

ANDREW ALLEN'S ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW AT HJ DALEY LIBRARY WITH MARGARET BANISTER AND HER DAUGHTER DIANNE FINCH

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AA Margaret can you let me know please when you were born, and also, whereabouts you were born?

MB I was born in 1945 at Fairfield, but I moved to Ingleburn when I was 14 years old. My mother wasn't born in Ingleburn but grew up in Ingleburn, so I knew Ingleburn from the time I was born virtually, we were up there every weekend.

AA How did you feel about moving to Ingleburn at that age?

MB Good, yes it was good.

AA So you would have moved in the middle of school that year, would you? Were you at high school still, were you?

MB I travelled for one year back to Fairfield High to do Year 11 and I finished school, and then I went to work in the Bank of New South Wales at Campbelltown.

AA And you made friends fairly easily when you came to Ingleburn, did you?

MB Yes, well I knew all the next-door neighbour's children and everything because I had been visiting all my life, and I also went to school in Ingleburn for a few months because my grandmother had a stroke and mum came up to look after her, so I came and went to school there.

AA Right, so you were reasonably familiar with it then.

MB Yes. I went to the movies down in the old hall, and Mrs Carrick's for Minties and stuff afterwards, and chocolate ice cream. Yeah, it was good.

AA So whereabouts exactly was the hall?

MB It's still there - the School of Arts Hall.

AA Of course. Tell me about the house that you moved into when you first came here. Whereabouts was that?

MB We first moved into my grandmother's house in Cumberland Road. I slept on the veranda and so did my mum and dad. It was cold in the middle of winter, and then within a couple of months we moved into the house in Carlisle Street.

AA What number Cumberland Road was it? Do you remember? Is that house still there?

MB No, the house was right opposite Suffolk Street in Ingleburn. Pretty much, there now is a small block of just two storey little flats, that's where it was. But as soon

as my grandmother died and the house was sold, whoever bought it, it suddenly burnt down.

AA Oh. Ok and then you said that you moved to Carlisle Street after that?

MB Yes, I lived there in Carlisle Street until I got married. I got married at 19, and a couple of years later we built in Palmer Street, and that's where I was.

AA What number in Carlisle Street?

MB 93 Carlisle Street.

AA And you were saying before, that's still standing, but it's been altered a bit, renovated a bit?

MB Yes, it's still standing. There are still neighbours opposite there, that were there when I came as a child.

AA OK let's get on to your school days then. So, you were 14 when you moved to Ingleburn, so you went to Ingleburn – what school was it?

MB No, I went to Fairfield High and finished school (year 11) there. When I was 15, I got a job in the Bank of New South Wales. I was there five years or so, but when you got married back in those days you didn't really keep on working, plus we went to South Australia with the army as well, to live. So that was my working life. When we came back from South Australia, I worked at the bakery in Fawcett Street, Glenfield for a while, and then I had a family. We built our house and had a family.

AA Tell me a bit about your job. Did you like working in the bank?

MB Yes, I used the big, it was called the compositing machine, I think. You had to put the sheets in every day when the banking had all been done. Like whoever came in, you got their sheet put in and did the transaction and it had to all balance. Yeah, it was good, it was good.

5 mins

AA That was on the corner of Patrick and Queen Streets. So you travelled there from Ingleburn?

MB I travelled from Ingleburn in the old steam train. That was good too.

AA Do you remember the day that the railway became electrified?

MB Yes, yes there was much celebration. But it was sad too because of the old steam engines, they were good. When the kids were little, we used to run up to the corner when we heard it coming through, going out to the museum at Thirlmere or somewhere. It would blow its whistle at every station, and we would run to the corner and see it go through.

AA Let's get back to Ingleburn. Walk me through the main street of Ingleburn from when you first remember it, some of the shops that were there.

MB There were just the ones near the railway line. Further up - I don't remember much as a child. On the corner of Carlisle there were quite a few houses strewn along Oxford Road. Roy Watts's house was right on the corner of Carlisle Street and Oxford Road where Starr Partners is now. There were a lot of houses still there, a lot of houses round the corner. There was no Woollies. There was another old house which was Mrs Welsh's around in Carlisle and there was another brick house and that was the Police Station. It was Teddy Baldwin, and God love him, he just died this week - Norm McDonald, were our policemen.

AA It's hard to imagine houses in Oxford Road.

MB Yeah, there were.

AA Do you remember Ingleburn House?

MB No, that was gone long before I moved there but it was where Ingleburn Fair is now, that was where it was. My mother as a child lived over the other side of the line up towards the army camp. It was called John Street, it's where Precision Valves are now. As you go up through the camp they lived there. She lived there as a child before they moved over to Cumberland Road.

AA Any other sort of businesses in the town, that you went to?

MB We had like jewellery and there was a little butcher, and he's still there. There was a chemist and Dr Hallinan was there. There was just what we needed. There was a post office.

AA Did Percival's have the butchery when you were there?

MB Yes, they had it. Greg's father Harold had the butcher's. That's on the corner and it is still a butcher's now, on the corner of Macquarie Road and Oxford Road.

AA What about the Ingle? Do you remember the Ingle?

MB Yes, it's still there.

AA Is that still there, is it?

MB It's an op shop. Dr Hallinan used to be over in the Ingle to start with. You had to cross the line to go over there.

AA What sort of things did it have there that you could buy?

MB It had just the ordinary sorts of things. He was down one side of it at one stage. But I believe now it is bookmarked to be a multi-storey car park, but I might be wrong.

AA Was it like, a café or a general store?

MB I think it was more a general store from what I remember. By that time, we were going over the other side of the line.

AA There were two sort of general stores in the main street were there? Dewrangs did you say?

10 mins

MB Yes and there was McIlveen's and Smith's hardware. I think McIlveen's was more a general store, and I think I can remember going there with my grandma and you could still get biscuits in a paper bag. You bought so much, and instead of being packaged up it was all loose, and you just bought it.

AA And McIlveen's was there at the time the McIlveen family?

MB Yes, there's still some of those in Ingleburn, there's Sue.

AA What about some personalities from what you remember in Ingleburn – any characters or personalities of the town.

MB Around the corner from McIlveen's, Jenny Tregear had a little shop with wool and all sorts of things like that, a little drapery shop.

AA That's Clive's wife you mean?

MB Clive's wife, yes. There used to be I never knew them, he'd gone by that time, but Digger Black lived in Ingleburn.

AA I've heard of Digger Black.

MB He was up just behind where the Mobil garage is now. He was a bit of a doer in everything, yes.

AA He died prematurely.

MB A long time ago, yes.

AA I met his daughter.

MB It was a great big home, a beautiful big home just up the other side of Cumberland Road.

AA His daughter was in one day, they were trying to find his grave in Denham Court cemetery, but they couldn't find it.

MB A lot of it up there was unmarked in Denham Court.

AA Any other interesting or unusual characters?

MB Well, dad was very good friends with Greg Percival, Ron Dunshea. But there was one thing about Ingleburn - it used to flood and what's Dunshea's corner now used to go all under water quite often. They eventually did put pipes in, but it would go under flood quite often.

DF Grandma went to school with Peter Benson.

AA Yeah, he's an interesting man.

DF We love him, he was our dentist for years and years, a lovely man.

AA Did he ever try hypnotherapy on you?

DF Yes.

MB Not on me.

DF On me he did.

AA Did it work?

DF No, but it was fun to do.

MB His mother taught my mother to make bark pictures. I still have one at home, a small one. He lived in the same house on, what's the name of the road, Sackville Street, he's still there. I used to go up there with mum sometimes and sit there and watch. He's a gorgeous man.

AA Did you go to dances?

MB I didn't, no, because I married early and Trevor never danced, but mum and dad did, at the Progress Hall in Macquarie Fields when dad was courting mum. That's where they went to a dance every Saturday night. He rode up from Auburn on a push bike. But down Saywell Road, down the hill towards the railway line – my grandfather was the postmaster at Macquarie Fields, and one of his daughters, his youngest daughter Aunty Cyril, she ran that. It was in a house, they had a corner bench thing across the hallway, and that was the post office. But he, where the Mobil garage is now, he was a blacksmith at Ingleburn as well.

AA So you were married at St Barnabas. Do you remember much about your wedding, was it a happy day?

15 mins

MB It was, actually, but because we've had to arrange it within a fortnight, we had the reception at Carlisle Street, and then Trevor went off for seven months over to Malaya.

AA To Malaya, so straight after the wedding?

MB We had a week or two I think, and then when he came back, we more or less went to South Australia for another 9 months, to live there.

AA So, I guess you were pretty devastated when he had to leave so soon?

MB Yes, but I was still working, and he would write, just about every day. I used to drive home most days to get the mail at lunchtime – in my lunch hour.

DF The postie knew who you were.

AA So you worked at the bank, and you were 19 when you started there?

MB No I was 15.

AA Oh 15 – oh that's right, 19 when you were married and 15 when you started. Gee that's early. Do you know when the bank was pulled down?

MB No I can't remember, but it was there for a long while.

AA So you would have worked there in 19 – I'm trying to work out what year you were there.

DF I was born in 66.

MB In late 1960 as I was born in 1945 and went there when I was 15. That's when Gordon Fetterplace opened his first pharmacy.

AA That was on the other side of the road?

MB The other side of the road, yes, it's where the little mall thingy, the alleyway where the paper shop is. I think it was sort of there. We thought that was good because he would let us lay by beach bags and all sorts of things. He was such a nice fellow.

AA Was he?

MB Yeah, a lovely fellow. Very big and happy go lucky.

AA I guess that's why he was so popular and kept getting re-elected. He had a way with people.

MB He was just so good. I live opposite his wife now up in the village. One of his sons has been my vet for the last for however long I've had dogs. When he became a vet, I've gone to him.

AA What were some of the buildings when you were working at the bank? What was next to it on the same side of the street, do you remember?

MB There was what used to be Downes, it was Downes then, it's Spotlight now. I can't remember. We used to travel up by train, and there was me with the Bank of New South Wales, and just up towards Lacks Hotel there was the surveyor, John Daley. One of the girls from Ingleburn she worked there. Over the road was the Commonwealth Bank and Denis Collins worked there. He was a Collins from Ingleburn and Peter English was down in the CBC Bank, which is down the other end of the town, it's still there, the old building. It used to be the Macarthur Advertiser, that was the CBC building. There were just all sorts of stores. I remember after we got married, there used to be a big Coles on the corner of Dumaresq I think it was and Queen Street. That was where my mother always shopped.

AA Yes, where Subway is now.

MB There were all stores around behind the Club Hotel in Cordeaux Street, Venture and all those old ones.

AA The building that Venture was in, is it still there? Or is it totally demolished? Do you know?

MB I think it's pretty much – or no I think parts of it could still be there. It was a pretty big, red-brick building, right opposite the church just about, St Peters.

20 mins

AA Did you go to Downes much, to shop?

MB Yes, one of the young girls that I worked with, she lives up at the village as well, she used to travel to Narellan in Pansy, the train. So, she would go on Pansy, and we would get the steam train back home again. The cop station used to be – you went down towards the railway line, and the Railway Hotel was on the corner, well the cop station was there out of an old house too. I think it could have been the old courthouse. The old picture show – we used to go to the pictures in the old picture show.

AA Did you, that's the Macquarie Cinema you mean?

MB Yes on the corner there opposite the Courthouse.

AA Did you go on the weekend?

MB Yes

DF When dad's family moved down here, they were working on the land that had the silos on Appin Road.

MB They worked on several places out towards Appin and around Campbelltown and then he went to work for the Water Board at Kenny Hill – my father-in-law. He used to have a drink at Lacks every weekend.

AA Most people seemed to have drunk at Lacks.

MB There was the Railway and the other one, way down the end of the main street.

AA The Good Intent?

MB The Good Intent, yeah.

AA But he would drink at Lacks.

MB Yes, I would drop him and go back and pick him up and wait around with three kids - two kids then. He wouldn't drink and drive. I would drop the father-in-law home on the way – it was fun.

AA So where did you – so whereabouts in Campbelltown did you move when you moved here?

MB I moved straight from Ingleburn, I was 50 whatever years at Ingleburn, up to Macarthur Village – Macarthur Gardens Retirement Village, the one up near Macarthur Square.

DF There's quite a few old Ingleburn people up there, aren't there?

MB Yes, half of Ingleburn is up there, there's three lots of people from my street. Friends of mine, I was 93, she was 79, they've been up here nearly two years. I've been up here nearly three. They moved up here too, we've been friends for over 50 years. All the children went to school together and grew up together. Norm McDonald - the policeman and his wife, they were further down, they moved up. He only died last week, poor old thing. It was good to move up here

because I knew the whole area. There are so many people that live in the village that don't know where anything is. You know, we've been in this area our whole lives, so it was not much of a transition at all.

AA Going back a bit in the conversation, you said you went to South Australia for a short period of time?

MB Yes, he was in the army, and when they came back, they were posted to South Australia. I was having her at the time, so I had to come home a month or so before him because I couldn't wait any longer to travel. So, he took me half-way home and my father came and got me the rest of the way, and then he had to stay. He was home before she was born, but only just, and then he got out of the army shortly after that and went into truck driving.

AA How many children did you have?

MB Three daughters.

AA How do you feel about Campbelltown today?

MB It's a bit sad, and Ingleburn is worse. Ingleburn has just gone, it's dreadful. It's not a village, it used to be a village, it's not anymore. I think it's because everyone sold up and moved out, and there are renters in.

25 mins

I know I was one of them that sold. They just rented the houses straight out and they're waiting for all this four and six-storey, because they are so close to the town, and it will be just high rise everywhere. The renters you get – some renters aren't careful, my old place looks like a bomb has hit it. It's just sad, it's just old. In Campbelltown they are knocking down all the beautiful old homes.

DF The history is not surviving.

MB It's not surviving and it's a shame.

AA You would have seen a lot of buildings in Queen Street demolished from the time that you were working there.

MB Yes, and in Dumaresq Street I used to go with a chap before I met Trevor, and he lived down the end of Dumaresq Street towards the railway line. They were all little shacks, little, small houses and it used to flood down there and everything, all the time, it was a terrible place. All the buildings in Queen Street, to get back to the station to go home and things, you had to walk along the back of what is now Spotlight and all that. But it was virtually nothing, it was bare land.

AA Do you remember the house in Milgate Lane or is that going back too far? What about, I guess you talked a bit about Railway Street, like you talked about the Police Station, do you remember the other buildings in Railway Street and behind?

MB There was the courthouse going back like it does, and the Police Station was there. I can't remember - whether there were small houses, like as you come up

Broughton Street. But Lacks took up a lot, it went around the corner. I can't remember what was in between that, and the old Railway Hotel. We walked round that way to go to and from work.

AA There were more buildings between Patrick and Railway Streets weren't there, where the car park is now?

DF What was down the other end of Queen Street where the old coach house and all that is?

MB Well, the CBC Bank sort of sat on its own a bit and there was the other big hotel that was down there. The Post Office was there then. It was there in the main street, it wasn't where it is now in Dumaresq, it was there. Cause I used to come up from Dumaresq Street to ring mum from the Post Office because there were no phones, no nothing.

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

MB No, no.

AA What about cafes, did you have lunch at cafes?

MB Not that I can recall, we sort of – there wasn't much of that sort of thing around then like there is now. As I said, most of the time I was driving home to get my mail.

AA You wouldn't have had much time.

MB No, oh dear, dear, dear.

DF There wouldn't have been much parking then.

MB No there was a very little spot behind the bank for parking, but we could get in there.

AA I suppose Queen Street was busy even though it was the 60s, it was still busy because you had no by-pass or anything, did you?

MB No, it was good. I went for a few years to the Fishers Ghost because we could go to my mother-in-law's place and just walk to the corner, the kids and I, and see all the floats going past and that, but then we stopped.

AA Has it changed much - the parade?

MB I haven't been for a long while, but it used to be good back then.

AA Were you ever one of the people that tried to see Fisher's Ghost?

MB No.

AA Isn't it amazing that they would get so many people to that?

30 mins

MB We've been on the ghost tours out to Picton a couple of times. There was definitely things happening, things happenings. I was very sceptical, she was

very sceptical. My daughter came down for the second one and she had a friend with her, and he is a psychic, and we were standing there in front of that tunnel. Diane said she saw the haze and I did too, inside the tunnel, but we felt really cold across the back of us, and my daughter's friend said that the lady that was run down by the train was standing behind us.

DF He didn't tell us until after.

MB He didn't tell us what she looked like, poor thing. He had to put up with that. When he had the vision, he saw what she looked like after being mangled by the train. Yeah, there're definitely things, but not Fred, nope.

AA Just a question out of the blue, Margaret. I saw this on TV the other night, someone was asking someone about it. What's been the best invention in your life? Just out of the blue I thought I would ask that. I thought it was an interesting question.

MB The telephone was one of them, not so much the mobiles but the telephone at least, that you could communicate. There're so many things.

AA I thought that I would just put you on the spot.

MB Well you did, I'll go home and think about it.

AA Is there anything else you wanted to tell me about? I haven't asked you much about your husband. When did he pass away?

MB It was 25 years ago. He just got ill very quickly and died at 48.

AA Oh really? OK.

MB His family, there was one still in Campbelltown, but he's moved up to Forster now, Kerry. They moved down from Dungog down to here and worked, as I said, worked on the land. The boys all did their own thing, one was a policeman, he was at Ingleburn and two have died, two out of the four have died.

DF Kerry played football, he was a foundation member of Wests, the youngest brother.

AA Are you into football or any sports?

MB No, no. I had to listen to screaming about the Tigers every weekend.

DF Especially in 1969.

AA Oh, he was a Balmain supporter.

DF That's when my sister was born.

AA Two of them were Balmain and two were St George, so there were some very lively discussions.

DF You're not sporty at all are you?

MB No.

AA What do you do with yourself today?

DF What don't you do?

MB I keep busy, the village has a lot of things on. I sew and crochet and do all sorts of things. I just keep busy.

DF She is never there, she's always out.

AA That's good.

MB You've got to, while you can.

DF Yeah, that's exactly right.

AA OK then, that was really interesting. Is there anything else you wanted to bring up?

DF This family has been in the area for 100 years, this part of the family.

MB There were Jacksons in Ingleburn for 100 years. There still is, I've got a cousin still in Ingleburn.

AA What usually happens is you think of something after.

MB My mum was the only one in her family that went to high school. She had to travel to Parramatta High, that was the nearest high school in those days.

AA That's so far, isn't it?

35 mins

MB Then she went to work in the city. She knew shorthand, you know, she went to school in there. She was the only one who was educated really, in her family. As I said they lived over on John Street and every time it flooded, they had to sleep at the railway station. She travelled to the city on the steam train when she got work in the city.

DF I think it was basically just a shack in John Street.

MB Well it wasn't very big - the house in Cumberland Road either. It was only basically three rooms with the big veranda all round. My grandma always slept outside on the veranda. Three sides were closed in, but one side was open. I can remember the iceman coming, and the ice chest was on one of the side verandas, and he would chip the ice and put in it. The toilet was ten miles up the back yard.

AA They mostly were, weren't they?

MB Grandma could sit at the table, and she would have the shovel, and she'd kill quite a few snakes. So, needless to say, when we visited, we didn't like going to the toilet. Behind her house was what is now Treelands Avenue - that was bush. We used to go and play in the bush. A lot of Ingleburn was still bush.

DF I used to walk through there to go to school. Pick Blackberries on the way to school.

AA Where did you swim when you were younger?

MB Up the weir, at Ingleburn.

AA I was going to say, did you go to Ingleburn Weir.

MB By the time you got down there and got back up you were half dead. You needed to go back down and have another swim. It was beautiful clear water, and absolutely lovely.

AA Would there be many people there when you would be there?

MB Yes, there were a lot of us. It was a long way down, it was up the top of Kings Road.

AA Was it deep?

MB Yes, but there were plenty of rocks and things. It was lovely.

AA Is it still there, I wonder?

MB I don't know, it's all built out where we used to go down to it. You wouldn't want to swim in it anyway now. We used to go out to Menangle to swim.

AA Yeah, a lot of people did.

MB Before the kids were born and everything, we used to go out there, and that's as dangerous as. There used to be someone killed there every - it was very deep and very cold and they used to swing off the trees, and they would get caught under – there was a ledge out there, but it was nice, there was a sort of a beach and all.

AA So was that near the bridge?

MB Right near the Menangle Bridge, right under it pretty much.

AA It's probably changed a bit now, I would say.

MB Well, I can remember the Rotolactor.

AA Oh can you?

MB See, all that's gone.

AA You didn't go to the Woolwash to swim?

MB I've been out there, but not to swim, no. Diane's got a book at home - you've probably got it here, it was *Between the River and the Railway*. A lot of my cousins have written in that. My aunt's written in that, and they all used to live in Macquarie Fields. They would hike all the way out to the river, which I suppose is Simmo's Beach now. But it was a long, long way, and they would go out with all the kids for a picnic day and have it at the river.

AA It's a shame it's not as pristine as what it was back then.

MB I think we used to swim a bit at Glenfield Weir, but it was very hard to park there and everything. It was more Ingleburn Weir.

AA OK, thanks very much.