

MRS DOREEN SCOTT
153 MARTIN STREET
JAMISONTOWN NSW

0.33 **Would you like to tell me your name and address?**

0.35 It's Olive Doreen Scott and I live at 153 Martin Street Regentville. My date of birth is the 1st December, 1925. I was born in Camden, New South Wales. I am married, Australian born, children three. Two boys and one girl.

1.04 **How long have you lived in the Penrith area?**

Over 40 years.

And you lived in the centre of Penrith most of that time?

I lived in Station Street, Penrith - my first home - for two years, and until just - nearly 12 months ago - I lived in 598 High Street Penrith.

1.28 **Right in the middle of the business area?**

Right opposite Penrith Shopping Plaza.

1.31 **Can I just ask you a little bit about your family background? You were born in Camden. What did your father do, and your mother?**

Well my mother was a housekeeper and my father worked on the Wollondilly Shire. He was the powder monkey on the Razor Back old road.

What's a powder monkey?

When they blasted the rock through to make the original old Razor Back Road, he was the powder monkey on that. He worked with Wollondilly Shire. Then Wollondilly Shire actually amalgamated to Nepean and Nepean then amalgamated with Penrith. When he retired he finished up with ... he was a power grader driver with Penrith City Council. Previous to that he had a horse -drawn grader - two draft horses. And we had a property at Luddenham, a 50 acre property with an original country home.

3.01 **You moved into the centre of Penrith?**

Yes when I got married I moved into a little weatherboard house for which I paid 15 shillings a week rent when we were first married. It is right where Penrith City Council Chambers stands today. The rock that is out the front of the Penrith City Council would be right in our bedroom in those days.

It was demolished was it?

Yes when Penrith City Council bought the property - well there was a few properties that they purchased along there - and it was right on the corner and that's when it was demolished.

3.49 So you were living there from about - what year would that have been?

1944 'til 1946?

And there wouldn't have been very much in the way of shops at that stage, or other houses in that area?

It was all ... mainly houses in Station Street. The original Nepean Times building and two other two storey shops alongside Nepean Times and next door to us was a wood yard where they used to cut block wood for the army, and that was mainly delivered by either horse and cart or a very old truck and there was no shops really until you got down to the corner of High and Station Street, which that was Bamford's shop.

4.49 What was the block wood for, for the army, was that for fuel?

Fuel stove ... block wood for cooking, and their stoves and their heating and that sort of thing. They had a contract which they delivered it to the army camps.

5.04 And after that time, 1946, where did you move to then?

Well I had a dream of a new home, being two years married, and we'd bought a block of ground just in High Street, practically opposite where the Eastern Inn is today and had the plans and everything ready to start building it within a few weeks, and my husband came home and said that the man the little tin shed where he operated his first little business wanted to sell the property and he would give us first offer of it. So, we had to then turn round and sell the little block and put a deposit on the ground to purchase the corner site - 598 High Street Penrith - where we've just moved from.

6.15 Was that residential?

From opposite Riley Street, the shops were down to opposite Riley Street, or just ... not quite where the Eastern Inn is.

On this block of land you built the workshop too did you, or just your house?

No, on the block of land, right on the corner was a closed up shop with a residence at the back, and then there was the small, as we referred to it as the little tin shed where my husband started off in business, and then a little tiny weatherboard house and a vacant block. That was block that was owned by the landlord that we rented the little tin shed off. We really only wanted to buy the part that my husband, but he said, no, he would sell the lot to us or to somebody else. So we had no alternative but to sell the other block that we were buying as quickly as we could and put the deposit on the 598 High Street, which ... that is the one that we conducted our business from since ... well my husband started in 1936. We moved there in 1946 and the little closed up shop was started as a joke because he said to me, "What will do with the old closed up shop on the corner?" and at that particular time I used to play for dances and teach music, and I was a little bit fed up with doing that plus going out at a night playing for dances, and I said I would give that away and I would start a shop.

And he said "What kind of a shop would you start there, because there's no shops down here at all it's only houses?" And so I said "Oh, anything. I'll get a general store - a little bit of everything. Whatever people ask me for I'll get." And that's what I did. So I wrote down anything someone would come in and ask me for. I wrote it down in my little book and I would get the smallest quantity I could buy. My first stock that I purchased, I sold my piano accordion to pay for that. So, that's how I started the little shop on the corner and then it became known, I think, all round Penrith that it was Scott's corner shop, so then it got the name of Scott's Corner Shop, and he had his little shop next door to me. Then we progressed from there and made the residence at the back liveable and we lived in that which was quite an ordeal in the first place because it had been closed up for many years and was very old and fallen tumbling down, and then we started to rebuild. So we started on the other end of the block to start to rebuild and come back to the corner. So we lived and had our business and reared our family and built all in one spot.

And you've lived there right up until now?

And I've lived there right up until, yes.

10.09 So you must have seen enormous changes in that area. What was it like when you first built there? Did you have close neighbours?

No, I've never really had close neighbours. As I say, my first little house that we rented in Station Street I had a street - Henry Street - alongside of me and the wood yard on the other side. When I came down to High Street I had Worth Street on one side of me, and then I had Jim's little workshop and a little old house which an elderly man had a little tiny fruit shop right up in the main street in Penrith, and then a vacant block. So I hardly ever see him. So I have ... sort of... never been real close to, lived next door to neighbours.

11.10 So did you feel a bit isolated, especially bringing up young children? I suppose you were so busy that you didn't have time to feel that?

Not really, that's right, because there was someone coming and going in the shop all the time. When we enlarged the premises more and rebuilt it all we put in a petrol bowser, so we opened at 5.30 of a morning and I was very lucky if I closed by 11 or 11.30 at night. So there was someone coming and going all the time in the shop, and in those days I also used to do sandwiches and snacks and take -away - they call it take-away today, we didn't in those days- and the gravel trucks would leave their order and pick them up coming back. So you were on the run all the time from the time you got out of bed 'til you went back to bed, you were on the run all the time and I, actually my first child, John was born six months after I moved down there.

12.24 You had your hands full!

So they were all good babies and easy to rear, rather than my daughter. My daughter was the one that got everything in the way of sicknesses, like ... those kinds of things.

12.45 Did you plan to have the three children, or was it just one of those things that happened?

Yes, it was just one of those things. My oldest boy, as I say, he was born in 1946, my daughter was born in 1949, and my youngest son was born in 1951. So I had three years and two years in between.

13.12 Did you have them in the local hospital?

I had . . . the three of them were born at Nepean District Hospital when it was Nepean District Hospital - the old Governor Phillip now, was Nepean District Hospital.

13.35 That was the hospital that most people went to?

Yes, it was the maternity hospital, general hospital - it was everything. There was no other hospital. There was only three doctors here in Penrith in those days, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Faulder and then after the war, Dr. Haleuring (?) came back.

And they serviced all the people in Penrith?

Yes, they serviced everyone in Penrith, those days, yes.

14.08 What about in an emergency? Was there an ambulance service or anything like that?

Yes. There was an ambulance service. Yes it was always ... the ambulance service. . where it is now But there were only two ambulance officers on duty all the time. Mr. Slatham (?) lived on the premises and he would be called out 24 hours a day, so he was just on call 24 hours.

14.38 And so when you built your house there, it was a weatherboard house I presume that you built?

Not down in High Street. No, what we did - we built our business on the ground floor, rebuilt my shop and a spare parts shop and work shop on the ground floor, and then a panel beating shop and the spray painting and all that at the back, and then we built our own home. It was above the shop, as it is now.

It's brick is it?

Yes, it's red brick, yes and it's still like it today. The red brick is our own home on the corner of High and Worth Street.

15.34 And so was it a big home? How many rooms were there?

Yes it was a big home. Four bedrooms and a very big lounge room. I think it is about 18 foot by 33 or something like that, the lounge room is, and it's a very big home. And then we also did our front patio in which is another 12 foot wide and another 30 foot long, and so...

You had plenty of room for the children!

Plenty of room for the children, and we've had lots of functions there. We've had many functions there for different organisations because I'm involved in a lot of organisations here in Penrith and so is Jim, and the children the same, and when we first ... we actually rebuilt twice on the same block and I just got it finished in time to have my mother and father's 50th wedding anniversary there. Then we've had many evenings, antique evenings and fundraising

evenings for the different hospital auxiliaries and the different church organisations and different service clubs.

This would have been during the 50's would it?

The 50's and the 60's and the 70's. Yes. And I've even had my children's 21st birthday parties there and all that because it all opened up right through and it all opened up on to a big patio at the back, so there was plenty of room.

17.26 **And I suppose the community spirit was fairly strong in those days too with everybody knowing everybody else?**

Yes, everybody knew everybody those days, yes. We also too, at Christmas time, it was really meant in the first place probably for the children round the area of Worth Street, High Street, Union Road and that area - "the bottom end of Penrith" we used to call it those days - and we would put on a Christmas party for them on Christmas week on the side street with a Christmas tree and give all the kiddies presents and ice -cream and drinks and that sort of thing, show them a Christmas movie. Also too the mothers and fathers all came along so we really never knew how many was there because it could be hundreds there! We would clear things out and make plenty of room and that sort of thing, and everybody got to know about the Christmas parties that we would put on and that sort of thing.

18.47 **Did you have an indoor toilet and bathroom?**

Yes.

And did you have the sewer on then?

Yes we had the sewer on, and we had a large bathroom which had a toilet and we also had a separate toilet next door and we also had another toilet outside on the patio.

All modern conveniences!

Oh, yes. Hot and cold water, yes.

19.17 **And you had electricity, electrical appliances like refrigerators and that sort of thing?**

Oh yes. We had all electrical appliances and we had oil heating in the home for heating set in a sandstone fireplace.

And did you have vacuum cleaners and Mix-masters and all those sort of appliances?

I didn't have a Mix-master for a long time. I didn't have a vacuum cleaner for a long time either. The first I had was a carpet sweeper, other than the straw broom, and of course there was not too many carpets around. When we rebuilt of course we had carpet and vacuum cleaners and those sorts of things.

Most people had board floors did they, or lino?

Lino mainly. Mainly Lino - Lino and board floors, yes. And carpets - they ... well you couldn't afford them, that was the whole thing about carpets in those days and they weren't making them anyway during War time, that's the thing.

20.45 What about the telephone - did you have a telephone service?

Yes. We had a telephone. Well of course -we always lived on the premises with the business, and our first telephone number was 205.

21.04 And did you have a garden or much land around your house?

Oh, in the backyard I had a little garden, which had the lawn under the clothes line and the clothes line was not a rotary clothes line, it was from one end of the yard to the back door and a garden round the edge. That's all I had time for having a shop and three young children.

21.32 I don't suppose you had time to keep chooks?

No, I didn't have any chooks.

21.38 And where did the children go to school? Was that nearby?

No, they ... the three of them - went to Penrith Primary School which was a matter of catching the bus and fortunately the bus picked them up from right outside the door of the shop and stopped right at the door of the shop. So they were very fortunate that the bus was right at their service.

22.07 And did they go on to High School in the area?

Yes. The three of them went from Penrith Primary to Penrith High School and they did all their schooling at Penrith High School.

22.25 **Did you go to school in the area too?**

No, not in Penrith. I went to Luddenham School and I didn't have the opportunity to come into Penrith to go to high school. As a matter of fact my brother, older than me, was the first one to go to high school from Luddenham, and he rode his push-bike which was eleven miles. My education was a lot from correspondence sent out to the school at Luddenham and the teacher would set our work and we had to do it that way, and that is the way I did it. I did do quite a few tech courses later on, even during the time that I had the shop and the children I was going up to the evening college doing different courses. I always wanted to be a nurse but my father always said that I wasn't strong enough to be a nurse and he wanted me to be a music teacher. So I had to be a music teacher, and I learned music and I studied music.

23.48 **And did you teach from the house there in Penrith after you were married?**

I taught from my parent's home at Luddenham, before I was married for a couple of years there in between going to work into Penrith, and I played for dances at night. Friday night those days was late night shopping. That's the only night that was mainly the working night. I played at Warragamba in the mess room where all the men had their meals every Thursday night and I played there for quite a few years, long before they ever had a hall.

24.34 **This was the men working on the dam?**

Yes, when Warragamba Dam first started I played there and they would go, the dances would go from eight o'clock to any hour of the morning. Our payment was ten shillings a night, and as I said we were likely to go through until one or two o'clock in the morning. You didn't get any extra naturally, for that. It was ten shillings. If you played for a ball you got twelve and six and you also had to find your own way of getting there. And also too there was petrol rationing and petrol coupons, and I used to get four petrol coupons a month. My father - we'd use his car, a 1934 Chev - and we all packed out instruments into that. So, with Dad's two coupons and my four and a little bit of kerosene and anything else we could mix into it, that's how we managed to travel all round the district.

25.54 **And this is before you were married?**

And this is before I was married, and that was for two years after I was married.

And did you have a car when you were married to get around in also?

I didn't have a car, no. My husband had a car. He had a 1928 Whippet which we nicknamed 'Bertha'. Actually it was a car that had gone over the Hawkesbury Lookout and was smashed up, and he purchased it from the people that owned it and put it back together again and done the panel beating and that was our car.

I suppose you needed in this district too?

Well it was your only means of getting around. We didn't have too many conveniences in the way of buses. The bus to Wallacia in the morning and a bus to Penrith night and morning. That's all there was. So if you missed the bus in the morning you had to wait for the night bus to get back home, other than walk or ride your bike, like I used to ride my bike. So that was my main means of travel was a push bike.

27.27 It was good exercise! And did the children ride bikes too?

Yes, my children all had bikes, but being that they travelled by bus to school, they didn't use their bikes for riding to school. I didn't let them on the street with them. We thought the road was busy then! Not like it is now!

27.54 Did they go on to tertiary education after they left school?

Well, my oldest boy, he went through his Intermediate, it was in those days, and then he went back to school and did his Leaving and subjects that he wanted to take he couldn't take because of the grouping of them, and after he'd done his Leaving I didn't know what he wanted to do or what he was going to do, and at that time we had had the local picture theatre for some time and he was the projectionist ... and without him we would have had to close the doors because, with television and all coming in and all that sort of thing, none of us collected any wages out of the picture show business.

28.59 Which theatre was this?

Originally it was the Dungowan which we purchased from Mr. Michorseman (?) and it was not a theatre then, although it was called a theatre. You have to have your licence reindorsed if you don't show pictures every six months, so we had to get the licence reindorsed. It was skating ... it had a bit supper room and we ran skating twice a week and a dance every Saturday night and at other times during the week we would run vaudeville shows and concerts and balls.

Were you involved in this yourself?

Mm.

In your spare time!

I was also involved in that - in my spare time, yes. I would take the children in the pram up to clean up, or clean up after. We mainly used to clean up straight after the function because we had to open up at 5.30 the next morning. So, it was all hands on deck to clean up after a function. We ran the place like that for about five years I think it was, something like that until we had the licence reindorsed to a theatre. And when we had the licence reindorsed, then we changed the name from Dungowan purely because of the length of the name Dungowan for neon signs, to Avon and it then became the Avon Theatre. And it was my husband's dream to build a. new theatre round the old one and we did that all but across the front of the building and that's where we got to when we sold it. We had it all equipped with all new Westrex (?) equipment, Cinemascope screen and everything ready for the new building.

- 31.11 So, that was our night time job, and our day time job was the service station and the auto-chef and Shell service station, so we didn't have many idle moments.

I won't ask you what you did in your leisure time! Did you actually run the whole theatre, your family ran it - you didn't employ other people?

It was a family theatre and it was run by the family and, as I say, my oldest boy - we had a projectionist and something happened one night and he didn't turn up and we never seen him from that day to this - and our oldest was always interested in the film industry and he got to the stage, the August before he sat his Intermediate, he would do the matinee and he used to do the matinee on his own while the projectionist just stood by and just watched that everything was right.

SIDE B

0.03 So ... the projectionist didn't turn up!

So I went up to the projection room and I put a record on as though the projectionist was there and the people down in the theatre didn't know he wasn't there, and I hopped in the car, went up to the school and called him out of the school dance, brought him down and he put the film on and he was our full time projectionist from there on. And he done his homework and studies in the projection box and then he did his two years - he did his Leaving and after he did his Leaving he decided he wanted to go back and take some courses that he couldn't take and he went back to school and did them.

In Penrith?

In Penrith at the High School and then after that we leased the premises, our service station premises out to the Shell Company. They didn't want our spare parts business because they were only interested in petrol and oil. They wanted my shop and the auto -chef part of it. So he then took over the spare parts business.

Our youngest boy was still going to school and so they came in together and they're in it today, together, so ...

1.58 So they both work there now?

They both work there, yes, both in the spare parts business, and they've now enlarged from one shop in Penrith to ... they now have four... and Jim has retired out of it and John and Dennis and myself are still in the business.

And my daughter worked in the business. We all worked in it as a family. We had to because that was the only way we could keep the doors open until one day we may be able to do something with it. And we sold the premises to Waltons, and I think that is Norman Ross, that's who is on the premises today, and that's on the corner of High and Station Street.

3.04 Did your daughter go to do further study when she left high school?

Yes, she did. She was always interested in pharmacy and she went to do industrial pharmacy which was a branch of Bristol Myers at St. Marys, and she went there, and she had to go to Granville Tech in those days because there was no techs in Penrith at all, and that was the nearest - Ultimo or Granville. So she had to go straight from work by train and then she would come home on the last train, about eleven o'clock I think it was, at night which worried very much, a young girl travelling on the train. And she had to walk about a mile and a half from the station to Granville Tech. She did that and she got sick and the specialist in the finish said that she had to give it away because it was too much study for her and the time that it was taking her - I think it was a four year or five year course then, I'm not sure - but she's still interested in that today. Pharmacy runs in our family. It runs in the family on my father's side and it's probably why I wanted to be a nurse and she went into that sort of thing, and she is very much into that kind of thing with animals. Even her daughter - her daughter is 15 and she's going to St. Paul's Grammar and she's going to do veterinary or agriculture or something in that line, that's what she is going to do.

5.27 And did you have lots of animals as family pets?

My daughter was the animal collector. She had two white rabbits and a little Pekinese dog and ... I sent her to get thistles up the back street which is a very busy street today, in Union Road, one afternoon after school and she came back with two kittens in the basket and not thistles for the rabbit. She is a real animal lover.

6.05 This was all paddocks and open ground then?

There was a lot of open space, yes. When we first built there, from our home above our business we could look onto Penrith showground and see the trotting and the ring events and all that sort of thing, straight off our back patio. We could look at the cars coming down round Lapstone. We could look across to Kurrajong Heights. We could look across to Castlereagh and we could look straight across onto Bellair Estate. Now, when you look in any of those directions all you see is concrete and bricks. You don't see anything of that.

That's a shame.

It is. It was beautiful.

6.51 And did you feel, while you were living there, did you feel this happening? This encroaching suburbanisation?

You could feel it closing in on you, yes, very much so. Especially when the Penrith Plaza was built. That's when it really made you feel that you were losing that atmosphere of looking out to the hills and looking out to the country and it was . . . yes. Well, when it snowed up on Kurrajong Heights we could see the snow from our front verandah. Because our front room's a bit ... before we closed our front patio in, which I said before was 30 foot long by 12 foot wide, and you looked across, we looked towards Castlereagh and Kurrajong Heights, across that way and when it snowed, the few times that it snowed there, you could see the snow from ... we could see it. And as I say, it was lovely to look out at night and look at the cars coming down around Lapstone. And Warwick Street just looked as though it was just there, it was so close sort of thing, and the big pine trees of the Judges' old home. The Judges family is an old family of way back in Penrith. Actually Judges had the first chemist shop in Penrith and we have a lot of their bottles as my husband has a large bottle collection and he bought out the interior of the old chemist shop. And it was lovely to look out and you could identify ... and looking out my kitchen window you could look straight up and I looked at the three steeples of the Catholic Church, the St. Stephens and what's the other one? Presbyterian I think it is, in Doonmore Street. They were straight in front of you, looking straight out my kitchen window. And I looked up ... and I could also look up a portion of High Street and I could see

Neale's on top of the hill, Neale's Furniture Store, Neale's neon sign - looking out my kitchen window.

9.30 A panorama. Are any of those shops still there today?

No. Well Neale's Store has been rebuilt completely now. The original roof of Bussell Brothers is still there if you look from opposite the Post Office and look across and look above the awnings of the present shops there you will see the funny little roof - we called it a funny little roof - and of course it was a big store - produce, groceries, clothing and everything those days. So, Neale's ... 'cause we had no supermarkets. They came a lot later.

10.16 How did you do your shopping? Did you just order things and have them delivered or did you shop yourself?

Well a lot of the people did ring up and give the shops their weekly order and they'd be delivered. But I had a shop on the corner which ... I had practically everything I wanted, so I didn't have to go up the street to shop very much other than for the butcher shop, Parker's butcher shop. Well he used to deliver the meat and I would ring up and tell him what my meat order would be and he would deliver it down to me. I sold bread and milk and everything.

So you didn't have the baker and milkman calling then.

No, I had a general store. I had a general store with the light meals and as I said the take-away that they call it today.

11.35 What about clothes shopping? Did you shop in Penrith for clothes?

Yes, I did all my shopping mainly at Fletchers which was in the centre of the town and ... well Neale's had clothing and Bussel Brothers had clothing. There were a few other little shops. Elliott's had a frock shop and Daisy Webb had a frock shop. There was a few other little shops like that, but Neale's and Fletchers were the main clothing shops in those days.

12.14 Did you ever have to travel into the city to buy anything for any reason?

No, I never got the chance to do that. I often wished I would go into town or sometime do that, but with a shop and young children I never ever did that. I think as far as I would go was to the bank, the post office and back to my shop.

12.45 And who did the accounts - the household accounts?

Well, I did a lot of it myself and then we had a man that used to come in twice a week. I had an office desk up the end of my counter, so when I was not doing something and serving and that sort of thing, I was up there at the end of the counter at my desk. So, I did a lot of it like that and in between serving people. I had a young girl that worked for me, and other than that I did most of it myself.

13.29 How did you manage the household money, or money generally, with the businesses. I suppose the housekeeping money came out of the businesses?

Oh, yes. Well I had my housekeeping money and so that was all there.

13.50 Were you actually paid a wage or a salary for what you did?

No, we didn't do that those days. Our main concern would be to pay the property off. Every cent went in to paying off the property to get it paid for and be able to buy furniture and to buy things, like that sort of thing, and give the children as much as we could give them.

14.29 And what about the roads in the area, were they pretty ... they weren't tar -sealed roads then were they?

No, the main street of High Street was concrete and it's been concrete for many many years. It was concrete, like it is today. But the side, Worth Street it was just dirt. It was dirt and it was not curbed and guttered or anything like that. We used to mow it with a hand mower along the footpath and the back streets, they weren't tarred or anything. They were mainly all dirt and High Street was the main street which was as it is today.

15.26 And what kind of industries were there in the area at that stage?

Not very many industries. The main think around was farming on the Castlereagh area, farming and orchards; Emu Plains mainly all orchards; on the Mulgoa, all dairies; and Luddenham, all around there were all dairy farmers with the milk truck picking up the milk every day in the milk cans and taking it to the milk factory, which was just down in Castlereagh Road, where it is today - the same place where it is today.

16.17 So there wasn't much industry. I suppose most of that was in St. Marys area?

Yes, St. Marys was the main industrial area when they started to build down there on the industrial sites.

16.46 **What about your health services. I asked you about the doctors and hospital, what about dental services?**

Yes, well there was dentists here in town. Not many of course. I think four may have been six, but I think about four, and they were dentists that had been in the town for many years. So, anything else ... well, you would have gone to Sydney for any other treatment mainly than if you just wanted to have a tooth out or a filling that didn't have any complications or anything. I know my father had a tooth out and it abscessed and he came back to the dentist and - the dentist's name was Don Hattersley - and he sent him straight into a Macquarie Street specialist and that was the nearest that we could see a specialist those days.

18.03 **And talking about the churches in the area. Do you think they played an important role in the community in those days in the 50's?**

Yes they did. They did play a very important role I think. Being that I was brought up in Luddenham, I went to St. James Church of England in Luddenham. I was the organist there for quite a long time. Even after I was married I went back until I started the shop, when I was open seven days and seven nights a week, I was the organist at the church at Luddenham. So I didn't go to Penrith church because I was still involved in the Luddenham church. But plenty of my friends that I got to know when I came to Penrith to live and that I knew when was working and when ... they all were involved in the church in some way or other.

19.09 **And it was a good social meeting place?**

Yes. It was, yes.

19.15 **I know you didn't have much recreation time, if any, but if you did - or what did your children do for recreation? Did you go on picnics or anything like that?**

No, as I said, seven days and seven nights a week ... no. My children ... we'd go up to the park where there were swings and a see -saw and when my mother and father would come in on a Sunday afternoon, because we were always open, and they would come from Luddenham, and sometimes when it was very hot Mum would say "I'll mind the shop. Take the kids to the beach" - down to Thirroul which was the closest for us, and always by the time we got there it had turned cold and it was too freezing cold for the kiddies to go in swimming, so we ...

Thirroul - that's a long way!

Yes, or Austinmer. Yes, so every time we did that, by the time we got down there it was too cold!

20.31 Did you swim in the river ever?

No, I was always very wary of swimming in the river because there was lots of holes in the river and lots of drownings and that sort of thing, so that I was very wary of my children. When we eventually got a pool in Penrith they would go to the pool and I had them taught swimming as soon as they were able to, with the school and in the school holidays and that sort of thing. but otherwise ... they were quite content those days to have their friends and do their own little entertaining things themselves and make their own fun.

Which they seemed to do in those days.

Yes, that's right.

21.30 Did you ever have time to go to the movies yourself when you had the theatre?

Well no. Sometimes we would have the same film - you're on contract with the films - and sometimes we would be on a contract that we'd have to run it for a week and everyone would say to me you must be sick of seeing that film and I'd think to myself well I haven't seen any of it because I've been too busy either cleaning the toilets, or cleaning the foyer, or re-stocking the refrigerators and the lolly counter and everything like that, because I'd run that in conjunction with my own shop down the road. So I was always flat out doing that or getting ready for the next night because as soon as the pictures would finish, we would clean up straight away all ready for the next night. And I'm afraid pictures were not my interest. Although we had the theatre, my father wouldn't ... when we were children ... he wouldn't take us across the road to pictures. He said they were shadows on the wall! But if it was a dance, that was a different matter. My parents both were very good dancers. So I grew up with parents that danced, and from the time I could walk, practically, we used to dance in the corner. So, it was quite a thing, and no one could believe, as a matter of fact no one could believe that I would ever give up dancing to play in a dance band, but I did. So, of course, I was not very interested in films, the same as I don't watch television very much either now. It's got to be very interesting - other than your news - that is the main thing I watch on television.

24.05 So when television started here, that made it difficult for you in the theatre,. Did you keep it going for long after that?

Well television started in October, 1956 - I think it was, 1956 - and we just had got our licence reindorsed and we had to do lots of renovations and we had to install the new equipment and everything like that. But we opened on Boxing Night, 1956.. which was just three months after television came to everybody's home, and everybody was so taken with television that they bought televisions and paid them off and they couldn't afford to go to the pictures. So we had a very lean time like that end we struggled through until when we did sell it, which was about 16 years later though when we sold it and the last six months to clear out our contracts we practically had a full house every night.

25.31 And you were very involved in lots of organisations in the area, which you talked about before. Did you ... how did you find the introduction of new people to the area from Europe after the War - the displaced persons who came to live out this way? Did you have much to do with European people?

Oh, well not a lot, not a lot. Well I say not a lot - but when you are in business you come across people from different countries all the time and they were always welcome in our home, and they were always welcome at our service station. And we got to know them very well and they are very good friends, and we are still very good friends with them today.

26.20 What nationalities mostly were they that you made friends with?

Oh, there's some German people and some Dutch people - quite a lot of Dutch people, English people, Italian people. We have quite a large variety of friends from lots of different countries, and as I say, they are still our friends today and we enjoy their company and have no regrets in any way.

26.58 And I suppose they changed your life in little ways, I suppose, like recipes etc.?

Oh, yes, we've exchanged lots of recipes and that sort of thing, only that lots of recipes that they have given me; Jim doesn't like all of them so I'm restricted that I can't cook them all the time.

27.29 I hesitate to ask this, because you probably didn't have time, but with all the orchards around did you make your own jam?

Often. Yes. Often. I used to have cooking sessions - night time cooking sessions in between - and Saturday afternoon cooking sessions. I always made seven apple pies every Saturday afternoon.

For the shop were they?

For the shop and for our own use and all that sort of thing. I've cooked all our own ... and most of the corned beef and everything like that type of thing - I cooked it for the shop as well. I was used to having home cooked food because the home that I ... my own parents home ... everything was home cooked there. So I was used to having all those kind of things, and my husband, being that he came from one side of Penrith and I came from the other side of Penrith, and strange as it may seem he had a similar home and he still likes his bread and butter custard and his rice custards and all those kinds of things, and steamed puddings, and all that. .And there's got to be home-made fruitcake and everything like that and that's all the things I was brought up to do. My mother was a good cook and my grandparents – my grandmothers - were both cooks. .And for jam, well my father was a pretty good cook as well and he would be on a grader somewhere in the district somewhere and he would arrive home with a case of oranges or a case of grape for grape jam, so I was quite used to that.

29.29 It sounds as though you had more than 24 hours in each day.

Yes.

29.35 What about the change, after reflecting on your life in that period and thinking about what it is today, how do you feel about the changes that have taken place out here in the west?

Well, I often think I'd like to go back to those days, because we had some lovely times and entertaining times and that sort of thing. Life is too fast now in a lot of ways, and there's just so many new people in the area and Penrith is not Penrith any more to me, because it's just not that big country town that it used to be. And I can remember when I had the shop and that and I said I'd go to the post office and the bank and I would often think to myself "I hope to heaven I don't meet anybody I know, because otherwise I'll be late back to the shop and I said I'd just be half an hour". But now, you can go there and you can spend a day in Penrith in the main street and you wouldn't know anyone. It's just strangers everywhere.

31.04 So it's become more impersonal?

Yes. Where everybody knew ... and everybody knew everybody's family, and what the kiddies were doing and where you were going, and everything like that. It was just more like a big family.

Last weekend we went to Gunnedah, which is a big country town, and it was just like Penrith used to be. While I was waiting for the lady I was staying with, people were gathering, talking to each other, saying "Hello Jack" and "Hello Mary" and "What are you doing? " and "Are you going to the Swap (?) meeting?". Then when Dot came out of the shop that she was in and we were walking along the street and she's saying hello to this one and hello to that one and I couldn't help but take me back to days when Penrith was exactly the same. Because I can remember when Friday night shopping was in Penrith those days, and I worked in Penrith on Friday night shopping and everyone would come into town and they would congregate in the streets

TAPE 2

and talk and it was a real night out. Not just a shopping night, like the shopping night is in

0.08 Penrith of a Thursday night. Everybody's rushing here and rushing there to one shop and another before nine o'clock, and nobody was in a hurry in those days. It's just so different.

0.39 One of the things in the shop, when I had my own shop, was the GPS Regatta Day. That was a big day in Penrith and you weren't allowed park in the main street, and I would go through gallons and gallons of milk with milk shakes and all sorts of drinks and ice -cream and that all sort of thing. And different people and all the neighbourhood around in the backstreets would come around and they gathered on my corner and most of my chairs would finish up out on the footpath, and they would sit to watch all the buses and the cars coming through with the different colours of the different schools coming up to the Regatta, and the trains. There would be hundreds of people get off the train at Penrith station and walk down to the river, and they were the people of course who bought the milk shakes and drinks and food and all that sort of thing, and it would be a fantastic day and everybody looked forward to that. Now the GPS Regatta can come to Penrith and go, and we would not even know it was even held. It just doesn't happen in Penrith anymore as far as the Penrith people are concerned.

2.14 **What about the Penrith Panthers?**

Well the Penrith Panthers - that is something that has come to Penrith in the latter years here now. Of course, naturally, we are all Penrith Panther minded at the present moment, but to me, I think that they're just getting too rough. I don't like rough games, although I follow and make sure that I know who did win. Show days was our days. Penrith Show used to be a big day, or two days, and then it became night shows, and we always had a stand over there. We did have new car agencies, the motor cycle agency, and we always had a stand at the Penrith

Show. So, that was always one of our main interests and then, of course, as I say, I'm in a service club. Oh I'm in more than one service club. I'm in Inner Wheel and I'm in the Quota Club, which is a service club too, and we always have a stand and sell different things at the shows. Plus I'm in the different other auxiliaries like the Hospital Auxiliary and the St. Stephen's Ladies Auxiliary, and of course when the children were going to school I was always in the children's things that they were in too. My daughter was in Brownies and the boys were in Scouts and so you were always active in taking part in those and when they had processions well we always used to do up our car as something or other in the procession, so that's always been ... we've always been very community minded, like that sort of thing.

4.34 **So I suppose you made friends in those community groups that you've made of the years?**

Yes, that's right. The Quota Club which started in October, 1956 - my husband had an accident in the process of getting the theatre opened and he was on crutches for seven weeks - and a letter came of introduction to this organisation while he was on crutches and I was trying to run his business and my own at the same time, and I would give him the mail to open. He read this letter and told me I should go, and I thought "Oh, I haven't got time" and it was night time, an even meeting at the Log Cabin. So he said "Well just go along, you don't know who has invited you". So I went along to this meeting feeling very lost and very strange because, of all the people I knew, I didn't know any of the ladies that turned up to the meeting. And they formed a Provisional Club so they had to have Provisional Office-bearers and I came home - and I don't know how it happened - but I came home being the Provisional President. I then went on to become the Charter President and I was Charter President for two years, and I'm still an active member in the Quota Club. And I don't have time to go to Inner Wheel because Inner Wheel's on Monday and they start about midday and that's a very busy day for me after the weekend, so I don't have much time to attend any of the Inner Wheel meetings. With the Quota Club I've had two trips overseas, and that to me is a marvellous organisation and a marvellous friendship because I've met so many ladies in other countries that I still correspond with, and in other towns like Gunnedah where I was at the weekend - I looked up a couple of the Quotarians up there and we had a laugh about different things we'd been to. It's a business and professional ladies organisation and I used to look forward so much to going to Quota every two weeks. It was like a month's holiday to me, being in business and not being able to get out. So that's just some of the organisations we have. And when our children were teenagers, and we leased the service station out to keep our children together and it then became our children plus all their friends. We bought a boat and they learned to ski on the Nepean. So I used to spend my Sunday mainly driving a ski boat

and as fast as you'd come in with two skiers, the other two were ready to go out. So instead of my family being three it was usually about nine, and I had so many of my children's friends used to stay over the weekend you never knew how many .. I've cooked for nine, quite a few years I've cooked for nine in the family, yes. It's only just now, in this last eighteen months, two years, that we are down to Darby and Joan with two of us.

8.50 **You have such a busy life. I think your father might have been wrong when he said you weren't strong enough to be a nurse.**

That's right. If he'd seen what happened the day he passed away, he definitely would have ... but as I said, he wouldn't let me a nurse, but if he wanted a splinter taken out of his finger or he wanted anything done like that sort of thing, he would not let my mother touch him. It was always me that had to do it and it was always me he turned to for help in anything like that. I always said that if I ever had to go out and do some work or be desperate or something like that I would go out and knock on the hospital door for a job.

9.49 **Well, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about?**

Well there are lots of things, but on the spur of the moment I wouldn't know where to start. Lots of things come to my mind when I think about one thing and it leads to something else. When my children were young and up until they started wearing gray serge trousers to high school mainly, I made all my own children's clothes, I made all my own clothes and the girl who worked for me in the shop, I made her frocks too. And I never had a bought jumper. I had a hand -knitted jumper, for everyone - all my children had hand -knitted jumpers and I did too. I even knitted myself about three frocks I think it was altogether, and many pairs of socks.

10.50 **Did you do this in the shop?**

Yes, my knitting was always around somewhere, sort of thing. And I did all my own housework and cleaning and washing and ironing and everything like that and there was no polyester those days either. It was all starched things.

11.21 **You've had a busy life and it sounds as though you've enjoyed it too.**

Oh yes, well I can't sit down, like even as I said, if I watch the news now, I can't sit down if I haven't got my knitting needles in my hand . I can't sit down and just watch something, I've got to do something with my hands all the time and I've been like that always. Dressmaking runs in my family. My mother was a dressmaker and I have her machine today, which I think

she paid seven pounds ten for from Anthony Horderns, and my father was always going to buy me a machine so that I had my own machine. But much to my father's disgust, I bought a machine on time payment at two and six a week from Bon Marche and he didn't believe in time payment things in those days. If you didn't have the money you didn't get it. You saved up until you did have the money. And I had my treadle machine. I still use it. I've have got an electric machine now, but I still use it, and only three weeks ago my granddaughter has asked me when I'm finished with it can she have it.

12.50 **Did you make these quilted cushions?**

Yes I did

They're beautiful. They'd take a lot of time.

Yes I did. Fancy work and all that sort of thing. I used to put fancy work in the show. In Penrith Show and Camden Show and Luddenham Show - sew all the year round in hand sewing. We did that when we went to school, my mother brought me up that way, because she was a dressmaker and both my grandmothers. My father's mother was a dressmaker and she made the . . . she even made for the Royal Family, and she used to make the professor caps and the gowns. She did all that and Dad's sister worked at Harrison Boyds which was a place in Pitt Street Sydney that used to supply them, and my grandmother on my mother's side was a dressmaker too. So dressmaking runs in my family so it's no problem to me. When I often would arrive home at three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon from work, because it wasn't all day shopping on a Saturday it was 'til 12:30. Then I had music lesson after that and then ride home to Luddenham, and I would have a dance to go and play for that night and I would open my wardrobe door and say, like we all say, I've got nothing to wear" and I always had some spare pieces of material. So I would go and pick out a piece of material and run up a dress and wear it that night. And that happened quite often. I paid for the machine. As I said, it was two and six a week, the payments on it, and in between going to work and playing for dances at night - I didn't play Monday nights and Tuesday nights - so I always used to make a dress and my mother used to get two and six to make a dress those days, and she would give me two dresses to make and that for the payments on my machine. So I paid my machine off in one year instead of two years, making two dresses every week. I had a set thing about that, and my father was quite upset because he refused to have the machine because he had to sign the papers for me to have it until the morning the man was coming to get it, and then against his will he did sign it and when I paid it off in twelve months instead of two years he wanted to give me some money towards it. And it upset him right up until the day he died that I would not accept anything for it because I was so determined, and I don't him I wouldn't take

a half -penny from him towards paying for the machine, because I was so determined. That is what happened on the machine.

16.16 Did you have time to practice the piano? I presume the piano was your instrument?

Yes, the piano, that's right. Yes, I used to get up of a morning and I did one and a half, two hours before I left to go to work. And we had the travelling by push bike in from Luddenham down to a fine art. It used to take me thirty-five minutes to ride from Luddenham into Penrith, which was eleven miles exactly from my gate at home to the shop I worked at. I worked at a music shop in Penrith. Music and lending library and musical instruments and all that sort of thing, and it was right in the middle of Penrith. I think it's the State Bank, it used to be the Rural Bank, but I think it's the State Bank there now - is built on the site where the shop was, and I worked there. I learned to play lots of other instruments while I was there as well and I nearly had a heart failure I think on about three weeks after I started there my boss went away for three weeks and left me his shop to look after. I treated it as my own shop and I think that's been one of the best things that ever happened to me because from there on I've always sort of treated everything as though it was my own business and that's what happened in my job, and from there we would go then and play for dances as well.

18.15 And your children growing up in the 50's. do you think they've carried on any of your industrious nature?

Yes, well my daughter sews, knits. She's just as active. She's only stayed home from work while she's had her two children and she's back at work. She's not satisfied with one job. She's got a couple of jobs and my boys are the same. They've worked nearly round the clock like I did, and still do, and they lead a busy life and they've got children. I've got seven grandchildren. I've got five boys and two girls between the age of eighteen years and fourteen years and babysitting them all at the same time can be a little bit of a handful. But we have no babies now. I ended up buying cots and prams and strollers and every other thing for that because I had the children quite a lot of a night. But they all lead busy lives, very busy lives, just the same. And they all live close. They all live here in the Penrith area, very close to us.

19.46 So you are able to give them support!

Yes, that's right I work in the business with them and, although I'm their mother, I feel like big sister, and that's the way we are and that's we look upon each other sort of thing, and we're very close as a family.

20.02 **And do you think growing up in the area for them. living here now, do you think it is better for them than it was for you?**

Well, I suppose yes, it is because there is a lot more opportunity for their own children. Yes, definitely, because their own children have got more opportunity with universities right at our doorsteps and that sort of thing and with the transport, our grandchildren have got golden opportunities and they are all doing very well at school. Our oldest grandson, he's going to uni and the other one will probably be going next year They've all got their goals of what they want to do and it's going to be ... their education is going to be much better and more opportunity definitely than what we had. You know the travelling is...

21.17 **But there are some things that you wouldn't mind having as they were in the old days?**

There are some things that I wouldn't mind having, that's right. There's ... I wish that I had the opportunity with education that they've got today because to me ... fortunately my grandchildren are reaping every benefit they can get from the education today. But it makes me sad when I hear and I see other young people that are not taking up these opportunities that they've got right at their doorstep to do something with their life, because it's a marvellous opportunity for them and Penrith is such a central place. It's so central to whichever way they wish to go, and they've got such opportunity. As I say, it makes me sad to see some of the young people who are just content to get the dole and not make use of their life. And when you are in business like we are and you see the young people that come and apply for the jobs, it nearly makes you cry when they can hardly write their own name, when they've opportunity like they've got right here. It is, it's sad.

22.46 **So there's good and bad about the changes that have taken place?**

Yes it is. Yes, there's a lot of good and I suppose, you know, there's good and bad in everything sort of thing, as I said. I only wish the opportunity, you know, was knocking at my door because I know that I would have taken the opportunity and we're over to the computer age now, and if anyone years ago had said to me anything about a computer, you know, I would not have even entertained the idea that I would ever finish up on a computer. Now I've been working on a computer today, most of the day, and I've just followed along and I just learned, and I've always been one to want to know how to do it and learn and I've been working on a computer since 1979, and as I said, with the primitive education that I had in the first place when you've got to depend on a primary school education and then go from that to correspondence - and then I finish up doing things like that.

You certainly have moved with the times!

24.07 Well, that's right. I've moved with the times. I have tried to keep up with the times. That's why there's lots of course that I have taken at the evening colleges and that and there's lots more I'd love to take. But I think to myself, well you know, if I take it I'm keeping some other young person out of the class, but it may not be that way I don't know.

24.36 **Well, I think we might finish off now. It's been most interesting talking to you and you're an inspiration!**