies and tents for all the various exhibits which were just being judged as we arrived.

Men and women, boys and girls, all in fine new clothes, milled around everywhere. Greetings were exchanged among various groups all over the grounds. Some only saw each other once a year at the races so it was a great time for catching up on all the local gossip.

Rosslyn and I raced off to get our share of the Minties in the lolly scramble and to join in the children's races. I came last as usual. It didn't really matter though as we all got a prize. I got a whistle and Rosslyn a tin trumpet – poor Mum!

After that we went to watch the wood chopping with Mum and Dad. It was exciting – all those men, shiny with rippling muscles and sweat, chips flying as their axes bit rhythmically into the huge logs.

How the crowd cheered when their favourite won! By then it was time for lunch and family groups spread out rugs beside cars or trucks and all the picnic hampers were unpacked to the whoops of delight from excited, ravenous children.

In the afternoon there was the horse racing. The horses looking magnificent with their coats shining like silk in the afternoon sun and their riders resplendent in their brilliant racing silks. It was thrilling to watch them flying around the track on a cloud of dust accompanied by the roars of the crowd yelling encouragement to their favourites.

All too soon, the lovely day was over and it was time to pack up, say goodbye to all our friends and drive up the mountain to home and supper – a very tired but happy and contented family.

Tiny Cheshunt went back to sleep for another year.

