

ANDREW ALLEN'S ORAL INTERVIEW

WITH KATHLEEN NEWHOUSE ON

13 NOVEMBER 2024

AA This morning I am doing an oral history with Kathy Newhouse. Can I call you Kathy? I am with Bernadette Stevenson at Kathy's place in Cordeaux Street, Campbelltown, and I am Andrew Allen.

Kathy, can you please tell me whereabouts you were born, and when you were born?

KN I was born in 1951 in Crown Street Women's Hospital. My early life was in Pearse Street, Baulkham Hills.

AA When did you come to Campbelltown?

KN I came in 1959, when I was seven.

AA Can you tell me a little about your family?

KN Dad worked for Jensen, the builder from Campbelltown. There was a timber mill just outside of Campbelltown, over near Leumeah - Mullery's Joinery it was called, and he worked there for many years. Mum was a homebody, as mums were in those days.

AA Did you have any brothers or sisters?

KN One brother, John, he was born in 1953.

AA Do you remember much about pre-Campbelltown times? Is there anything you remember?

KN I went to school at Merrylands, it was either East or West, it was where I started school. I came to Campbelltown in second class. Dad was building a house in Allman Street for about five years. We stayed at my grandmother's place at Merrylands for those years, before we came up to Campbelltown.

AA What was it like having to move house? At that age, was it difficult?

KN I don't remember it so much. I remember the move I made eight years ago in Campbelltown. That was only my second time ever. I was in the family home for fifty-six and a half years.

AA Whereabouts was that?

KN 22 Allman Street, Campbelltown.

AA Is it still there?

KN At the moment, until Council decides to pull it down.

AA Hopefully they won't.

KN They call it progress.

AA So which school did you go to here?

KN When we came to Campbelltown I started second class. I didn't have much schooling before that because I had a very big eye operation when I was five, and I had my adenoids and tonsils out when I was six. In those days it was very much a long time to recover from those operations.

AA You wouldn't have had very far to go to school, would you?

KN No, where I am now in Cordeaux Street, it was two streets down, in the other house it was only just around the corner. I still walk past that school today.

AA When did the vision go? Can you tell me a bit about that?

KN Well, I've always worn glasses, but I had a turned eye, that was the operation I had when I was five. I just went to school quite normally, and I matriculated and got a diploma in music. I was in a car accident in January 1978. It was a brain stem injury rather than an eye injury.

AA So you would have been in your twenties?

KN Mid-twenties, yes.

BS Now I know where you have your love of classical music, when you borrow.

KN That's true. I studied music in Campbelltown High too. There were only two in the class in the end, in years 11 and 12 they now call it, it was fifth and sixth form when I was there. I was one of the first to do music at Campbelltown High. It's a Performing Arts High School these days, but it wasn't when I was there.

AA Did you play instruments?

KN Yes, piano. I learnt the violin for a short time, but I've got major technique problems, and I haven't touched it since. But I love the pipe organ and that was my second instrument. I used to play at St Peter's here, and I had quite a few years at St John's Anglican Church at Camden, I was assistant organist there.

AA Has your vision stayed the same, or has it deteriorated?

KN I'm getting cataracts, but I'm not noticing that at this time. I've had training with the Guide Dogs Association and Vision Australia, and that will continue on.

5 mins

AA Can I ask what, for a better word, percentage are you?

KN I'm classified as legally blind, but it's a brain stem injury, the cortex part of the brain, I was told.

AA Besides music, is there anything else, what other hobbies have you got?

KN Gardening.

- AA** You've got a wonderful garden. It's a beautiful home and garden.
- KN** I listen to audio books these days. I used to read print. I've always loved books. Walking, short walks these days, not so long, but I still love walking. I am a member of Myrtle Cottage in Ingleburn. Originally it was for the physically disabled, but these days there are people there who have got Down Syndrome and a bit of mental disability, going there as well. I have been a member of that for forty years, I am a life member.
- AA** So you would have made a lot of friends there. That's a great set up there. What about your brother, is he still alive?
- KN** Of yes, he has just retired from being an accountant. He's down in Mittagong these days, Colo Vale actually, that's the suburb.
- AA** Ok. Changes in Campbelltown over the time you have been here. What sort of things have you noticed?
- KN** I'll go right back to when there used to be a train between Campbelltown and Camden. My brother and I were on the last trip going to and from Camden. In those days it went along the Narellan Highway. I couldn't imagine that now actually. I've written down a few things too. You used to go to Liverpool by steam, and then later diesel train, and pick up the electric trains from there. These days the electric trains go as far as Macarthur, I think. I remember the library being in what was the Council building, that was on the second floor. I've been a member for many, many years actually. My brother was a member until he moved away, and mum and dad were members as well.
- AA** It's a shame that train doesn't go any more, isn't it?
- KN** I think so. It would be a great tourist thing, bringing people out from Sydney to Campbelltown. It could be one of the tourist things.
- AA** Yes, and with all the traffic along Narellan Road, although it's not as bad as what it was, since they put that extra lane in.
- KN** It helps a little bit. I remember Macarthur Square being built, in 1977 I think it opened. I think Campbelltown Mall is turning 40 in September just gone, in 2024. I was one of the original shoppers of that shopping complex, and I still go there. I was going to say, where it used to be called the Downes department store, it's now where there is the secondhand bookshop, and an empty space at the moment, there's a coffee shop there too. Some of the shops I remember in Campbelltown, Macy's - a furniture retail, Coles - used to be on the corner of Dumaresq Street and Queen Street. I remember Retravisision, where we bought all the white goods, that was in Queen Street for a long time.
- AA** Whereabouts was Retravisision?
- KN** I think between Dumaresq Street and Lithgow Street. I think people would remember Willis's bakery too, they were in Queen Street. I remember Zetta's, which was a fashion shop that mum and I used to shop at.

AA Do you remember Tripp's garage on the corner?

KN Oh yes, I had forgotten about that, yes, I do.

AA Did your family go there?

KN Dad would have gotten petrol there, often.

AA You would have remembered the Old Post Office building, when it was a post office?

KN Absolutely, yes, I'm sorry it still isn't. I think the other one opened in 1974.

10 mins

AA So how do you feel about Campbelltown now? Do you like the way its heading?

KN I'm fortunate I'm in the CBD of Campbelltown. It's not changing in the area where I am, at the moment. I'm away from all the development. I don't like what's happening, but it has to change, I guess.

AA When you were a child or a teenager, did you go to things like the movies?

KN I used to go down to Dumaresq Street Cinema, which is still there.

AA Did your family go to church?

KN Yes, that's a story, we started off at St Peter's Church, but because we lived three streets down and mum was looking after her own mother, and the Methodist Church (as it was then, it is now the Uniting Church), that was just on the corner, so mum could watch my brother and myself going there. So we went to Sunday School there, and later Bible study. I am actually back at St Peter's now, I have been there for the last 40 years. I remember the bypass, in 1959 that was a two-lane dirt road. My brother and I could run along there. Mum would let us run along the street, it was safe, as long as we waited before we went down to Station Street, to get the train. How that has changed!

AA Yes, it's hard for me to imagine because I have only been here for 20 years or so. When you were a kid and you first moved here, do you remember any of the personalities or some of the older folk? I'm putting you under pressure now, aren't I?

KN You mentioned Tripp's earlier, that was one family. There were the Conway's.

AA I'm testing your memory. What about cafes?

KN Oh, the Monte Carlo. It was a milk bar as such, and you could go there and get a milk shake in the tall, silver container it used to be served in. Next door was a fish and chips shop where we sometimes got fish and chips, especially on a Friday night. I do remember the Monte Carlo very well.

AA They made good hamburgers I believe, did they?

KN They did. I'll tell you what was down a bit further, down Queen Street, I think somewhere near where Dredge's Cottage is, the place where veterans can meet.

It used to be like an old-fashioned grocery store, and there was a little old lady that ran it. Mum used to tell me this story, if you wanted something, she had a bit of everything in that shop, mum remembers asking for some bobby pins and she would get the step ladder and she would run up the ladder to get them down. We used to buy an ice cream in a cone. We went for a walk on Sunday afternoons, and we would stop off to get an ice cream on the way home. I was very young then.

AA Mrs Taylor.. do you remember Mrs Taylor?

KN I know the name.

AA She had the shop which is probably what you were thinking of. Now we've got McDonald's and all those. So Downes was where you did all your ...

KN We got my high school uniform in particular at that shop, but they sold a bit of everything, like Manchester. I tell you what was good, when we came here, we had one primary school, actually the high school was not even thought of yet, pupils had to go to Liverpool High School. I think Campbelltown High was opened in 1963, just in time for me to start. Oh gosh, over the years, Campbelltown North, Campbelltown East, Ambarvale, all these different suburbs have schools now, whereas we only had the one primary school and one high school in my day.

AA Did you enjoy school?

KN I did, I loved it.

AA Both primary and high school?

KN Yes, I did.

AA Did you have a favorite teacher?

15 mins

KN Oh gosh, not really, there wasn't one teacher that I disliked, I liked them all. I suppose I was fortunate in those days. I remember Mr Thomas in High School, he was the French master, and it wasn't me, but most of the other girls fell in love with him. He was quite handsome actually. Mr White in those days was the English master at Campbelltown High. I'm just trying to think of other names. In third class I had Val West. My brother is married to her niece, Heather. Then I had Miss Shoemark, as she was in those days, she had a combined class 4A/4B and I think there were about 42 in the class or something. Miss Tankworth who later became Mrs Power, she was fifth class. The teacher who had me in sixth class, her husband was the Headmaster of the Primary School at the time, I can't quite remember her name. Another thing about primary school, Val West always used to take the school choir as well, right through primary school.

AA I believe she was a popular teacher.

KN Absolutely. A lot of people in Campbelltown had Val West, and she was a lovely teacher.

- AA** Yes, she was a lovely person, I met her through the Historical Society.
- Ok, we have covered a fair bit in that short time, haven't we? You have got some photos there, so we will have a look at the photos, that would be great.
- KN** Oh, back in 1959 when dad was building our house in Allman Street, which is the street running up to Campbelltown Mall, that was the last street in Campbelltown.
- AA** So Allman Street was the last street in Campbelltown?
- KN** Yes, and on the other side of the house that dad was building was an old house called Ivy Cottage, and I believe that there is a photograph of that, down at the medical centre locally.
- AA** We've got a photo of Ivy Cottage in our library. I've seen photos of it. So can you tell me, was it on the other side to where you lived, and a little bit further up the hill?
- KN** No, directly opposite our family home, which is still down in Allman Street, and in fact (dad was a master builder), it was still there when dad was starting to build, and some of the rubble from Ivy Cottage is underneath the family home.
- AA** At 22 Allman Street? So, it was across the road from you?
- KN** Yes it was.
- AA** Directly across the road? I must have a look because I was never quite sure where it was. Did you know Elsie?
- KN** Absolutely I did. I went to school with her two girls. Her son is still living in the family home at the moment.
- AA** Right, I guess you would have known Elsie.
- KN** Her two daughters both did music, same as I did at school. I got to know them very well.
- AA** This is a bit sad, but do you remember the day that the two boys were killed on the corner of Allman and Lindesay Streets?
- KN** I don't, mum would have protected me from a lot of that, I think. I do remember it happening. That was a bad corner down at Allman Street and Lindesay Street, very bad.
- AA** Even though I guess there was less traffic it would still have been bad. I was going to ask you also, when you were at school, was there something that you always wanted to do when you left school?
- KN** Music teacher. It did happen for a while.
- BS** Where did you teach at?
- KN** At home actually. Well, I was qualified to teach at a school. At the time of the car accident, I was asked to teach music up at St Pat's, that was the girls' school up

in St John's Road, but sadly that was when I was involved in our car accident, so I never did get up there.

AA Where was the accident?

KN Woodlands Road, between Mittagong and Bowral.

BS It's nice to hear about Campbelltown because I wasn't from Campbelltown. I've only been out here since 84. I've seen lots of changes too. I remember when a lot of the shops were in Queen Street, like the old Venture, remember Venture?

KN Absolutely I do. It was a good shop actually. There used to be a fruit shop up where that was as well. We went there.

AA The Venture building has gone, has it?

20 mins

KN Part of it is where they are building the new RSL, I think.

AA And you would have known the people in Cordeaux Street around there?

KN Shirley Jensen is still down the road, I know her. I knew Mrs Ponsonby too.

AA My mind has gone blank, there was Everett, it will come to me later.

Do you remember Bradbury House? Do you remember the big house?

KN I know there was one, but I don't remember it. I was probably a bit young then. I do remember this; when we used to go out in the car as a family, and going from Campbelltown to Liverpool, each little suburb like Leumeah, Minto, Ingleburn and Macquarie Fields, they were all individual towns, and they were separated. You could tell at night-time there would be lights, then bush, then lights again, but these days it has all joined up because of development, sadly.

AA Yes, that's interesting, I think of it as one big development.

What about Fisher's Ghost as a kid, were you fascinated with Fisher's Ghost?

KN Well, in Allman Street back in 1959 and probably into the early 60s, the parade used to go up from Mawson Park, down Queen Street, along Allman Street and up to the park at the end of Allman Street, Hurley Park. And as a child, I remember this, at the end of it there was a steam roller, it kept breaking down, and the last bit of the Fisher's Ghost parade was the cats and dogs following after it. It was very much like a family affair. It's not like that these days of course.

AA People loved it, didn't they?

KN They did.

AA Let's hope they will bring it back, we'll see what happens with that.

KN They've still got the fireworks. I think they were in the old Campbelltown Showground.

AA They got ready for the parade at the showground, didn't they?

KN Yes, I remember the showground as a showground, before it went to Menangle, and that's where we would have gone to quite a few shows, early on. Campbelltown has changed, a lot. Where I'm living now, it was not nine units as they are now, it was just two houses.

BS They were nice big blocks of land then.

KN Also, where the car park is between the By-pass and Queen Street, right along from Allman Street up to Cordeaux Street, there were just houses then, there was no car park there. Quite well-known Campbelltown families lived in those houses. I can't quite remember their names.

AA Do you remember the houses on the other side of the By-pass Kathleen? The ones in between Dumaresq Street, Oxley Street, in that sort of area? I think Vince Tripp lived there.

KN I do remember them vaguely. There was an elderly gentleman down in Allman Street, and his house was one of the last ones to be pulled down before the car park went in, I can't remember his name though. He was a friend of mum's and myself. I know where the house was too, there was a Jacaranda tree, and it is still there.

AA It is hard for me to imagine houses being there because it is all car parks now.

KN It's hard to remember myself now actually, because I know they were there, I remember seeing them there. There was another family who lived in the house next to us, and the house is still in Allman Street, the Hinds. I taught Dianne Hinds the piano for a long time, I think she is up in Queensland now, but her mum and dad were in the house next to us for many, many years.

AA Well, Kathleen, thank you very much.

KN It was a pleasure, I have enjoyed myself.

AA It's been a pleasure for us, and thank you for sharing your story with us.