

INTERVIEW NO.27

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 13th December, 1991.

MRS JOYCE MOON
23 BROXBOURNE STREET
WESTMEAD.

0.22 My name is Joyce Moon. I live at 23 Broxbourne Street, Westmead. Date of birth 15th March, 1921. Place of birth - now you're asking me? I'll come back to that I think. Married. Nationality Australian. Number of children two.

1.12 **Good. And you were born in Sydney were you?**

No. Beelbanger.

Oh where's that?

Oh it's up Leeton way.

1.21 **Oh, right. So you are a country girl!**

Yes.

1.28 **OK. So just a few background questions. What sort of work did your father do?**

My father ... Dad was an engineer. He was an engineer before he came out to Australia and then he worked on Burrinjuck Dam and then he bought a poultry farm at Schofields.

Right. And he came out from England did he?

Yes.

1.59 **And so how long did you live in the Blacktown area?**

Well we lived at Schofields when ... I was about two when I went to Schofields, and then I was married from Schofields. And then we moved to Riverstone and we lived there for four years and then we moved to Blacktown.

So you've lived in that area for a long time. And when you moved here to Westmead, when was that?

Well Helen was four then and she's 36 now, so we've been down here about 32 years.

About 32 years ago. So that would have been in the '60s.

2.43 **Right. OK. So when you first lived in Schofields you were two years old. What was the house like that you lived in there with your parents?**

Oh, well it was only an old place when we first went then and then Dad built a big weatherboard place. It had four bedrooms and a lounge room, dining room and a kitchen and a bathroom and back verandah - round the back - and one across the front.

So it was a nice big house.

Yes, it was.

And it was weatherboard wasn't it?

Yes.

3.20 **And did you have an inside bathroom and toilet?**

Well we had the inside bathroom, but not a toilet.

Down the back?

(Laughs)

3.32 **And did you have a lot of land around the house?**

Yes. There was quite a bit. Not as much as what a lot of them had, but it was enough for poultry farm and we had an orchard.

Did you? What sort of fruit?

Oranges.

3.50 **So I suppose your mother made jam did she?**

Oh, yes. Mum was a good old cook. She made all the orange jams and fruit cakes and stuff and we had plenty to eat because there was always the cow – our own cow - and we had our own chooks.

Did you? You had your own cow too!

Yes.

And how about other things like vegetables and... ?

Yes. Dad grew vegetables.

He grew vegetables too?

Yes.

4.17 **So you wouldn't have had to shop for very much?**

No. And when the Depression was on well we were very lucky for that reason that - we could pick our own fruit and grow our own vegetables and having our own chooks. So we were lucky - and our own cow and that. So we were lucky. A lot better off than a lot of other people around us!

4.39 **And what about shopping? Did your mother go to the local shops for anything else she needed? Not that she'd need much!**

Oh, like the meat. Only for, you know, - we used to kill our own chooks - but I mean for chops and steak and stuff. And the baker used to call and the ice-man of course. (Laughs).

Right. That's before you got the fridge?

Yes. But otherwise, oh if the fruit was out of season and that, we didn't have oranges and that on; Mum went and did the shopping. Dad always had a truck - an old T-Model Ford - and he used to go and drive that.

5.16 **And was there any transport - any bus services or anything?**

No.

So if you didn't have a car you walked everywhere did you?

Yes. We all had bikes! (Laughs)

5.30 **Did you have any brothers and sisters - did I ask you that?**

No. Oh yes. I had two sisters, one older and one younger. My brother was the eldest, but he was killed in the War.

So while you were growing up there were the four of you?

Yes.

5.48 **And did you walk to school?**

Sometimes we walked and sometimes we rode. We had two and a half miles to go to school. And sometimes we'd walk and a lot of the time we rode our bikes.

And you thought nothing of it I suppose?

No. It didn't worry us. I reckon that's why we're so healthy now! Because we had to walk or ride our bikes. Plenty of exercise.

6.17 **And did you go to high school after that - after primary school?**

I went to high school. My sister didn't go 'cause she was very sick. She had a bad bike accident. But I went to Parramatta High School for a while.

Did you? And how did you get there - by train?

Yes.

And was it far to walk to the station?

Oh yes. It was about two miles to the station every day. Well even when I left school and went to work - I worked in Sydney - I had to catch the train every day.

And walk to the station?

Yes and then walk home of a night. And now they whinge if they've got to walk round the corner!

That's right - that's what legs were made for wasn't it!

Yes.

6.59 **So what sort of work did you do?**

Well I worked ... I was in the office where they were making ... I didn't go to work until the War broke out and then I was in the office where they made military clothes.

Oh right. Was that part of the Manpower scheme?

Yes.

You had to work there?

Yes. Also I used to help on the poultry farm before that 'cause Dad, he got a job, and he was out working and my brother and I run the poultry farm.

That would have been hard work?

Oh it was.

7.35 **What did that entail?**

We had to feed the chooks, collect eggs, pack eggs, water the chooks and that.

All day long, I suppose?

Yes. 'Specially in the heat, in the hot weather, you know. And it was pretty hot those days.

Hard work!

Yes. My brother used to milk the cow. Mum made all the - we had to separate the milk – and made our own butter.

Did you?

Yes.

8.03 **And did your mother make clothes? Did she sew at all?**

Oh she sewed a bit. But not a lot. No.

8.12 **And so what year was it that you were married?**

I was 22 when I got married.

So that would have been about... what year were you born?

1921.

That would make it about the early '40s wouldn't it?

Yes.

8.40 **And so where did you move to when you got married?**

We lived in Riverstone then.

You moved to Riverstone. Did you build a house then?

No. We only paid rent for one.

Did you?

Yes.

8.52 **Can you remember how much rent you paid when you first moved in?**

Yes. Fifteen shillings!

A week?

Yes. (Laughs) Had it paid into the bank every week for ... Miss Shirley owned it.

Miss Shirley? Oh.

Yes. It was right opposite the Church of England Church in Elizabeth Street I think was the name of the street.

9.18 **And what sort of house was that? A weatherboard?**

A weatherboard place. Only a small place it was. It had two bedrooms, a lounge room and a dining room, kitchen, little back verandah.

And how long did you live there?

Oh well I had my son there and he was four when we moved to Blacktown.

9.34 **So what was it like there where you lived in Riverstone? Was it countrified or was it built up?**

No, no. There was quite a few houses around.

Did you have next door neighbours?

Yes. We had quite a few. You know, it's gone ahead a little bit now, but I don't think it's gone ahead that much, really.

You don't think it's changed that much since you were there?

Not Riverstone, no. They've built out a bit further, they have, and there's some big homes and that gone up, but there hasn't been that much change I don't think around Riverstone.

10.08 And so then you moved to Blacktown, and that would have been... let's see ... so you would have moved to Blacktown in about 1948?

Yes.

So whereabouts did you live in Blacktown?

In Flushcombe Road, right opposite the Public School. So Warren only had to run across the road.

So that would be in the middle of the shopping centre now!

Yes. Now. And there was a vacant block of land next door to us and there wasn't that many shops around then. There was the bake-house - we went out through the back of the vacant block and we went into the bake-house then. Hepplewhites were there and Jimmy Sing. They were down ... he had the grocer's shop and Bubbles Sing had the fruit shop. Greenaways were there on the corner. There wasn't much, you know, a lot of shops around then.

11.10 Did you get things delivered or being so close I don't suppose you did?

No I used to just duck out through the back, go through the vacant block, and I was more or less in the shops then. So it was quite handy that way.

11.23 And did you build that house?

No it was Gordon's auntie's place. It was a fibro-weatherboard place.

And how many rooms would that have had?

There was two bedrooms, the dining room and the lounge room and the kitchen and a bathroom and laundry all in one. Then we altered it when we went down there and built the laundry outside and just had the bathroom. Then there was a little verandah on the front and a verandah at the back.

11.57 Did you have the sewerage on there?

No. We didn't have the sewer there.

So you had the...

Pan man!

Right. Down the back again!

Down the back again's right!

12.12 And what sort of electrical appliances did you have in that house? Did you have a fridge?

Yes. We had the fridge and we had an electric copper and we had the electric stove. We didn't have a bath heater. We had a chip heater.

So did you have to collect the wood for that or did you buy it?

Oh well we just used paper and that in those.

Did you?

Yes. and stuff like that. But we had an open fire in the dining room and in the lounge room. Gordon used to go up - well we didn't have far to go in those days till you were in the bush in Blacktown - so we used to go up and get wood.

Did you - collect your own wood?

Yes. For the open fires - in the winter time.

They're lovely aren't they, the open fires?

Oh yes.

A bit of hard work!

13.04 Oh I loved Blacktown when we lived there because everybody ... it was like an old country town and everybody knew everybody and, you know, it was really good. I wouldn't want to go back there now!

Why is that? Is it just too busy is it?

Yes. Too many - I shouldn't say it- foreigners there now. But I shouldn't say that. You go up there now and you never see a soul you know hardly. We went down the street once-upon-a-time you knew everybody down the street. But those days are gone I'm afraid.

So it's not so friendly now that it's bigger?

Oh I think too, they spoiled it really. They've got all the shops down one end. You know friends that I know up there say you've got to go right down that end of the town now instead of up Sunnyholt Road. There's no grocery shops and that up that end now.

14.04 So you think it was bad planning really?

Oh I do. I think they did muck Blacktown up the way they planned it.

14.12 And so the house you lived in, would that be...?

That's gone now.

That's gone- what's in its place?

Fish shop.

14.22 Oh really. So how did you feel about that when it was demolished?

Oh we didn't like it. Well it wasn't demolished actually. They shifted it. The chap that bought it shifted it along Reservoir Road. I think it's still up there. He shifted it out there and put it up. But oh, it got too noisy, otherwise you know, being so close into the town and that.

Is that why you moved?

Oh, more or less. 'Cause we had the Post Office just across the road and the school was just across the road and everything was so handy.

15.01 Yes. So your children only had to cross the road to school from there?

Yes. Well Warren did, but Helen, see she didn't start school - she came down here and she went up to Westmead then.

So it was very handy for everything, but a bit too close to the hub of everything?

Oh, yes. And when it got bigger, when they started building shops right on us. 'Cause we had the vacant block next to us, well people of the name of Wiggins bought that and built a brick home on there. Well then they sold out and Stone's Furniture Shop built there, so you were sort of in the middle of all the shops then. It started to get too noisy.

So you've seen a lot of change there then haven't you? From the quieter village to what it is now.

15.51 And what would your daily routine have been? Did you work at all when you were married?

No.

So how would you have filled your day?

Oh well I used to work for the Mothers' Club at the school and I used to go over and do the milk of a morning for the kids at the school, and I belonged to the Country Women and I was in the Red Cross.

You've been busy!

Yes.

And did you make a lot of friends in those community organisations?

Oh, yes.

16.24 **And did you sew for your children or...?**

I did for Warren, but not for Helen.

And did you cook much?

Yes. Oh, yes. I used to do a lot of cooking.

Did you make jams and things too?

Yes. Still do! (Laughs). Oh yes. I mainly make the orange jam and the grapefruit, but ... and I make all my own pickles. All the kids - all my grandkids - won't have bought pickles. They'll only eat what I make.

Nothing like home-made pickles!

17.07 **And what about the household finances? Did you manage the finances or did your husband do that?**

Oh we both did a bit of both.

A bit of joint management?

Yes.

And did you...I suppose in those days you bought everything for cash.

Oh yes.

There was no plastic money around then.

You don't buy them if you ... you just wait and you get enough money and then you buy it. I don't believe in paying off things or time payment things. I never have done. I think it was because my father was very up against those things and that's why he sort of instilled in to us "You don't buy anything unless you can afford it!"

You save up first. That's different today too isn't it? Everyone wants everything straight away!

In a hurry! Well that's what I say about our kids. They've got more than we ever had when we were first married you know. They've got dryers and washing machines and all that sort of stuff.

18.09 **And what about clothes? Did you buy clothes locally or did you have to travel into Parramatta or Sydney?**

Oh no. The shops were all right for clothes, but sometimes you go into Parramatta, but I mean the shops in Blacktown were all right for clothes.

18.29 **The health services - what were they like? Did you have your children at local hospitals?**

I did. Warren was born at Blacktown; Helen was down here at the hospital up here. But, no ... the doctors were all good, always I found them all right.

In any emergencies you had doctors around?

Yes. Not that we had many! Only Warren - he used to get whoop when he was younger of a night time, but the doctor just lived a couple of doors up so he'd run down, you know, he was just like one of the family. You know how you get to know doctors in your country towns.

Yes. And they'd come at any time or night in those days?

Yes. He'd run down in his 'jamas! (Laughs)

Good service!

19.23 **And what about industry in the area? Was there much industrial development?**

No. Not really. Not round Blacktown there wasn't, you know.

And did that change - it's more industrial there now isn't it?

Oh yes. A lot around on the other side of the road. The ice-works was up Campbell Street when we were there, like just up the road. But that was about the only thing they sort of made around there.

And most people had to travel to work - to go out of Blacktown?

Yes.

20.09 **So what about the roads and transport? Were they sealed roads?**

Some of them right in the town, but the other weren't you know, once you moved out of the town it wasn't. No they were - as far as roads go - I suppose they were all right.

20.30 **And there wasn't any bus service or anything in Blacktown then?**

No.

So it was still just the train or the bike or you walked?

Yes. Well we didn't have a car then. Gordon had a motor bike but we didn't have a car then for ... I don't know, I can't remember when we first got our first car. While we were living in Blacktown but I can't remember when.

20.58 **And what did you do for recreation?**

What in Blacktown?

Yes.

Well we used to make our own fun in those days. There were a whole lot of used to have parties and we'd go to one another's houses and we used to play a lot of cards, and as a matter of fact we had a - what we called 'The McCard Girls'. There was 16 of us and we've only just broke up because there's only three of us left.

Goodness.

It went for about 35 years and we never had a cross word!

That's a record!

It is. They were a wonderful bunch. A lot of them passed on and some moved away and that, but the only three or four of us that's left now, two of them's too sick to come and there's only two of us left! So we sort of give it away. It's only the last 12 months we give up though.

Did you?

And there was 18 of us, so we used to go every Thursday night, and we'd go from ... every one of us took it in turns at having it at one another's houses.

So you kept up those friendships for all those years?

And they played tennis and, you know, and they had parties and things. Oh, no. There was always plenty to do. You didn't get bored or anything.

22.28 **No. And did you go on family picnics and that sort of thing?**

Yes.

What about in the school holidays? Did you ever go away to the seaside or anything?

Yes. We used to go to Foster.

Oh did you?

My Mum and Dad moved to Manly and Warren used to go down there and stay with them at times too. We seemed to have plenty to do.

22.52 **What did your children do as teenagers for recreation? Did they go to the pictures and that sort of thing?**

Oh, Warren's a great Air League boy. He always has been. He still is in the Air League. He's gone right through the Air League and he's right up in it now of course. He always says well the men gave up their time for him and he thinks he should do the same for them. He loves the Air League.

So he's still involved with it now?

Yes. Oh quite a few of his mates are still in it, that was in it when he was in it.

23.33 What about your daughter? Did she go to the pictures or go dancing?

No. Helen was ... she wasn't in ... she was only born...

She didn't really grow up there?

No. She was four when she came down here see. She was more or less a teenager up around this area - not in Blacktown.

23.57 And how does it compare with the sort of things you did for recreation as a child? You played more...

Sport.

Sport, did you?

Yes. Well we played vigoro and, you know, you played cricket and that with all your neighbour's kids and things like that. But, I don't know, the young ones these days don't seem to do those things do they?

Perhaps television's influenced them a bit there!

24.27 And you mentioned you were involved in the Red Cross and the Mothers' Club and those sort of organisations. And after the War did you notice many of the migrants that came out here from Europe? Did they settle around Blacktown area did you notice?

Not for a long time. They didn't seem to get out that far. 'Cause we were living back in Riverstone when the War ended and then we moved like after that down to Blacktown. But they didn't seem to come out that far for a long time.

25.05 And what about the market gardens? They were usually run by Italians or Maltese weren't they?

Oh a lot of the Chinese had market gardens up around that area. The Chinese had market gardens down the bottom of our place when we lived at Scho-ie when we were kids. So, I mean, they've been out there all that ... for years! All their life I suppose.

25.36 **And so when the population started to grow in Blacktown and the shopping centres were more built up and that kind of thing, how did you feel about that?**

Didn't like it much! (Laughs) But not much you could do about it! Oh I often say, you know, I was sorry when I left Blacktown. But it wasn't the same old Blacktown that we were used to. They all moved ... all our friends seemed to moved out too. They all came down this way so we're all still close around.

26.14 **A lot of people seem to have left Blacktown. Do you think that is a result of it growing too quickly, too big?**

I think so too. A lot of them didn't like it you know, they said. It was badly laid out and it got too noisy and I don't think the roads could take the traffic either. There was always some traffic jams up there.

26.43 **So when you think about what your life was like in the '40s and '50s, how do you feel the changes that took place there... how do you feel about those changes? Do you think some of them are good or what sort of things did you like more before the place grew?**

Well being a country person I like a quiet life and I don't like a lot of ... you know I don't like being in the shopping areas or anything like that. It's too noisy. I love the bush. Give me the bush any day! (Laughs)

And so you would have called it bush, I suppose, when you first went to live there?

Oh, yes. There was a lot of bush around Blacktown still then.

27.34 **And what about the feeling of security? Having to lock up and that sort of thing?**

Well when we first went to Blacktown you could go out all day and leave your house undone and nobody touched anything. Then of course it got worse and worse. And I mean even when we first came down here we didn't shut our windows when we used to go out, but now you can't go out and leave your windows open.

And walking around the streets at night and that sort of thing?

I used to walk round here. We used to go round some friends at Joyner Street but I wouldn't walk round there at night now. I'd drive round, but I wouldn't walk round.

And it would be the same in Blacktown too?

Oh, yes. It's a shame. Oh even when we were younger, when we lived out at Schofields, we used to walk from our place at Scho-ie through the bush to the railway at Scho-ie of a night time and not think anything of it. But I wouldn't want to walk through there now.

No. And as a child you felt quite safe and free to do that?

Oh yes.

And your mother didn't worry about you?

No. But, I mean, now you can't let your kids do that. It's a shame isn't it?

It is.

28.57 **So did you feel - by the time you left Blacktown – did you feel you wanted to move because of the encroaching buildings and suburbanisation?**

Yes. We came down here but I said I'd never go any further down, you know, I didn't want to ... we come down this way for Gordon's work to be closer work, but I wouldn't go any further.

Further towards the city, you mean?

No.

29.33 **And so do you think it's better... how do you think young mothers for instance, living in Blacktown now - how do you think they fare as well, you know, their lives would compare to your life as a young mother?**

Oh I think they'd have a harder life than we had!

Do you?

I do. I'd hate to be bringing up children around that area.

In what ways do you think it would be harder?

Oh I don't know. I think there's not as much space up there. They're all jammed in. The kids don't have the ground to play on like they used to have. And I mean they couldn't let their kids go out and wander around like our kids used to.

So they'd have to keep tabs on them all the time?

Yes.

30.27 **And do you think the shopping's better than it was or...?**

Oh well I suppose as far as shopping goes, but you go up there now, I mean, when we lived up there we knew everybody in all the shops. Everybody was like friendly to you and you got served and everything else, but now you go through the supermarkets and you don't get served any personal attention or anything.

No. It's rather impersonal.

You'd go down before and they'd serve you and you could have a talk and that. There's none of that these days.

31.06 **And the traffic I suppose is another thing?**

Yes. No parking up there much. I don't go to Blacktown very often. I very seldom go up there. I've got nothing to up for now. I like to see a few of them up there that I know, but there's not that many left up there now.

31.31 **I think we've just about covered it all, so, unless there's anything else you'd like to tell me about I think we've covered everything now. Anything else you can particularly think of that's changed since you were young - say in the late '40s and early '50s?**

No really, no.

OK. Well thank you very much for your time.

END OF TAPE.