

**INTERVIEW NO.21**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 27/11/91**

**MRS DIANA REYNOLDS  
131 JAMIESON ROAD  
PENRITH**

0.38 My name is Diana Reynolds. I live at 131 Jamieson Road, Penrith. My date of birth is the 24th January, 1929,. My place of birth - Penrith. My marital status - I am a widow. Nationality - Australian. Number of children - one.

**1.08 So just a few background questions to start with. What kind of work did your father do?**

He was a doctor. He was a doctor in Penrith, yes.

**And your mother?**

Mother didn't work, no.

**Right, and did you have brothers and sisters?**

I had one sister. She's four years older.

**1.29 And you were born in Penrith were you?**

Yes, down ... in a house, not a hospital, and the house still stands. It's on the corner of High and Evans Street, Penrith.

**1.45 Do you remember your first memories of what the area was like as a child?**

It seemed very ... just a town. The highway - the Western Highway - went straight through Penrith; old dirt roads; old houses.

**What about the land around your house?**

Oh we had ... the land - well, we were in the centre of the town - so we didn't really have much bush or open spaces immediate to Penrith, but outlying areas yes. They were farms and bush areas, namely Cambridge Park. That was quite a bush area for the gypsies. And north, south, east - they were quite bushy areas.

**2.46 And you had neighbours both sides?**

No, we had a street one side and a neighbour on the other side because we lived on a corner.

**And did you have a garden around your house?**

Oh, yes. We were interested in gardening. Of course it was your pride, I think, to keep a garden more so than perhaps it is now. You kept your surrounds very, very clean.

**And did you have a vegetable garden?**

No we didn't have a vegetable garden. It was mainly flowers, shrubs, trees.

**3.16 And what sort of house did you live in?**

It was a double brick home, and it was a very happy home. The surgery was attached to the house, which nowadays of course you don't have surgeries attached to the home. The whole family seemed to be part of the practice and so we grew up in that environment really, sort of communicating with people, mainly patients and all their ails.

**And your father was one of the only doctors in Penrith at the time wasn't he?**

Yes. Dr. Higgins was the other doctor in Penrith. Dr. Baxter was at Springwood and Dr. Day was at St. Marys, and in the very early stages they were the only four. But after the War - '45 - more doctors started coming to the area.

**Your father was Dr. Barrow?**

Dr. Barrow, yes.

**Then he must have been very busy?**

Oh, yes. Very, very busy. And then during the War he was over at the Army Camp at the speedway. He was an all Army doctor as well and so his day was very long really. And then later on he became Government Medical Officer of the whole area, so he was very involved with Penrith.

**4.44 So did you go to school at the local primary school?**

No. We went to school - it was called Miss Lennox School - and she first started up in St. Stephen's Hall, up at St. Stephen's Church there, and then they went down and they had a two-storey home down near the BP Garage right away down the bottom end of Penrith. And we would walk to school and there were only about, oh I suppose about 20 children at the school. There were two Miss Lennoxes, they taught and one - the other sister - she more or less looked after the house and did their cooking. And then in sixth class I went to SGEAGGS in Sydney. We were sent as day pupils to SCEGGS. We travelled to Sydney every day to Darlinghurst.

**5.38 By train?**

By train. By steam train.

**Did you enjoy that?**

Yes. It was good. The soot in the eyes and (laughs) the dirty white blouses. But, oh, no you met a lot of good people on the train who sort of looked after you as children, because not many children really travelled to school from this area. They may go to Parramatta, but they didn't go right in to Sydney. But my parents chose SCEGGS and so were some other children from Emu Plains. They also went to the same school.

**So you travelled together I suppose.**

Well, we did. We ...you know. . I mean you'd have a dust-up with them and you wouldn't travel with them. (Laughs). But there was only one first class carriage on the Chips - we used to travel down on. The fish went through first. It never stopped at Penrith going to Sydney, and so we used to get on the Chips. And I had a reserved seat on that, later on, because my occupation was Sports Mistress and then I taught in one of the Sydney schools so I had a reserved seat then, because the number of people were getting greater and greater on the trains and ...

**6.58 And what did you do as a child for recreation?**

Right. Well. My parents were busy with the practice so we hardly ever really went out on picnics or anything like that. It seemed to be a 'no-no'. I had good friends in the Walkers at Emu Plains, so I'd ride a bike over there and play tennis or they'd come over for the weekend or I'd go over there for the weekend. They used to take me to Avoca for school holidays, but other than that it was tennis. We played up at the Church courts and we went to Church - Sunday School, Church - so you were involved in that, and then you just occupied yourself at home, really. We had the picture theatre - one picture theatre - in Penrith, and then we got

two picture theatres. So you had that as an entertainment. But, no you found your own entertainment really. So ...

**8.09 And so when you worked - you went to teacher's college when you left school did you?**

No. I went to the A.C.P.E. - the Australian College of Physical Education - and so that was a two year course.

**Where was that?**

That was based in Hunter Street in Sydney, and then we had gym work up at the YMCA, actually it was, up in Oxford Street. We seemed to spread around a little bit and then the hockey fields and cricket fields and that sort of thing - we went to Rushcutters Bay. So we had quite a variety of things for our sports and then I prac taught out at the Methodist Ladies' College at Burwood and of course taught there for six years then. And then after that my sister married, so I came home to be secretary to my father. And in those days you seemed to, you know, support your family and live at home. It was not living away from home, sort of - those things weren't thought of - and so I came home and just worked at home. I did teach swimming in the river because Penrith didn't have a swimming pool. Used to ride the bike down there and teach swimming in the river. Then I taught in winter. I taught tennis up on the courts at St. Stephens, so I had that as well.

**9.33 It's a nice healthy lifestyle!**

Oh, yes. Good and healthy. (Laughs). But I was in a tennis group that played every Saturday, so that took you to various other tennis courts, you know, Luddenham, Castlereagh, all around you see when you visited those and they'd visit you. But those tennis courts were behind the ... well it was Fletcher's store, and then it was Red-S, and now they've put in a three-storey car-park behind there - so those tennis courts were there.

**10.14 Yes. I was going to ask you next about the shops and what they were like when you were a child?**

Yes. Well they were quaint shops some of them, you know. One of the shops down where we were - down near the school, right down the bottom end of Penrith - she had lollies, a lolly shop. So that was interesting to go in to this old little lolly shop and buy things. At the garages they had the pumps right on the street, you know, you'd have the pumps. This was mainly in High Street and oh, a couple of hotels. There were about three hotels down in High Street, and just Fletcher's was the general shop for clothing and wool and menswear, then they went into china and of course from there they spread out and they did buy more and spread themselves and went upstairs, you know, it was fun to go into the shop and you had to go upstairs in Fletchers. Then they changed to Farmers and of course down to Grace Brothers and moved into the big area at the Plaza.

**11.32 Did your mother do her shopping locally?**

Oh, yes. She did do shopping mainly where we were, up the top end of Penrith. We did it at Neale's. They had it all. They had groceries, it was like hardware, farm barrows, all that type of thing, then the menswear and the ladies-wear. And then they moved into furniture, Neale's. And of course you'd sent your order over and when the order came back you'd always get a little bag of boiled lollies in your order, so of course as children we thought that was wonderful. But you used to front up to the counter and give your whatever, and then they'd bring it to you. It was sort of ... you just didn't have to go and shop for yourself like it is in the super market today. No, you got your orders that way and they'd count out the biscuits (laughs) and scoop out the sugar and the flour. So that was good. And of course the milkman was the same. He'd come around with his haps on the back and you'd leave your billy out and the milk would be left. And the bread, of course - the nice fresh smell of bread - and he'd come around with his cart. I can remember as a get, you know, you'd have the fellow calling out 'Props, props'. These were props for the clothes lines. And we used to have one faint old chap who came in with beautiful vegetables and he had a horse and sulky - Bidy was the

horse - and Mr. Baxter was quite a current caller to the place. With the practice a lot of people worked a bit on a barter system. Dad used to treat the Barber and he used to cut his hair for nothing. And one Christmas we had seven chooks. They were on foot! Not on foot! (Laughs) They were presents from patients and then, of course, if you went to someone with an orchard, well a few days later you'd wake up and a box of oranges, grapefruit or the lemons, peaches, nectarines - all these things used to come in. Well when my father and mother made up the accounts 'Oh, you can't charge them, they've already give us a box of fruit'. So this is how it was. But it was only five shillings for a consultation, and seven and six to go and visit someone. So things - you know, you'd go right out to Warragamba Dam perhaps for ten shillings.

**So doctors didn't really get rich in those days?**

You didn't get rich in those days. One person stood beside my father in the bank - you know how you usually stand back, you don't sort of stand up as if your looking - and he said 'Oh I'm not going to pay his bill. He's got enough in his account!' (Laughs) But, no, that was one way of paying you back you see, and so that was interesting. And Mum always welcomed the new babies with a blue bow or a pink bow round their wrists, you know. And they always liked the new babies coming into the practice, you know, it was just a feature of the practice. But later on of course you got the foreign people who came out, the New Australians, and we found those a little bit unusual to start off with. My sister was home at this stage and one woman came down the surgery hall and she said 'Quick, quick, the newspaper, the newspaper!' So my sister gave it to her. So she just spread it out on the dining room floor and squatted down and had a miscarriage. And of course my father came in later and said 'Where's that paper, I haven't read the paper' ... and he said 'I've hadn't read it yet!' And the doormat - we had another one on the doormat. Things like that. They were just a little bit unusual from our ways, you know.

**16.00 Did you father mostly deliver babies in the hospital or at home?**

Oh, yes. No, a lot in the home. He had one case where the lady came in and the neighbour came in to help and she fainted, so with one foot he kicked her under the bed (laughs) and that was that one. But, no there was a private hospital diagonally opposite where they lived down in High Street and she was the Maternity and of course she'd just whistle, you know, 'Quick over the road' so that one was quite easy. And then they got the Maternity up at the hospital which was the Nepean Hospital which is now the Governor Phillip. That was quite a thing for Penrith when that came. Everything, like it is now, when it's new, you know, "The University! Oh isn't this good, the University'. Each new thing seemed to be progress I suppose all the time.

**16.58 So in the late '40s, I suppose you were married about that time were you?**

No. I wasn't married. I married only about 28 years ago really, and my husband was in the Airforce. It was his second marriage. His wife had passed away, and I came here when the girls ... the twins were 14. So, no I didn't marry until about 35.

**1935? No when you were 35?**

No, when I was 35.

**17.34 So you moved to live in this house when you were married, so that would have been in the early '60s?**

Yes. Yes, about 1964.

**And did you build this house?**

No my husband bought it when he moved up from Albury. He came up here with his wife and family and then in 18 months she passed away with cancer, and of course he was left with the twins. And then I met him later on and of course we got married, and we had one son.

**And so the twins were a fair bit older than your son?**

Oh, yes. Yes, they'd been 16 when he was born. They're married now and live elsewhere.

**18.26 So, your husband actually built this house when he came up did he? Or was it already here?**

No it was already built. A Mr. McKearn built this house. He worked for the gravel company, I think, on McCann's Island down there. He worked for them and they were very good Methodists and .. but we don't see them of course. I don't know where they moved too. We extended here when my mother wasn't able to look after herself. We put an extension on the back of the house so that's sort of improved the value of this house now I suppose.

**19.09 And this is a brick house isn't it?**

No this is a fibro home.

**Is it, oh it's hard to tell when you're inside. So it's fibro and it's how many bedrooms?**

Yes, it is fibro. Well with the extension on - you could have five bedrooms because it's extended out there and that's like a little tele room out there, so it could have five bedrooms. So, its - with maintenance - it's, you know, quite good. It stands up. But my husband was a very good ... he loved looking at 'House and Gardens' and 'Home Beautifuls' and 'I think I can put that into the house' and out something go or a wall or a window come down and he was very good in that regard. But he was with the Airforce out at Bringelly Road and he was with Bomb Disposals.

**Exciting work!**

Well, when you look back you sort of think 'Oh dear!'. He was sent to the island of Naru where he had to diffuse Japanese bombs. That was quite late after the War and he got the MBE for that, so that was quite a nice pat on the back for him, we were all very happy about that.

**It's nice to get recognition isn't it?**

Yes. Well it was lovely. Really lovely. But he died nearly eight years ago now, with cancer. So that's one of those things. But you soldier on. My son was 18 then. He'd just finished his HSC, so it was 'Right-oh! What do you do?' So he went into languages to Sydney University, and then after a year and a term he thought he'd like to give that up, which he did and went into nursing.

**Oh, really.**

Yes. So he's through nursing. He's three years through and he's now doing his maternity at Nepean Hospital. He got in there and ... waiting for his new arrival Thursday week. Yes, so ...

**His first?**

Yes. Their first. So that will be lovely. So I said at the school, you know, 'You mightn't see me for a few days!' But, no. Everywhere - the two places I've lived - it's all been very, very pleasant and happy. We get on well with the neighbours. I've got a very good neighbour relationship here. This neighbour that walked off the verandah when you came brought me beautiful peaches in from one of their friends who has an orchard out here. They'll bring in grapes and they grow their own vegetables in their background. Emily's Yugoslav and Vitto's Italian, and I think they could live off their bit of land in there for ages. They just re-cycle things and she'll take a mug of hot water down the back and put in mint leaves. Well that's mint tea she'll say, and she's just very, very good. She's a wonderful neighbour.

**22.21 That's important to have good neighbours.**

Yes well you learn such a lot from them really. You sort of think, oh dear, if I had the time to have a vegetable patch and this sort of thing. But that will be my Christmas present. He'll bring me in tomatoes and grapes, and sort of carrots and onions, whatever they've grown.

**22.41 Have they lived there very long?**

They've been there before George came here, yes. So they've been there a long while.

**So they probably came just after the War.**

Yes. So Vitto was interned. And George used to say to him "Oh, you foreigner. You were against us weren't you!" (Laughs).

**He wasn't interned here was he?**

No, he was overseas I think, yes he was overseas then, Vitto. But, oh no they're just tops. They're wonderful.

**23.15 And did you have much to do with other Europeans who came out here after the War? Did you notice them coming into the area? Did you notice them coming into the area?**

Yes. I think really I notice it more now with the new influx of Indian people, Vietnamese. There seem to be far more that came in those early days after the War. I don't think we were bigger enough, probably, in other areas. It suited them, perhaps, but they have just swarmed out this way. Whether it's, you know, the living conditions or what I don't know. But they seem to be ... I've know with the school, I've noticed .. oh, we've got a terrific lot of Indian children and we got a little Vietnamese girl the other day and, I mean, she can't speak very much English at all. And she's sort of 'You're welcome, you're welcome!' and that's what we get. But she'll learn, because they do learn very quickly. But her older sisters and mother have to go to some other area to really learn to speak English first. But there are nine of them living in that house, in their sister's home, and she's been out here ten years. No, I think we were fascinated with them in the early stages, but as I say, there didn't seem to be many out this way.

**24.55 And what about finances, when you lived at home, who managed the household finances?**

Oh, no ... well my father would, you know, he'd give mother the money and she had to sort of live on that but he'd pay all the bills.

**Right. He'd give her housekeeping money?**

Housekeeping money and he'd pay all the bills, mainly by cheque, because you had a form of receipt then, so he used to work on it this way. But no he was always very pleased ... he'd always pay his bills. He hated owing anybody anything so they were paid promptly. There was none of that time payment or anything like that.

**25.45 What about when you were married, did you handle the accounts?**

Well I mainly handles a lot of the accounts because George would go away on these inspections overseas - disposals inspections and so forth - so he said 'Well you'll just to handle all that, because if not here ...'. He'd go for perhaps a month, six weeks at a time sometimes. They were only rare ones but you know, things would come in. But after Rod started school at five, I started work in the schools. I went for the position down at St. Stephen's Church but they wanted shorthand and I didn't have it, and there was the Principal, Mr. Hepworth down at Penrith South School, he was interviewing also and he said 'Have you tried the school jobs?' and I said 'No' and he said 'Oh I'll ring you up about ten in the morning!'. So he rang and said

'If you can get to Parramatta and do a typing test, you might be in somewhere.' So I was told there and then 'Would you like to go to Nepean High School?' So I started there on the Monday. Very different from now and so I started there and was over there from the July until the following November twelve months, and Mr. Dillon, the Principal, he called me in and said 'Oh we can no longer have you because our numbers have decreased and we can't carry an extra ancillary staff. I said "Oh well, I've enjoyed it' and he said 'Don't worry we've got a job for you with Kingswood'. So these positions are like gold really. But people I don't think realise just how busy they are. They're very busy. So I've been at Kingswood ever since, which has been most interesting.

**27.45 And you've seen a lot of change in the school system too?**

In the school system, yes. It's changed greatly. Yes. I don't know if it's for the better. I suppose it is to the academics, but the little things you know just seem to be by-passed. The manners, you know. Manners - that's one thing that these overseas children ..they are well mannered. They're very well mannered. You get all the dirty words and all this sort of thing. I don't get it much around the office, but you'll get the kids who say nothing. They all say words like this at home. And they just come in and impart it to the good children at school.

**It's a shame.**

It is a shame. Of course you get the band of nice children too.

**28.48 And so when you were growing up, when you were older, say when you were working, what did you do for recreation then?**

Oh, well the tennis gave way to having a child and putting what I could into him. Taking him very regularly for swimming and this sort of thing early in the mornings, and getting him into that. My husband was involved in Scouting so Rod automatically went into the Scouts, so it's like that. I got their uniforms ready and their tea and they'd go off. So I didn't have any actual entertainment that way, sort of, I was in the Church choir. But I found that running the home and going to work was quite sufficient. I just didn't have time for running in to this club and that club and that sort of thing. And we didn't really have the money for that. We still had to pay the house off. And I hate owing things. I suppose that's a hand-me-down from the family, but ... so when I started work I matched George on what he was paying off for the house. So we got it paid off so much quicker then, and you know, we only had a Volkswagen and that fitted five of us in. So that was a bit of a squeeze, so I said 'No, we don't buy a car until we've got the money to actually pay for it.' I said we'd just put up or walk. Walk somewhere or we just don't go anywhere. So we got right for that and were able to pay for a car, this is how you can, you know, strive and you do succeed.

**30.45 I think it's different to these days isn't it with the instant plastic money and credit accounts?**

Yes. That's right. And I think the television and media just ruin the place really, 'cause they pressure people into doing a lot of things. You've got to be strong against the media.

**That's right.**

**END SIDE A**

**SIDE B**

**1.49 How did the daily routine in your life compare with your mother's daily routine?**

Yes. It was totally different because with the practice on the premises you never knew when the door was going to ring or the telephone go. You'd be dragged out anytime of the night or day for calls, which my sister and I usually drove my father to - these calls - you know, to just accompany. Or Mum would go too, and to her point of view - well to all of us - it was like an outing. You'd regard it as an outing - a drive. Come for a drive out to Mulgoa or somewhere. But she worked very, very hard. She did have a maid in the earlier years when we were little, but the latter years, to save money of course, that was bypassed. And many a time she'd be

round in the surgery cleaning it up for the next day after eleven o'clock at night. And during the war, of course, it seemed to be very, very busy and she'd be cooking bacon and eggs for Dad at these unGodly hours of the night and he was a light diabetic so of course she had to watch him too. But home life here, really totally different, because comparing my father with George, my husband, Dad wasn't really a gardening man. He loved to tinker with car and so forth, but he sort of I think valued his hands, so of course ... but George was the real 'into-it' home-maker. But he was a very strict man, I suppose being in the Airforce and the forces - they are all down to earth and everybody was sort of ... we weren't regimented, but ... (laughs) but, no we'd get up and we'd be gone by seven-thirty in the morning, take him up to the camp every day and picked him up, or he'd take the car sometimes, but no it seemed to be a different type of life but we loved our home so we weren't really wanting to go further afield. He did like to ... we went to some ... a couple of overseas trips. Not big ones, but we saved up for those. He preferred to go for those rather than just every holiday you just went for a fortnight's holiday somewhere. He felt you gained more education-wise going to another country to see how they lived. But they were two totally different ways of life from a practice to a normal home.

**4.43 Did your mother make clothes or ...?**

When we were little she used to sew, but she used to, you know, you'd have full skirts so she'd pull those all apart and they might be a tea-towel, you see! But they didn't have much money so she really looked after her clothing exceptionally well. Oh, no ...

**And did she make jams and that sort of thing?**

Oh, cakes, yes. Cakes, jams and all those sorts of things. And I love making marmalade jam. I like all those old-fashioned type of things.

**You cook too, do you?**

Yes. I cook too. Yes. I like all that.

**5.26 And did you sew also for your family?**

I'm not as good a sewer as my sister. She can fun up anything. She's very good. She had four daughters and of course she can turn her hand to anything and she makes lampshades and all this sort of thing. But, no, I think I haven't had time to do that. I'd much rather get out and mow the grass and (laughs) do the garden and things like that. But I can put a dress together and I can sew if I have to, yes. And this is where, when I do retire, you have to look ahead - 'What am I going to do?' - which I'm sure there's plenty to occupy my time when I retire.

**6.12 And do you belong to any community groups?**

Yes. I belong to the Nepean Historical Society and the Nepean Choral Society for singing and I go regularly to Church every Sunday evening. They're about my three main things that I feel that I can fit it. Because our school - the Principal before this one wasn't very pleasant - and so our school seemed to go down and down. And so anyhow I joined the P & C out there and Mr. Coss, the Director, said 'Goodness, you've come to the P & C' and I thought 'My goodness'. Well, I think I'd be about the only clerical that perhaps would, but I've sort of tried to help as much with the school. Now I'm involved with the Centenary book out at the school, and the Centenary which comes - the school's a hundred next May. So we're really working towards that and that does involve you. You seem to just somehow get involved with things. But this is one way of communicating with the outside world.

**And did you belong to any of these groups before you were married?**

Yes. We belonged to the CWA Younger Set. We were the Younger Set group, and oh, yes we did lots of fund-raising things and we'd go and do some older people's gardens and there'd be the parades down when the electric trains came to Penrith. They had a big parade down Penrith and of course here we all were up on the back of a truck! And one year another lass



was the front of the cow and I was the back, you know, and we walked down High Street. (Laughs). And then we'd go to the ball at night. We had lovely balls and they finally ended up down at the Log Cabin Hotel, the balls, and they were good. The Dungowan Theatre which was in Station Street, they had nice balls too. You know, it was quite a big barn of a place, but ... then you'd go to Lower Castlereagh - you'd go to dances down there. But the CWA Hall in Station Street was a funny little tiny weeny little hall and we'd have local dances in there. We'd all sit round, you know, 'I wonder whose asking me to dance?' (Laughs). And somebody thumping on the piano, but you wish some of those times would come back and the children might be more occupied. But those sorts of things... and Red Cross. Not that I was in Red Cross very, very much. But I went to some of the evening classes. They started those at Penrith High, so we went up and we learned cake-decorating, hat-making, glove-making. They were about the three things we got ourselves involved in up at Penrith High.

### **Glove-making?**

Glove-making! (Laughs) But cake decorating, that has been ... I've been really lucky with that. I've done wedding cakes and that one, you know, sort of took my fancy. So, you know, any of these things they do occupy your mind. But being with the school I got involved and I had to do the First Aid, so every three years I updated my First Aid and I do the First Aid out at the school, just in case something ...

### **9.47 You're quite busy now aren't you?**

Well, you sort of pick ... yes I like to ... I feel you want to put as many strings to your bow as you can through your life, and it's such a waste, you know, if you don't do as much as you can and fill up your time.

### **10.05 What about roads and transport. You said they were all dirt roads when you were young. How did you get around in streets - did you walk?**

Walk or ride a bike. We had a bike between us, my sister and myself. I was more the tomboy type so I seemed to ride the bike more than she did. But then my parents had a car, but of course - we were taught to drive - but that was a no-no. You couldn't really take the car anywhere because that was for the practice. And that was it! Later on I bought a car for three hundred pounds. I had five hundred pounds left in the bank.

### **10.44 What sort of car was that?**

That was a little Ford Prefect - tiny little Ford Prefect - but it took us miles you know. Yes.

### **And what about your son. When he was growing up, what did he do for recreation?**

Well, I think I swam him so much that he didn't have much more ... and he learned tennis. I took him down to tennis lessons, and he loved running. He was a very good long-distance runner and loved going out on, you know, all the runs. And we'd follow him around on quite a lot of those. We'd go to Bathurst and all around where the fun-runs were on. He went to Penrith High. The twins went to Penrith High and so Rod went up there and went right through until leaving school - Year 12 - and so I felt sending him to a private school - all that travelling - that we'd have been better if we'd been sent to MLC Burwood than going right into Sydney. I felt, 'Oh well is all that travelling worth it?' He could just walk to Penrith High and he was quite a good student, so had he been not so good I think we'd have considered another school and given him more a one to one opportunity. But he seemed to cope and has coped right through, so I think he'll be all right, you know.

### **12.20 And what about the twins. How did you find taking on a grown-up family? That must have been a challenge for you?**

Well, I counted to ten many times. (Laughs) Yes. Had to do that. It was strange for both sides. Some things I feel now I might have been a bit hard. But George said, when I first came, he said 'We will not go against each other's decisions' 'If I make a decision and you

think it's wrong, we won't argue about it'. So we got on very well, and I had no trouble with my son at all. Nothing. I've had not an ounce of trouble right through his life. Because we never argued in front of him. Sort of, he might say 'Well black's black ' and I'll say 'No, it's white' - no - we both agreed it was black, you see. So we just didn't argue on anything and he's grown up through that. There was no fighting, nothing going on in the home situation, so I think ...

**A stable background!**

Quite stable, very stable. But of course George was ... if he said 'No' it meant no and that was it! You didn't come back for another 'Please?'

No.

No. Yes, so he knew that was the finish.

**13.45 And did you have any animals?**

Oh, yes, I've got chooks.

**Have you, still? Really.**

Oh, yes. Emily and I both have chooks and I find that's wonderful because people don't have poultry in their backyards now, and if I take people half a dozen, a dozen eggs, they nearly flip over because they're so different from the egg of today which runs all over the pan they tell me. No ... cat, birds, fish - goldfish - dog. We've got a lovely Golden Retriever. And ... so I'm a real animal lover, yes. And love ... we've got a pair of blackbirds, they come into the trees - and they're beautiful, the English blackbirds. But I've got a lot of other birds that are around. I think it's because George loved trees and being a fibro home perhaps it was ... it cools down quickly but it does get very hot on a hot summer day. So western side he made sure there were enough trees there to give us shade on it.

**The birds are attracted by the trees.**

And so the birds are attracted by the trees, yes.

**14.59 So looking back on and reflecting on the days before - in the late '40s really and before then - and looking at the place now or really as it was in the late '50s and '60s, what do you think about the changes that have taken place? How have you felt with all the population explosion that took place ...?**

Yes, it's ... well it's too rapid now. Things are changing too quickly, but I feel with the town itself better planning could have been done. It's a shemozzle! (Laughs) Now!

**Right in the heart of the town?**

Oh yes. It's just .. it's a mess. I don't know how they're going to get out of it. But it was, you know, it was a comfortable town and you could just get in your car and just drive wherever you like. Now you have to think 'How am I going to get from A to B?' without sort of coming across a stop sign or a 'you can't go down there' or a one-way. It's just out of control at the moment. I feel that the power that be above in the Council and so forth just have not planned the town properly. We had the older cars, I suppose, the horses and sulkies and you'd have the rails, you know, the hitching sort of posts down at Penrith and the horses would be tied up to that, but I suppose it was all slower then. But it's much faster now.

**16.58 That's a lot of traffic here isn't there?**

Oh yes there's a lot of traffic out the front here.

**And that's changed I suppose. What was it like there?**

Well I used to use typing over in a funny little house over the road there, well before all this was here, and you'd slither and slide in wet weather up the mud up that road. It was terrible. But, I don't know how they're going to overcome it now.

**17.32 And what else did you like about the old days which you don't like so much now? Or are their things which perhaps are better?**

I suppose it's the - you don't have as many, when you were in the smaller town you know everybody. But now it's getting to the stage where you can go down the town, you just don't know anybody. You could go to the pictures on a Saturday night and you knew everybody in the pictures and it would be a real gossip, you know, 'Look who's with that one', you know, (laughs) and this type of thing. But that's going from Penrith completely, it's going from the area, and it's a shame the children sort of can't grow up in that calmer atmosphere. It would be much better for them really, yes.

**18.40 And do you feel that sense of space you had around you as a young person here - do you feel that that's gone now with the build up of houses?**

Yes. It's disappearing. Yes. It's going. Because it used to, you know, you could walk ... I know my sister and I, we lost our cat - somebody stole him and he was a Persian cat and cut all his fur off - and we were told this man lived right out here, out at Penrith South there. Well, I mean we walked and we hid behind bushes and we followed this man! I mean, we'd probably be murdered now! But we got right out there and walked up to this man's home who we knew and he said 'What are you girls doing out here?' So he hitched up the horses and sulky and brought us back home again. Because we were looking for our cat, weren't we.

**And that was South Penrith - it's not far from here now - and it's all built up.**

Yes. It's all built up. And it was, you know, it was miles out really. I could show you the trees. You know right out there there are still sort of these trees of his, but no home. But it was just all paddock. Nothing. It was lovely. And they've got that new complex out there - that Glenmore complex. The other day I said 'Well there seem to be only three outlets from there, if they had a boomer fire in amongst all that, how are all these people going to get out I don't know.' But, you know, it is - it's just growing and growing.

**20.27 So when you were a child did you walk around the streets a lot? You were allowed to ...?**

Yes. you'd go over to the shops, you'd walk to school, you'd walk home. There was not a fear. There was nothing at all. Everybody knew you and you just didn't worry about that.

**A different feeling altogether!**

Oh a totally different feeling, yes. I mean these people next door, they wouldn't even let their little girl walk round to the shop round the corner here.

**That's more recently?**

That's now, yes. I mean you couldn't. You're too frightened to.

**And you have to lock up.**

You lock up. Yes. Well the other night I came home and we'd been in to Sydney to see 'The King and I' and came in. I'd seen this man up on the drive here. He seemed to be drunk. So I drove in and I always pip the horn to let Emily and Vit know I'm home. And I got out of the car and turned the two-way light switch light on, and then I got back in, locked the wheel, put the hook on, got out, about to shut the door and he was coming down the drive. I jumped back into the car, slammed the door, thought I'd locked it you see, but I hadn't locked it on the return trip and I just put my hand on the horn and blew and blew and blew. I thought 'Now

what do I do? Do I waste my time getting the hook off and drive out?' And I thought I could hit him, if he's drunk, so I just kept blasting the horn. Nobody heard me! (Laughs) I thought, 'Oh can't somebody hear me?' 'Cause he'd turned around and went, but I didn't know where he'd gone. So then Vitto came out because their dog started making a noise on the door 'cause I was making such a noise. So I put one leg out ready to get the other one back in again, and I said 'That you Vit?' and he said 'What's the matter with you?' I said 'A man just walked down the drive after me!' So he came in - this is the funny part - he came in in his pyjamas. So he saw me in the front door and that was it, and I thought 'Oh God, if anybody sees Vit walking home in his pyjamas from my front door at about 1.30 in the morning!' (Laughs)

**That will give them something to talk about won't it?**

That's right, yes. You'd better not put that in! (Laughs).

**Oh but that lack of security though is something that has changed.**

It's gone. Yes. It's really gone. Even when we work out at the school on a Saturday, we lock ourselves in the building.

**Do you?**

Yes.

**23.12 How do you feel about that? It must be rather sad?**

It is sad. It is very sad to think you can't trust people. You just don't know what - really, I suppose with children - you don't know what your neighbours are like. They could be the offender or people living in the house nowadays isn't it. But it is a shame. I feel this mall down here - it has some disco place - and there's quite a bit of rockish types get down there, whereas the dances we had, you know, when we look back they were as harmless as anything, but oh, the fun we had. Yes, it was really good.

**14.03 So there are probably some things that are better these days?**

Yes, I suppose shopping - perhaps it's better. You can select your own and, you know, you can budget yourself I suppose, you don't have to pick up from the shelf if you really feel you don't want it. I suppose it's quicker. All those things, but I don't know that we've got really much more time on our hands. I mean I never watch television. I think it's a waste. I suppose in the holidays I might get an odd day where I'll watch tele, but a lot of people just sit and watch that and don't do anything.

**It waste's a lot of time.**

And waste a lot of time if they only realised, yes.

**24.46 I think we've covered everything now, so thank you very much for your time.**

END TAPE