

**INTERVIEW NO. 16**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 25th November, 1991.**

**MRS. MARGARET TAYLOR  
10 LONSDALE STREET  
ST. MARYS. 2760.**

0.35 My name is Margaret Taylor. I live at 10 Lonsdale Street, St. Marys. I was born on 23rd February, 1932 in Bradford, Yorkshire, England, which makes me English.

**1.02 So what year did you come to Australia?**

1949.

**And where did you settle?**

At Kingswood. O'Connell Street. It's on the corner of the Great Western Highway and O'Connell Street - not far from the University of Western Sydney as it is now.

**Right. And you lived there with your parents?**

Yes for 12 months.

**And then where did you move to?**

We moved to Mt. Druitt which was where the main road to Mt. Druitt shopping centre is now. I just can't think of the name of the road. Actually they demolished our house to build the road.

**Oh, did they?**

Yes.

**And was that a house your parents built?**

It was a house my parents built, yes.

**2.01 What sort of work did your father do?**

My father was a very interesting person. He was originally a tripe dresser which you probably don't have any people like that in Australia but in Yorkshire it was quite common. He had tripe shops all over Yorkshire and people used to buy them as we buy fish and chips in Australia and eat them in paper just like you do in Australia with fish and chips.

**Really!**

And he had a restaurant. And when he came to Australia he went to work for the railways as a telephone technician. He'd studied radio and telephone and all that sort of thing in the army during the war, so he decided to start afresh when he came out here and have a new career. So he worked for the railways until he retired at 75, which would have been in 1976.

**3.20 And so you lived most of your childhood in Mt. Druitt did you? I mean ...**

No. Well I was 18.

**When you arrived here?**

Yes. When I arrived here. I spent all my single years in Mt. Druitt and I went to work in St. Marys as a telephonist for the PMG as it was then.

**Oh, did you. So you were in communications too. Like father, like daughter!**

Yes. Well I'd always been interested in - as a child - in telephones and telephonists, and I thought "Oh, that would be an interesting job to do". And I'd left school at a very early age - I left school at 14. I'd had no high school education or anything like that. So I applied for a position and I was given like a temporary position because I had to sit for an exam to become a permanent telephonist and they were very very strict in those days. I managed to get through the exam and I was appointed a permanent telephonist, and I worked there for eight years until my marriage.

**4.55 And so what year were you married?**

1957.

**So you didn't move here until 1957?**

Yes, when we built this house.

**5.11 We might talk about the Mt. Druitt area a little bit as well. When you first moved there with your family, what was the area like?**

Well, it was a little bit more - particularly the area where we lived was on the southern side of the railway - so it was quite a little village there. And everybody knew everybody and we sort of got involved in all sorts of things like amateur theatricals. We formed a theatrical company, because there was nothing of that type of thing anywhere around this area at that particular time.

**Did you start that up?**

My father did, and myself. When we left England we'd been involved in just about everything and - any musicals, opera, dramatic things, you know - and we sort of missed it terribly because we felt we'd come to a - it's an old saying - a cultural desert! There was nowhere to go - there was only the picture theatre - and we wanted something better than that. So we decided to form our own theatrical group called The Mt. Druitt Players, and we did all sorts of things like excerpts from operas and operettas and sketches. It was like a revue type of thing. And it was so popular with the audiences around there.

**It's not still going today I suppose?**

No. No, I don't think that sort of thing's as popular now as what it was then.

**7.16 So, where you lived, did you have a lot of neighbours, or was it ...?**

Yes. We were very close. All very close, and we all got on very well. There was quite a mixture of nationalities because at that period there was a lot of migrants ... so we had quite a lot of different nationalities all around us.

**Such as?**

Well, particularly Germans. There seemed to be a predominance of German people at Mt. Druitt, as there is here in St. Marys. There was a few from Yugoslavia I think and - oh, I know, there were a couple of Italians too, close by.

**8.09 And when you say you were close to neighbours, did you mean physically close?**

We were physically close and, you know, we all got on very well. I think because we had this common bond, this experience of being migrants too. And although we were British migrants, I suppose we felt just the same as they did.

**Just as alienated?**

We could speak the language which was one great thing, except that we all had terrible Yorkshire accents in those days. (Laughs). In fact I can remember the first few weeks I went to work at the telephone exchange, an irate man rang up one day and said "Who's that bloody Pommie?" Really! He was quite angry. He didn't like the idea of this accent. It was terrible.

**9.10 When you moved to Mt. Druitt, your parents built the house there. What sort of house was it?**

It was quite a big house. My father wanted to have rehearsals at the house, so he built this huge lounge room which was - Oh, I'd say, in feet, it was probably about 30 by 24.

**Really!**

So it was quite a huge room. And then we had about three bedrooms, I think, and the lounge room, dining room. It was quite a big ... and in those days you didn't have sewerage of course. You had the old toilet down the back.

**You had to put your umbrella up in the rain!**

Which was a cultural shock to us, because we'd never experienced anything like that! I mean, we're city people. We came from the city so we didn't know those things existed still.

**And this really was country in those days wasn't it?**

Oh, it was. It was very much country. We found the trees and all the bush very strange. We didn't like it. We thought it was horrible.

**Did you?**

Yes. After the lush greens of England it was hard to take. Everything seemed so dry and, oh, it was awful.

**Did you feel lonely or isolated at all?**

Not really. It wasn't so much that we missed people so much as things that we'd been used to like ... as I said, we were so much into all these theatrical things and it was mainly this cultural thing, you know. It wasn't so much that we didn't have friends and we didn't meet a lot of people and that, so we weren't lonely in that sense. It was just that we missed all the things that we loved.

**Yes. Including your cold Christmases and that sort of thing?**

That's right, yes. And of course the greenness and, you know, all those lovely sort of things. So we thought. And we couldn't see anything nice about the Australian bush.

**11.52 What was the landscape like around your home? Was it very built up or was there a lot of bush?**

Yes it was very built up where we were at that particular time, even though it was, you know, quite in the early '50s. But all around it was the bush and there used to be quite a lot of bushfires at that particular time, which was another thing that we had to face up to, and things like snakes and strange spiders.

**It'd be quite terrifying, I can imagine!**

It was very ... I mean we didn't get off to a really good start with Australia. I mean we eventually did grow to love it and we do love the trees now. But it just seemed so strange, you know. But it was just a matter of getting adjusted and trying to be a bit more positive about things. I think a lot of people - and I think Australians would be the same - you're

always inclined to think about 'we used to this' and 'we used to have that in England whereas you don't have it in Australia" you know. It's thinking about things.

**You romanticise things a bit?**

Yes. Everything seems larger than life, you know. You can't see the good points.

**13.23 And did your house have a lot of land around it? Did you have a garden?**

We had a double block which would be ... like twice the size of this block we're on which is, in feet, I think about 50 by 120 feet, but it was double that size. So it was quite a ... and my mother had a beautiful garden. She did a lot of gardening. But they were all European plants! (Laughs)

**She struggled with them then?**

She wouldn't grow any Australian ... well, Australian natives weren't popular in those days - you didn't grow them, you know. If you wanted to see the Australian natives you went out to the bush. It just wasn't done. Even Australians didn't grow them. I know it's very popular now. We're getting back to that.

**14.29 And did your father grow vegetables?**

Yes he did. He used to grow quite a lot. He used to complain terribly about things like potatoes. Because there's nothing like Irish potatoes! And so he used to try and grow his own, but they weren't any better than the stuff we bought in the shop really. It's just a different soil.

**14.58 And did your mother shop from home? How did she manage the shopping? Did she have deliveries?**

Well, she'd always had deliveries in England, but here in Australia they used to go - 'cause they had a car - that was one of the first things they got, was the car, 'cause we'd always had a car at home so that was one of the first things my father got was a car, realising how isolated we were and how cut off we'd be if we didn't have a car - and they used to go shopping together once, twice a week. They used to go to Blacktown, I can remember, quite a lot. And if my mother wanted to do any special shopping like clothing or anything like that, she used to go to Parramatta, and that was the big thing then. I'm trying to think what they called what now is Grace Bros. I can't remember what it was called in those days. Was it ...?

**Farmer's?**

No, it was before that - or was it Grace Bros. It might have been Grace Bros. They had a big department store there and that was her favourite shop. She loved that shop. She used to get all her special things there. And we used to go into Sydney too, to concerts, symphony concerts and operatic stuff and plays and that sort of thing. So we did quite a lot of travelling. It was all by stream train.

**To find the entertainment you liked?**

To find the entertainment, yes. We used to come home ... when you went to Sydney in those days, in the 1950's and probably in the '60s as far as I can remember, you always wore a hat, you always wore white gloves. I mean, you really dressed up, and you'd come home and you'd be absolutely filthy because of the steam trains. You know, your gloves would be black and ... but oh, we used to love that. It was a real ritual, because every young girl - unmarried girl - would be there with her hat and white gloves and yards of petticoats, you know - starched petticoats - 'cause that was the fashion in the '50s, and I used to love doing that. But everything was much more formal. As far as dress and that was concerned, everybody had to conform. Nowadays you where what you like, but in those days if you bought a dress you brought it home and you immediately measured the hem - the length from the floor to the hem

- to make sure it was the required number of inches from the floor, because people didn't wear any length skirts - you all wore the same! And the newspapers used to say 'this year skirts will be so many inches from the floor' and you'd immediately get your dresses out and alter them to suit the lengths.

**Fashion dictated then!**

I talk to people about this sometimes and they look at me as though I'm a bit odd, you know. But we really did those things, and you wore the right kind of hats and the right kind of gloves and ...

**19.10 Did you work in the city or ...?**

No, I worked in St. Marys. I worked at the St. Mary's Telephone Exchange. It was a very busy telephone exchange. It was supposed to be the busiest country - 'cause we were classed as country by telephones, for anything else we were metropolitan! But the telephone exchange was country which meant that we were the busiest country exchange in the whole of New South Wales, because you see we serviced the munition area - there's a lot of factories over there in St. Mary's factory area - and it was extremely busy. We must have had, I think, about 24 switchboards. There was about eight in the main telephone exchange which was the very old brick building that used to be down there on the highway and then there was ... they built a sort of a wooden structure, and they had the rest of the switchboard in there which were the first automatic telephones in New South Wales.

**20.37 Were there a lot of women employed there?**

All women.

**All women!**

All women. There was only two men that worked there, but they worked over night- at night. You see the telephone exchange closed down at, I think, ten o'clock. But there was a man who slept there and if there was any emergencies or anything, he was there to, you know, connect people through. And then it opened again at 6 a.m. in the morning.

**21.12 And what was St. Marys like in those days?**

St. Marys was completely different to what it is now. The shopping centre was down at the highway, it wasn't down Queen Street as it is now. Queen Street was completely full of houses and there was ... the shops that are right at the railway now, opposite the railway steps, were there then - that block of shops - and then across the road there was the other block of shops that are there at the moment and then they built a Woolworths store where Rockman's is now. But that was probably in the middle '50s, I think, they built that building there. And from there onwards it was all houses.

**Was it?**

And as I said the main shopping area was in Victoria Street as they called it - that is the Western Highway now. Just where Mamre Road is now, coming down towards Penrith, there's a block of shops and there was one shop with a very, very old building and it used to have a great turnover of people. You never knew what was going to be there next. It just seemed to have all sorts of people moving in there from antique shops and maybe clothing shops or something like that. But next to that was Sandy Lang. He was a greengrocer and he used to sell milkshakes. He sold me my first milkshake. (Laughs) And he was the Fire Chief, 'cause they only had volunteer fire brigades in those days, and his shop was very popular. He used to sell ... he had the milkbar on one side and the greengrocery on the other. I thought that was really quaint because I'd never seen a milkbar before.

**23.55 And they were really popular in the '50s weren't they?**

Oh, these milk shakes and ice creams! We loved that. And then there was ... no there was nothing else. The next building was the Masonic Lodge ... was next to that. And next to that was the Presbyterian Church and then next to that was the outbuilding of the Telephone Exchange and then there was the Post Office which was a brick building and that was ... the Telephone Exchange was behind that - behind the rear of the Post Office. And if we worked on Sundays we used to hear the church service from the Presbyterian Church, and that's the Church I got married in actually.

**25.06 And I suppose most of those buildings have gone now?**

They've all gone.

**Including the Church?**

Yes. Including the Church which was a great pity. And across the road was an old building which was practically dilapidated at that stage - this is in the early '50s - and it had a doctor upstairs, Dr. Renshaw, Morris Renshaw, he started his practice there. And then there was Ian Rex who used to have a store in St. Marys in the main street until just recently. He started his business there on the corner, and going into his shop was like going into a gypsy caravan. He had all sorts of things hanging up, you know - saucepans and ribbons and laces and clothing - and this fascinating shop, you know. It was like a disposal store only a bit more romantic than that.

**26.15 So you must have notice a lot of change in this area and in Mt. Druitt in that time?**

Yes we have. Actually Mt. Druitt's probably been a bit luckier than St. Marys because it's still got the hall where they still show films today where we used to ... Community Hall I think it's called. It's still standing. They've managed to preserve it.

**Oh, it's a little timber hall is it?**

Yes. Melrose ... no Melrose was at Emu Plains. ... Which I think was really good, you know, that we've got something.

**27.00 So how do you feel about all those landmarks that have disappeared, particularly ones that are associated with your earlier memories - the Church you were married in and that sort of thing?**

I think it's sad that the Churches have gone, 'cause there was also the Methodist Church in Queen Street too, which was directly opposite Chapel Street. It just seems a pity that those buildings have gone, you know, but ...

**27.31 And the area's become more built up. After the War people moved out here in droves and ...**

Yes I think the biggest upheaval was when they built the housing estate at Mt. Druitt. It caused a lot of resentment around this area because, you know, the old established people didn't like the idea of 'ho-hoppers', as they called them, coming into this area because they felt they were worse than the migrants you know. That's the way they felt. You know, because they were down and out, a lot of them were down and out and they ...

**They moved out here for the cheaper housing?**

They moved out for the cheaper housing, but it did cause a lot of friction.

**Did you live near the estate?**

No. We were on the southern side. Like the old Mt. Druitt village as it is today. And the other side was the housing area. In 1957 ...

**28.52 So, it was in 1957 you moved here?**

It was when we got married, yes. We got married. We decided - we had a few problems - we were trying to decide where we were going to live and we went all over the place looking for blocks of land and things, and when we came up here to look at this block of land there was nothing. There was no housing - it was all paddocks and there was - I think there was two houses in this street, and at the top of the street, on the northern side of Lonsdale Street was a saleyards. It had been the saleyards for the area and people used to come from Liverpool and Camden to St. Marys, so you know it's ... but they closed down - I don't know what year they closed down but it mustn't have been ... not long before we came, because there was still the fencing, you know. And then shortly after 1957 they removed all that and they started dividing up the land.

**30.19 And so you built this house yourself, did you?**

Oh well, it was built for us, by some firm. I can't remember who now.

**And it's a fibro house is it?**

It was originally fibro, but it's got the cladding on it now. We updated it.

**30.38 And this is a normal quarter-acre block, I presume, is it?**

Yes.

**And what is it, three bedrooms, or ...?**

Two bedrooms.

**And when you moved here did you find it hard ... did you build straight away when you were married?**

Oh yes, yes. We moved in after we were married.

**And did you find it hard to get building materials or anything?**

No. No problems. They just came. I think they took about three months to do it.

**To build it?**

Yes.

**31.13 So when you lived with your parents, what sort of electrical appliances and that sort of thing did your mother have?**

My mother was very modern.

**Was she?**

Very modern! So she had everything she could lay her hands on. In fact she was one of the first women in Yorkshire to have an electric sewing machine which she bought in 1932. I know a lot of Australians say to me "Your mother didn't have a sewing machine in '32! They hadn't been invented then!" But they were, I can assure you, because she used to make all our dresses and things.

**Did she?**

So she had everything. Everything that was up to date. And my father was a bit of a ... he'd go down, say to Grace Bros. or one of the big stores and they'd be demonstrating these new

electrical things and he's very impulsive. He used to buy everything. So my mother had everything that she wanted.

**And so did you have refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, toasters and all those sorts of things?**

I mean she had it all in England and she couldn't live without them. She'd had them all her life.

**32.37 And when you moved here to live did you have the same appliances?**

No, we were poor. (Laughs).

**So how did you manage?**

Well, I just had to learn to manage without them, you know, 'cause we didn't want to put ourselves in any debt or anything, so I just happily went along and didn't think anything of it, you know. I was quite content. In fact I rather enjoyed ...

END OF  
SIDE A

SIDE B

**0.01 So how did you manage to cook? Did you have a good stove?**

Oh I had a good ... that's the one thing that I indulged in was a really good stove because I liked to cook. I loved cooking. And as I'd always been used to an electric stove I didn't see why I should have anything else. I didn't want to wrestle with a fuel stove, so I did have an electric stove. And it was a long time before I got a washing machine. We just couldn't afford it. I had to make do with washing by hand for quite a long time - until I had a couple of kids, and then we managed to buy one.

**0.52 And did you plan your children? When you married did you plan to have five children?**

Well ... (laughs) yes and no. We wanted a few children anyway but we had them quite spread out, you know. They didn't all come all at once, sort of thing. We had ... the first two were born with 18 months between them, and then there was three years before we had Robert, and then there was another three years before John was born, and then ... I think it was about 12 or 13 years before we had the last, Jason.

**So he's really the baby!**

**1.43 And did you have them all in local hospitals?**

The Nepean Hospital, every one of them.

**All of them?**

My first was Shirley-Anne. She was born in the old hospital which was over the other side of the railway line, which is called the Governor Phillip Hospital now. So it was very, very primitive in those days, very old.

**What year was that?**

That was '59. No, '58 - the end of '58 she was born. Then when Helen was born in '60 the new hospital had been built and so, you know, the facilities were much better there. Each time I had a child they seemed to have improved things somewhat in the hospital, so that by the time Jason was born they'd opened a real maternity wing! So, that was in '75, so ... that was quite good.

**3.05 And were there baby clinics and things like that?**



Yes, there was clinics. There was a clinic on Mamre Road and it's still there today. They didn't have it in the same building, it's a more modern building now I think, but they always had a clinic, a health clinic.

**3.22 And what about any emergencies when the children small? Were there doctors nearby?**

Yes, I had Dr. Renshaw who was my doctor, and he was very good. I've never had any problems getting medical help. And as we had a car, if we couldn't get the doctor we could always go to the Nepean, which we did on occasions. But I always had healthy children, thank goodness.

**You were lucky!**

**3.54 And when you think about your daily routine, particularly I suppose when the children were small, what would that have been like and how would that have compared with your mother's daily routine earlier on?**

Well I didn't go to work after I got married. I stayed home and looked after the kids, so that was different to my mother's in that respect because she worked all her married life.

**Did she?**

In my father's business, you see. They worked together. So that she had to wrestle with the children - she had two sets of twins - she had to wrestle with the children and serve customers and all this sort of thing and keep an eye on the kids. So, she had a very difficult life, and yet she enjoyed it.

**She didn't feel she was hardly done by?**

No, no she didn't. She really enjoyed her life. Providing she had all the different material things, she was quite happy, you know. She used to go to the theatre and do all that sort of thing. As long as she had her entertainment and her music and all that kind of thing, she was quite happy to work. And she did - she worked very hard. But I decided not to go to work - or rather my husband - at that stage. I listened to him and decided not to go to work.

**5.40 He didn't want you to work?**

He didn't want me to work, no.

**Did he see your role as being in the house looking after the family?**

He wanted me to be wife and mother, you know, and he felt it was his place to provide the finances. So I didn't go to work.

**6.02 So how was your day spent?**

Well, it was spent washing and ironing and cooking. I used to do a lot of baking and things like that because the kids ... the children were always hungry. (Laughs.) So I used to make a lot of cakes and pastries and things, and I used to do sewing, and I had my piano. I was studying singing at the time as well 'cause I wanted to ... I actually had been studying in Sydney before I was married and I wanted to join the Opera Company. I auditioned and I was accepted, but I couldn't fit it in, you know.

**With the children? Or was this before you were married?**

This was before I was married. The PMG at the time - Public Service you see - they had this rule that you weren't allowed to have another job. And of course I was a very good little girl and I always did as I was told!

**What a shame!**

I didn't think for myself, you know.

**You might have been another Joan Sutherland!**

I suppose I could have been in those days ...but I turned to amateur theatricals and, you know, so I made up for it in that way.

**And you enjoyed that?**

So ... I enjoyed that. I did a lot of stuff locally and singing and being in choral societies and musical comedy, drama and all the sorts of things I used to do before. But ... and my husband was right behind me. He used to look after the kids while I used to go.

**You continued this while you were married?**

Yes. I decided when I got married - 'cause you know what you're like when you're first married, everything's so lovey dovey - and I was satisfied that I didn't want anything but my husband, and that's all I wanted. And when I had my first baby I wasn't interested in music or anything. Just my husband and the baby. But then, when my second one came along, I started to think "Oh dear, is this all there is?" The novelty had worn off. So, it was then I saw an ad in the local paper for the ... a man called Robert Bignold had been engaged at the St. Marys Band Club, which was just a new Club at the time, and he wanted singers so he could form this musical society which is called the Nepean Choral Society. And I went down and auditioned for him and he was delighted to have me in his society.

**And do you still belong?**

No, I'm not. At the moment I'm right out of singing. I haven't done anything for a long time. Since I've been going to Uni anyway I haven't had time. People are urging me to go back and do something.

**9.19 But you were able to follow your interests even though you were married with five children?**

Oh, yes.

**You were still able to have some time to do your own thing?**

I'd quite often take the kids to rehearsals, and that's how they got the interest in the music. They've all been interested in it. I've got two trumpet players.

**Have you?**

They became interested in the brass band.

**9.46 So did your children all go to school at the local school?**

They all went to St. Marys South which is in Monfarville Street which is just down here, just south of ...

**Which street?**

Monfarville - which is the street that runs ... and they went to St. Marys South and then they all went to St. Marys High, which is now St. Marys Senior High.

**Right.**

And it's ironic that all the years that my kids went to school they were in temporary buildings, or they were going to get them built. Over the years the government kept promising "Yes we'll build permanent buildings", and every one of them - oh, the four of them - had to put up with these temporary buildings - wooden rickety buildings. Now, my youngest son is at St. Marys Senior High as it's called now, and they have magnificent brick buildings, and it's taken them over, oh, thirty years to decide to build a permanent school which is very sad.

**So only one of them really enjoyed it.**

Only one of them benefited from it. So ... that's the way things are.

**11.12 And did any of your children go on to tertiary education?**

No. I think Jason, my youngest, wants to do Bachelor of Music so we hope ... he's in Year 10 now.

**11.39 Now, just to ask you a little bit about finance, I suppose you paid cash for most of your goods?**

We always did and I guess we haven't got very much but we've never been in debt or anything like that. We've always been very careful. So ...

**And who handled the household budget?**

Me!

**You did?**

Yes. Always.

**Did your husband give you housekeeping, or ...?**

Yes. Oh yes we used to ...well actually he didn't say "Here's so much", you know, we just worked it out. I'd say well we need this and that and the other, you know, and he was never stingy with money. He was always good. Not that we had very much.

**12.30 What about churches? Do you think the church played an important role in the community in the early days?**

Yes, oh yes. It's a very touchy subject with us actually because we very nearly didn't get married because of the church because I was a Catholic and my husband was a Presbyterian, and I ended up getting married in the Presbyterian Church, much to my mother's horror. And that caused a bit of conflict in the early days, but we overcame all that. All my kids were baptised in the Presbyterian Church with the exception of Jason who was never baptised.

**That in itself says something about the role of the church in the community I guess, that it seems to have, you know, lost some of its importance?**

It has, because I know my daughters both went to ... in fact, no ... my two eldest daughters and the other son, Robert, they all went to Sunday School. They went to the Presbyterian Church which was moved from down there to Marsden Road and they all went to Sunday School. In fact my daughter was very friendly with Rodney Field who was the Mayor that there was all this ...

**Yes? The disappearing Mayor!**

We knew the Fields. We knew all these people like the Fields and the Moorheads and a lot of the well-known people around, you know. And working on the Telephone Exchange I knew quite a lot of people - the Beecrofts, the Renshaws, oh all the people from the Band Club because the Band Club was directly opposite the Post Office, so I used to meet a lot of people

from the Band Club. In fact I'm very, very keen on writing the history of the St. Marys Band Club. It's a project I want to do. They want someone to do it and I thought it might be something very interesting to do when I've finished ...

**I think it would be a great idea. You've certainly been involved with it for a number of years.**

Yes. There's quite a lot I can contribute to it anyway, and I know Joan King. I don't know whether you know Joan King? Her husband was Mayor of Penrith for many years. (Sound of trumpet playing) He's practising! (Laughs). She wrote ... collected all the stuff together. Apparently somebody had lost all the minutes of all the meetings and things that were held with the actual St. Marys Band. And it's very strange. Some secretary or other lost them on the train or something. So they've got great big gaps in their history.

**You might be able to help?**

I might be able to help fill some in.

**16.01 Were there any women in the Band?**

No.

**Any?**

There is now. There's - oh, there's two.

**Two now.**

Yes. They don't encourage women in at St. Marys. They're very old fashioned in that way. They don't say you can't - I used to play in the Band too. I was a percussionist and I learnt to play tenor horn as well, so that's another thing I did. So they didn't encourage women in the Band at all. I know the situation is now that, when you go down to Brass Band Competition in Sydney for the Nationals, that 75% of the brass players now are girls! And last year every section from cornet to B-flat bass were won by girls.

**Really!**

So women are really taking their place in brass bands and it's not so in England but it is in Australia.

**Interesting!**

I might put that down to the fact that there is such a small population in Australia, compared to England where they don't need women to take the places in the brass band. Whereas in Australia they really need the women to fill the places in the brass band and so they let them come in.

**17.43 And what did your children do for entertainment? Apart from the music of course.**

Well, mostly it's been ... we used to do a lot of going on picnics. We used to do a lot of picnics and going with church groups and things like that. I'm just trying to think. Shirley-Anne was really into amateur dramatics so that was her past-time. Helen, she was an epileptic, and she had a lot of health problems so she didn't really get involved in anything like that. I think she mainly went on picnics and things like that. Oh, and Shirley-Anne did horse-riding. She was really into horse-riding. We couldn't afford to buy her a horse so she just had to be content with going down to riding schools and things like that.

**Nearby?**

There's one down in Luddenham Road they used to go to. And Robert, he went into amateur dramatics as well, and he also joined the Brass Band and became a tuba player, but he gave that away. He got bored with it and he more or less got involved going to watch car-racing and things like that. He used to love that, and going to movies and all that kind of thing. And John, he was my first really good musician. He was really into the brass banding as a trumpet player. He's in the Army now and he's a musician with the Army. And then Jason, he's interested in music of course, but he's also interested in model radio-controlled cars. His passion is his radio-controlled cars. He hasn't got time for anything else, you know, because of his music. That's what he was doing a few minutes ago. He was practising without practising, you know, just doing his lips - keeping his lips in trim.

**20.30 Do they watch much television, or did they when they were growing up?**

Not a great deal. My kids were never ... there was always too much to do. They spent most of their times outside. My husband used to take them down to Eastern Creek. That's where he was born and there's a lot of bush down there and they used to go down there in the bush and get on the old horse and all that kind of thing. So, you know, we didn't get television until I think Shirley-Anne was about 12. - 11 or 12 - we resisted it for a long time and then they finally talked us into it and we got our first television set, which would have been .. let's see ... it would have been close to 1970 before we got our TV set.

**Really!**

We just didn't have time. We just weren't interested.

**It sounds as though they've all had a lot to interest them, all of them, as they were growing up.**

All of them, yes. We've had plenty to do.

**21.43 What about organisations? Did you belong to any community organisations, you know, like Inner Wheel, or Country Women's Association or any of those things?**

No. I could never bring myself to get involved in anything like that.

**No, well you had your interest in the drama.**

I had my other interests and I've never been interested in that kind of thing. Even now as my husband's retired I don't think that we would be interested in pensioner groups or anything like that. It just doesn't interest me.

**22.21 So, you're going to university now?**

Yes.

**Doing your BA?**

Yes. I hope to do a lot of writing.

**Great. And what does your husband do in retirement?**

Well, he only retired this year, and we're doing the house up, trying to bring it up to scratch because we'd like to move away from here now, and ...

**22.48 Where would you move to?**

To Canberra. We want to move down to where our eldest daughter is - our eldest daughter. They're hoping to buy a property fairly close to Canberra so that they're not too far away from the hub of the city, you know.

**So that they can still be a little bit countrified!**

So that we can still go out and still listen to our music and go to all these kinds of things.

**23.17 And did you have any animals at all during your growing up or your married life?**

Yes. Always had cats. I always had a cat. And we didn't have a dog until about, let me see, when Jason was born. My husband had resisted having animals because he said if you have animals and you want to go anywhere you got the problem of who's going to look after them, so he'd resisted us having anything but a cat. So, this was about 1975, this friend of ours who was involved with the theatre company. Her husband left her and she had Afghan kennels. Afghans were all the fashion in the middle '70s and she was left with all these dogs, and she was finally feeding them bread - old bread from the baker - and they were getting pitifully thin because they weren't getting the proper nourishment. So she came to us one day and pleaded with us to take one off her so that she wouldn't have to have them put down. Of course we were real suckers! And we got Muscles. Oh, he was a beautiful dog. He had a long pedigree, but we called him Muscles for short, and he was a lovely dog. We had him for about eight years. When he died - he died from stomach cancer - we decided that we weren't ever going to have any more dogs. And then one day John brought home this little puppy. He'd bought it at the markets. He was only about 15 and he wanted this little pup, and we decided we'd keep it. As long as we didn't see them we could resist them, but once we saw them ...

**I understand that!**

We were finished! So we kept this little Torrie, he called him, after his ... oh, he must have been older than 15 because he had a car, a Torana, so he must have been about 17 - just got his licence, that's right - had a Torana.

**25.48 And what about the transport in the area? Did that improve a lot during the late 50's?**

Yes, Bowman owned the bus route and it used to go all the way down Lonsdale Street, which was very convenient. We've had a bus at the door practically ever since we've been here. So we've been very fortunate in that respect, not that it's very far to walk to St. Marys from here.

**To the train?**

It's quite a nice walk. So we've been blessed with good transport here, although a lot of people argue and say it's terrible, but I don't know ...

**You've found it OK!**

I've been quite satisfied with it, you know. It always seems to be there when I need it.

**26.40 So, after reflecting on your life from when you first came out here from England, and thinking what it was like during the '50s and early '60s, how do you feel about the changes that have taken place here and the suburbanisation of the area?**

Oh, it was inevitable and in lots of ways it's good, but from my own selfish point of view I don't like it very much. Particularly - I could cope with the development, like the buildings and all that kind of thing - but it's the traffic that really gets me now. I mean it's just dreadful trying to shop in St. Marys now. It's very difficult to find parking and all that kind of thing, and we were really much better off in the old days when there was hardly any traffic. But that's progress.

**And do you find ... you know how you were saying how friendly it was before, when you went shopping, you'd know everybody?**

I don't know a soul.

**Does that worry you?**

Yes, it does. We often look for familiar faces, but you just don't see them anymore. Everybody in St. Marys knew everybody, you know. They'd get around and say "Hi" you know, "Hello Mrs. Moorhead" or whoever, and you knew all the shopkeepers like the Beecrofts and the Lammings - Mrs Lammings and Miss Lammings I think it was - but now, you just don't know anybody. It's just not the same. In some ways it's good because you can get so much more goods here in St. Marys than you used to be able to, and you just go in and do your shopping. You don't stand and chat for half an hour like we used to, you know. We'd go in and see Sandy Lang and he'd pick out some nice green apples for me. It was really lovely because ... although it was a lot more expensive!

**Then, was it?**

Then - I found it very hard shopping in St. Marys. That's why we often went to Parramatta to shop 'cause it's a lot cheaper, but you can't have everything.

**29.33 And what about the landscape - how that's changed - how does that make you feel?**

Well, we're more closed in now and we don't see as much as we used to see. We used to look out the back window and we'd see just the paddocks. Now all we see is a bit of the freeway and houses, roofs, that's all we can see. The same looking out here, all you can see is housing.

**And how does that make you feel? Is that one of the reasons you are moving?**

It probably is, it probably is I think. It's just not the same. Although we can still see the Mountains. It's people, I think, more than anything that's making us move because we haven't got very good neighbours like we used to have in the old days. The only people that we have from the old days are next door but one we've got the German people and they were there before we moved in - they'd just built their house - and we've got lovely Indian people next door. But they all keep to themselves, all these other people down here. It's not like it was before.

**It's more impersonal?**

Yes. And they seem to complain about the silliest things. They complain about my son playing his trumpet. (Laughs). And complain about the dog when we had a dog, complain about the cat, you know.

**You're not left to get on with your life?**

No. They just won't leave us alone. You've got to live to their standards, you know. They expect you to live to their standards.

**Everyone's so close together.**

Yes. I don't know if we'd every find that same community spirit again if we move away. It's a lot to ask isn't it?

**Yes. Well thank you very much. The tapes just about to run out Margaret, so thanks very much for your time.**