

# Nancy's Memories

My earliest memory seems to be of the very lovely, china-faced, dressed doll with which I played at Footscray. It lived there at first because Nin considered my younger brothers of an age when they might damage the doll. Anyway, the day came when I was allowed to bring the doll home. Grampa and I sat on the front board seat of the dray, which he must have borrowed, (as I don't think he owned one) and pulled by a horse, drove from Footscray to West Brunswick in this manner. I cannot recall the trip until we drove down Wales St., nearly home. A time later the doll's face was smashed on the brass and timber fender, which was in front of the fireplace. I was sitting on the mat and dropped the precious doll onto the brass rail.

I remember a sunny front verandah at 15 Wales St., with Mum and Allen and Brian. Allen was learning to tie his shoe-laces, probably runners, as these were worn for school and shoes kept for "best". We were getting ready to go to school, across the unmade road. On the frosty mornings, I remember Mum telling Allen to shake his hands up and down to get the blood circulating faster. The school clothes were made by Mum and were usually grey trousers and long-sleeved shirts with some kind of jumper. Mine were whatever there was available, in jumper and skirt. I remember that Mum loved that front verandah and spent time there, sitting in a deck chair, sewing or knitting, on the sunny mornings. On the hot days it was cooler there in the afternoons, where we would have our projects.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook were the caretakers of the school and lived in a house on the school grounds, on the corner where Culloden St. (front of school) and Wales St. met. They had three children, I think. Norma was the name of the girl, but I don't remember the boy's names. They had a dog, a foxy, called Jack. He was the sworn enemy of our dog, Jim. Jack was always looking for a fight and this particular day Jim accommodated him. It was the fight of the century. It started at the quadrangle and they rolled snarling and bloodied down the hill, being prodded with broom-sticks, doused with ashes and eventually hosed upon.

I loved school. There was never a day in my life, which I remember, that I didn't want to go to school. I seemed always to be teacher's pet helper and got all the monitor's jobs to do. Blackboard cleaner, empty the waste paper baskets into the incinerator and assorted odd jobs for the teachers. (Whoopi do!) Strangely enough this was considered a privilege. I also spent some time standing in the corner; I think I must have been a bit talkative. I didn't have any problems with marks, although I was never the best in the grade. I often had to stay behind on needlework lessons day to learn how to treadle the sewing machine. My best subjects were sewing and English throughout my schooldays. There were years of handwork, sometimes called sewing, to be learnt before the time when we started to do the "real sewing".

I used a treadle machine for all my sewing for many years, at home. Mum's, and after I married and went to live at Nana and Pa Sporton's home, Nana allowed me to use her Singer. It was a long time later when Nana bought a new electric machine, found it difficult to learn (very different from the old treadles) and gave it to me. I was sewing for all the family at this time.

There were many practice days with the basketball on the court for inter-house games and inter-school games. And then on Friday afternoon we had "sports".

As inter-school sports days approached we had many hours of practice at crossball and overhead, under the watchful eye of Mr. Seers. We entered in these big sports days at Olympic Park and ours was one of the better teams. I was Captain of gold house at school (there were three houses; green, gold and black) I was also Captain of the team at Olympic Park.

One of my particular friends at school was Lois Parry. The Parry family lived on the corner of Albion St. and Bayles St. (later Wales St.) Theirs was a large timber house facing Albion St., with the wide back gateway on Bayles St., it was called by everyone, Parry's dairy. Inside the gate the area was paved in bluestone. Around the fence lines were stables for the horses and sheds for the carts and other equipment. Adjoining these and extending to the house was the brick "dairy". It was always cold in there, and to keep the milk churns and cream billys fresh, there was ice. There was certainly no refrigeration. On some Sunday afternoons I was permitted to help Lois with her job of serving the customers milk and cream. They would come with a billy or jug to buy the produce. Sixpence bought a quantity of cream for eating with scones and jam for Sunday tea. It was a luxury and bought for special days. Later on, during the war, it was hardly available at all, so it became more of a treat than ever. The milk was kept in the cool dairy, in milk churns and ladled out with a long-handled ladle, which was left hanging inside the churn after use. The same thing applied to the cream container, only on a smaller scale.

Mr. Parry, called Lou by most people, delivered milk to the homes of customers, early in the mornings. His horse and cart would be heard by us in our warm beds, making its way along the street, then the thump of Lou's feet as he ran to our billy to ladle out the milk. He knew how much milk to leave for his customers, because of the amount of money left out in the billy.

Lois had an older sister named Joyce, a younger sister named Margaret, and a younger brother called Peter. I remember their Mother as being an agreeable lady who always wore a floral coverall. Always tidy for the dairy. Mrs. Parry took a day off on Sunday and Lois served from 4p.m. until 6p.m. Perhaps Joyce served sometimes also, that I don't know.

One Sunday I went with Lois and her family members to Daylesford, to visit Mr. Parry's father, who lived there. I don't remember much of the outing, except that we drove in a very large silver car, called a Terraplane. I don't know which company made it but it had beautiful red leather seats and I was thrilled. It may have been my first car ride, but there was another car ride which was pretty memorable. It was in Uncle Tom Ford's car. Make and colour unknown, it was one of those which had roll up, button down, leather side windows and I think it may have been pretty old.

Uncle Tom was staying with us in Wales St. at the time. He was from Ballarat and he had a contract to paint the new State Savings Bank, which had been built on the corner of Melville Rd. and Whitby St. West Brunswick. Uncle Tom was a great bloke, smallish in stature, sandy in colour, and was always in white overalls for his work. I don't know how

long he was with us but it must have been a while, as it was not a small building and it had to be done from scratch, so to speak. I never heard of any others doing the job with him, but perhaps there were. This day we were invited to go for a drive in Uncle Tom's car. We all piled in, lots of us, no seatbelts in those days, and off we went towards Flemington Rd. down Brunswick Rd., and into Oak Rd. We were bowling along when there was this almighty noise and some of the floorboards in the back seat area of the car had fallen out and there were tools and other stuff all over the road. Great consternation!! We stopped, of course, and picked the things up and I daresay we went back home.

There was a time, I recall, when along with some others I was sent out into Culloden St. where there was a new ambulance. It was some kind of publicity thing and we were the spectators at a supposed accident. There was a newspaper photograph taken but I don't know whatever came of it.

I remember there was an interesting game played at school, in retrospect, a fore-runner to any gambling instincts. It was played with cherry-bobs. Stones from cherries carefully washed and stored in a bag. Two games come to mind. I was helped here by Allen. I remembered that we would be down behind the shelter-sheds, where it was always either dusty or muddy. In cherry season, it was usually dusty. This enabled some enterprising youngster to scoop a saucer-shaped hole out of the dust and sit astride it, to wait for some player to reply to the call of "two and your old girl back". A call like a bookies call. Perhaps there would be greater odds elsewhere and one would cast around for these. The idea, of course, being to win the greatest number of cherry-bobs one could, from the operator. The "old girl" was one's original throw.

I have a vague recollection of coloured "bobs" perhaps some coloured with cochineal, but this is very vague. The other game required considerable skill to set up. I don't remember making a "TOODLUMBUCK" but Allen described to me how he was wont to make them, with a butcher's wooden skewer, a circle of cardboard, a piece of string, a pin and a wooden cotton reel. Apparently, it worked somewhat like a roulette wheel and again the player would bet with cherry-bobs.

There was a man who lived with his family in Wales St. I suppose, as it was the first house from the bend of Bayles St., as it was No.1. He and his wife and daughter, Irene were there for many years. Irene was an only child. Mr. Grindle was what we called "The Rabbito". He had a horse and dray, or rather, a flat-top cart. Every so often (it may have been weekly) he would come down the streets around about, selling freshly killed rabbits. They hung from the side of the tray in pairs, with the skin still on. The householders would buy them like that and skin them. They were used for stewing or roasting. Rabbits were very largely used in those days, as they were readily available, being trapped or shot for food. I don't know how Mr. Grindle obtained the rabbits; he may have gone out to the country to trap them or perhaps bought them from the trapper for retail selling. By country people, rabbits were considered a pest and later on as the country was swarming with them, there was a drug introduced to cull them.

In our very young days, Allen, Brian and I went to the Methodist Church in Albion St. to Sunday School. This was about 1 km away down near the creek, towards Essendon. As I grew older I went with Ethel Jones to West Brunswick Presbyterian Church, in Melville Rd.,

later known as St. David's. Ethel Jones lived with her family two doors down the street from us and on the other side of our house lived Edna Harris who sometimes came with us to Sunday School. Edna and I were friends for many years.

Between our house and Jones', was a house which always seemed to be changing occupants. At one time there was a very nice family which lived there, Mrs. Parsons and her son, Charlie, and her daughter, Gwen. These two were several years older than us but we saw a lot of them. Mrs. Parsons was very friendly, pleasant and extremely fat, which seemed to inhibit her movements. One time I remember Gwen and Charlie brought me to Mornington on the day tripper, Wyuna. There was more than the one boat which brought picnickers down to the Mornington Park for the day's outing.

Like the "Butcher's Picnic" Day and other commercial producers also. I recall a time when we were in the Parson's, on the backyard grass. Just laughing and playing about. Charlie was whizzing Allen about by his arm and leg, in what we called a windmill, I think, when we heard Mum call for tea. Somehow or other Allen landed heavily on the ground and when we climbed over the fence to go in our house, Allen's arm was hanging rather limply from the shoulder. He must have looked a bit woebegone because Mum was saying "What's wrong with you?" and then she saw the arm, looking not so crash hot. Well, the upshot was we all traipsed up to the man who operated the new-fangled X-ray machine at his house on the corner of Bent St., and Cumming St. His name, Alan reminds me, was Endicott. I understand the arm was broken and was put in plaster. End of story, as I recollect. (I suppose he got out of household chores because of that, what a ploy!) Just teasing, Allen!

When I was in the 8th grade at school, Merit Year, World War II had begun and people in England were sending their children to Australia or Canada to keep them safe from anticipated bombing of England. At this time it was being said that when war came it would be quite short and the children would soon be home again. This of course didn't happen and in some cases, relatives did not see each other again for many years, if at all. And so to W. Brunswick came Joan Sabine to live with her Aunt, Mrs. Calow, who lived three doors up from us. Joan came to school but was very quiet and withdrawn. In retrospect, as an adult, I see her now in a strange country, with an Aunt she didn't know and very far from home. Mr. Lyons, my teacher, was given charge of her at the school, as her standard of work was about 8th grade. Mr. Lyons sat her next to me and told me to look after her. Poor girl! I'm sure I wasn't unkind to her but I must have left her bewildered, as I was far from shy and quite confident in my school activities. As I recall, she was not into sports but managed the schoolwork well enough. I do not recall her after school years but she must have gone to work or to Domestic Arts School, which was where girls went to learn sewing, cooking and home care.

At W.B.P.S. there operated a girl's club, called P.G.F. And when I was thirteen I was invited to join. This I did with great pleasure and can say it was a really lovely period in my life. It was a weekly club where each Monday evening we had a particular programme. Devotions, speakers, fun evenings, money raising events, concerts and even, as times became a little more liberal, we had social evenings with the members of the boy's club. No dancing but wonderful games nights. Here I made many good friends. We had two basketball teams and travelled around in bus and trams to play against teams from churches in other suburbs.

During my time as a member of P.G.F., we spent short times away on what were called camps. In these cases, not strictly camping. One time, we girls travelled to Mornington, to the Margaret Baird Cottage, to spend the weekend. It seemed at the time, the cottage was away out in a large paddock, on its own. It had, at that time, verandahs around two sides, with beds, to accommodate lots of bodies. There were rooms inside, of course, where some people would sleep. But we more adventurous girls chose to sleep on the verandah. These were iron bedsteads, with cyclone wire bases, which creaked like billy-o when we turned over. After we had exhausted ourselves with chatting, and were settling down to sleep, some could not get comfortable and would be creaking around, our leader decided to impose a consequence on the next one to move.

Silence for a while and then guess who the restless one was. Yes, the writer creaked her way into the record book, when I gave them a serve of "I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER", by Thomas Hood. It has about 12 verses, all beginning with the title. Perhaps they went to sleep; certainly they would have been pretty bored after the first verse or so. I always thought it was a lovely poem.

After I obtained my Merit Certificate, at the end of 1939, I left school to stay at home and learn my housekeeping skills there, whilst waiting until turned 14, the legal age when apprentices could begin training. It had been decided that I would learn dressmaking. Mum and Nin seemed to think that I showed promise in that field, indeed I do not remember that that was not what I wanted, so I was happy to wait until March and I turned 14. While I was doing this Nin came down one day to tell me she had spoken to a lady dressmaker who had just begun business in one of the shops adjacent to the Western Theatre, in Melville Rd.

Nin and Grampa at that time lived in Daly St., close by the shop and that's how Nin came to see the advertisement for an assistant. This dressmaker had formerly worked for a very high class lady's dress establishment in Collins St. Well, off I went to learn how to sew in return for a few pence. (I don't recall the amount.) I was a bit dismayed to find my job seemed to be cutting off threads, after tying the two ends together, as one. It was not a lot of learning but then, after I gently, so as not to raise the dust, swept the board floor, to which the threads stuck, I was sent off home. I don't ever remember watching her cut a garment or be told to watch her put together a seam. I think I was only there a week or two, but after I was there when her boy-friend came one evening and I saw them canoodling, I was glad when my job terminated. I think she didn't get enough work to justify the rent. I don't know how it came about. So I waited for the next opportunity for a dressmaking apprenticeship.

In the meantime, as was often the case in those days, ladies went to town to shop or lunch, or both. They travelled by tram, train and bus. Not many ladies drove cars. So Mum, with me in tow, went off to town by tram. One day on the way home on the Sydney Rd. tram we called in to Wright Bros., which was in Sydney Rd, near the corner. Of Victoria St. This was a very good delicatessen, where assistants in white uniforms, with white caps, would cut the butter from huge blocks on the marble slabs behind the counter. They would cut the quantity asked for, with first of all a wire, suspended from the shelf above, and then use two butter pats to get the exact amount, not a bit more or a little less, but the exact amount asked for. A former school-friend of mine worked there, her name was Elsie

Davidson and she lived in Albion St., near Melville Rd. She was a wonderful assistant, quick, ready smile and very efficient.

A major event happened when we left Wright's and went into Love and Pollard, the Department store for some item or other. While Mum was being served, I spoke to another girl I knew, this one from the P.G.F. She had attended N.W.B. in Alan's grade, a higher grade than mine. This was Joyce McNaught and she worked in the Haberdashery, called the Haby, selling buttons, ribbons, etc. Joyce wanted to know why I wasn't working and I told her I was waiting to go to dressmaking. She suggested I could take a job with her while waiting. I consulted Mum and she must have said all right. Joyce spoke on the phone to Mr. Love in his upstairs office and the upshot was I was interviewed on the floor of the store! I was told I could begin work the next week, in the Haby dept.

So off I went and worked for one week there, during which time Miss Shone, who was store accountant, came down and asked me if I would like to work in the cash desk. This was an elevated over-hanging, box-like office, where the customer's cash was received, in their sales docket, and change given if necessary. These monies were carried to the cash desk by lines, which carried a small, clip-on, cup-like wooden container, propelled by the sales assistant at the counter. Docket received, change and receipt being sent back again down the line by cashier. So up to the cash desk I went, working very happily there for 2 ½ years. The other girls who were there then were Val Savage, Elma DuKyper and Edna Bengsston.

I became very good friends with Val, whom I would visit long after we both married. Edna belonged, with her brothers to W. Brunswick Presbyterian Church. Elma was married to a soldier who had gone away to serve in the Army. Elma was forced to give up her home and was looking for a home for her dog. He was a fox-terrier-like dog but as his name indicates, was a lovely deep biscuit colour. I do not know whether he came to us with that name or whatever he was christened that by our family. In my recollections, Geoffrey was sent to bring the dog to us, from his home in Hope St. I think Geoffrey had his scooter at this time and brought Biskie back to Wales St., on a lead with his scooter.

Biskie found his new surroundings not to his liking at first and had to be brought back from his old home more than once, after he had gone back there, searching, no doubt for Elma and her husband. He was not the only displaced victim of the war! At any rate he became one of the family and during a cold winter, Dad brought him inside one night. Needless to say Biskie took his place on the hearth-rug and there he stayed. When he died, he was buried in the back garden. Jim (of the earlier tale) was already resting somewhere in the garden. And later the beautiful collie, Sandy, was buried there also. In later years, any developers of the property might be amazed at the bones which may be found there!

Two girls with whom I became friendly at P.G.F. were sisters Marjorie and Dorothy Reinecke. They lived in Everett St., and Dorothy also worked at L & P. She was the alteration hand and did all kinds of sewing and repairs for customers. I spent quite a bit of time in their home. One day when I was there Mr Reinecke, who was the manager of Gossard corsets, asked me if I would go and work for him, in his office in the city. After I spoke to Mum and Dad who were pleased for me to make the change, I cleared it with Mr. Love, who was a bit cross, and wanted to know if I wanted more money. I explained that I wanted the change. So I went to work for Gossard, where I stayed until I got married 4 ½

years later. In this office were several girls working, Pat, Muriel, Gwen, Lois, Marj., Neva. Marj. Gibson married and became Mrs. Frank Jessop, and we are still in touch today. Neva and I spent time together during our lunch-hours and were firm friends. When Alan and I married she was our bridesmaid.

This was a very changed time in my life, as the war became very grave and it was obvious it was going to go on for a considerable time. A lot of people I knew began to make life changes and go to serve their country, some in the Armed Services, some to work in factories, some for Land Army duty, to replace those who went to the Services.

Close to home, indeed in the home, Dad was one of those. He joined the R.A.A.F. and did his training, I think, in Victoria. He worked in Prahran as an office worker for a time and saw the need, apparently, for sports facilities for men and women in the Air Force.

After a time was made a Sergeant and was sent around the country seeking out Air Forces bases and setting up "Amenities" blocks for recreation in these sometimes outlying areas. I remember hearing that he was given donations of billiard tables and other goods for these recreation halls. There was an occasion, I remember, when there were swimming sports, arranged by Dad, for R.A.A.F. And W.R.A.A.F. Personnel, held at the Brunswick Pool, an Olympic sized pool. I even remember what Mum and I wore.

We had to "toff" up a bit. I don't remember Allen, Brian and Geoffrey being there but I suppose they were there and "toffed" up also. I remember there was a man, actually from Baker's Pde., W.B. who exhibited how easy it was to float on his back in the water and read a book whilst doing so. He was just a diversion between events. I think his name was Masters. After a time Dad went to Darwin and from there wrote wonderful letters (unfortunately lost today) about life up there, heavily censored of course, as this was a serious war zone. Mum, by this time, had gone to work at Ensign Lamps, one of many women who went into factories to replace those who had left. So that left a lot of work to be shared at home.

Allen and Brian were at Brunswick Technical School and Geoffrey at Nth. West Brunswick until he went later to University High. The afore-mentioned pool was where we had gone regularly with school classes to swim, years before and for years later.

At this time I was very interested in the planes which were constantly flying overhead and could identify them very well, with the help of books and observation. I was pretty good at spotting, which was the term used for aircraft watching and identifying in those war days. I was extremely anxious to get into the W.R.A.A.F. and could scarcely wait until I was eighteen, the acceptable age to join up. Dad was in the Northern Territory at this time where lots of Australians and United States services personnel were stationed. I wrote weekly, I suppose full of my own doings and of my wish to join up. Then came his letter with the request to drop the idea of joining up and stay home to help Mum with home and brothers and the unspoken (unwritten) wish to do as he asked. It never occurred to me to go against his wishes.

I continued my job at the office, watched with longing the planes going overhead and spent time at ToCH servicemen's club, washing up after breakfast and lunch on Saturdays. My

companions at this job were Muriel Addison and Marjorie Gibson both from the office. Muriel also belonged to P.G.F. At the rear of Scots Church in Collins St. was a prefabricated building set up for the duration, as a club and eating house for service personnel, and ladies from the various Presbyterian churches around Melbourne shared a roster to run it. In the evenings girls would come from their jobs to relieve the ladies who had been there during the day. It was another little job which I did on roster.

There were many compromises made. Of course, one cannot list them all but there is a good story, I think, about Dad going off to the far-off war and leaving us with a vegetable crop to harvest. I remember there was some wonderful celery, which, when we dug it up, Mum remarked what a pity Dad could not see it. Well it came to pass that he did see and eat it, up there in Darwin. For that's where he was at this time, overseeing the preparation of tennis courts made from anthills, crushed and pressed into a kind of gravel surface, which apparently worked very well. Dad also made no bones about how scared he was when the bombs came over, one remark was, "there was no snake's belly ever closer to the ground than mine" Also he asked for and obtained for me, an autographed photograph from Clive "Killer" Caldwell. A treasure for me and in an album still today.

Back to the celery story. We were wondering how to send some celery to Dad and must have written to him about this, because we got word from him to say if we could pack it and get it to Essendon Airport, there was a R.A.A.F. plane leaving there for Darwin daily, with essential stuff on board. What was more essential than celery for the troops?? Well, a corset box was the ideal packing medium and my co-worker and friend in the dispatch at Gossard's packed it beautifully and somehow or other I got the package to the Airport. I contacted the fellow there who knew about the contraband, and away it went to the far north. It was received in perfect condition the next day, and eaten with relish, according to the thank-you letter.

As my teen years spanned all the war years it is obviously a big part of my story and there are lots of tales that could be told. One change that affected the whole population was coupons for most things one needed (or wanted) to purchase. I have talked about the veggies which a lot of people grew for home consumption, and in these years were shared with those who had less opportunity to grow their own. Brian tells about the tomato crop, of huge proportions, which grew one year. And as for coupons, all persons were issued with a book of coupons, I'm not sure how often they were issued but probably every few months and these had to be shared by the household for things like tea, sugar, flour, meat, milk and we each had clothing coupons allotted.

The person in charge of the buying of household goods (usually Mum) had need to collect them and work out how best to spend them. All sorts of things were done. I remember once Mum gave me a worn cream blanket which I turned into a dressing gown, then I dyed it pink. Lasted me for years. We went without stockings and saved our clothing coupons carefully for special purchases. Some girls went without foundation garments, too! Gossard was making girdles and brassieres for the service women. They were very practical and made from hardwearing fabric. Not at all attractive !

Women dreaded the telegram lad coming to the door, he usually had a nasty message about their menfolk, missing in action or missing, presumed killed. Servicemen and their

girls were being married in a rush, as the boys were suddenly given one day's notice of embarkation. One close to home was Dorothy Reinecke and David Fraser who had only a day or two for preparation before they married and David was sent away. We never knew and they rarely knew, where they were headed. Marjorie and I were Dorothy's bridesmaids.

I remember Mrs. Reinecke rushing about at the Church, giving anyone who was nervous, as she was, a drink of this Sal Volatil? Some kind of calming drink. I wouldn't have any. I was quite calm, actually, having the time of my life, in my full-length, blue organza dress with flowered headdress. Marjorie had the same and Dorothy the same in white, I mention her last. Dorothy was only the bride!

We were so young, Dorothy must have been about 21, Marjorie 14 and I was 16. It amazes me now where all the coupons came from for all the finery, as it was 1942 and the rationing and war were still in full force. I know the dressmaker worked day and well into the night to get the dresses made, they had been ordered previously. And I know that Mum went around to the home of the dressmaker, in Everett St., and sewed all the buttons down the back of the gowns.

David was one of those who went away and came home again and, as our families grew, we saw a bit of each other, but this was later, and I keep getting off track. At the time of the wedding we were at W.B.P.C. with a large number of young men and women. Many of them were going away. Alan was one of the Bible class boys and I knew who he was but when he joined up we became what was known as an "item" and we regularly exchanged letters for some years.

There were times during Alan's training, rookies at Shepparton and other training grounds, and in Sydney, when he would have leave and we would visit his aunts and uncles who lived near our homes, or Camberwell, where his long-time friend, John Hocking, lived with his family. There were great evenings spent at Hunter St. W.B. with the Hantons. There billiards would be played, Harry would play his squeeze box and I would sing the wartime songs (not to the company, just with Harry playing). And Mrs. Hanton would provide a wonderful supper, despite rationing. Sometimes the twins, Harold and Alex would be home on leave from the Army and there would be great gatherings. Alan and I loved the pictures and would go to the city theatres, like the Capitol, Regent, Plaza, State and have a drink at the Tarax bar where drinks were served from ice troughs.

I have rushed ahead, there are so many memories of my earlier childhood which I want to include, because they are of the time and anyone imprudent enough to read these meanderings may be interested in the pre-war days. The 1939-1945 war that is, not the Boer War!!

Our household consisted, as you may have gathered, of Mum and Dad, Vera Lillian Walsh and Maurice Walsh, daughter Nancy (yours truly!), sons Allen, Brian and Geoffrey. This is the age order of the children. We lived, in these recollections of mine at No. 15 Wales St., W. Brunswick. It was a new house when Mum and Dad moved there, we understand, in a new development; a very nice house and modern for its day. Indeed, when it was vacated by the family 58 years later, it was still in good structural condition.

Over the years there had been lots of additions, alterations and modifications. In the early days by Dad with his marvellous helper, Grampa Mathews, and later by Allen, who was at home longer than any of the children. Judging by my age, which I understood was 3, when we moved there, it must have been 1929. Until I wrote this, I had never thought about it but that was the year Nth. West Brunswick State School, No. 4399 was opened, so the school must have been being built at this time. I do not recall these things, it's as it must have been. Alan has always said he began school there on the first day it opened. He was ahead of me at school. Even now, I can recall very well the ashes on the footpath and the deep ruts in the mud of the road, as we went over the street and climbed the fence, to go up the hill to the quadrangle. It was many years before the road was sealed and the sewerage put through the area.

I also remember when we were very small, that the "little-house" as we called the toilet was up the far corner of the block, actually to make it convenient for the "nightman" to come and collect the toilet bin from the trapdoor at the back and leave a fresh one. I never smell (not often anymore) phenyle but I am reminded of those far off days when it was used as a disinfectant in the "little house".

To get back to the story, when one of us was to use the toilet in the night, another one of us was sent along for company, it was pretty dark (no outside lights in the yard, in those days) and I remember how we used to sing "Twinkle twinkle little star" to keep up our courage. No doubt learnt at school (probably not for that particular purpose) or from Dad, who was the parent who interested us in songs and poetry. Also, it is only this week that I came across information which says that that song was written by Mozart at the age of five. Dad also taught us ditties and songs of Gladys Moncrieff and others. One I remember was "Danny Boy" When I learnt to type, (after a fashion) at Gossard, I typed " Danny Boy" and proudly took it home to show Dad.

At a stage in our early life Dad had made a gramophone cabinet. It was very lovely, a reddish colour polished to a high shine, perhaps French polished, I don't know. Allen would know about that but I know that I was the one, who later on, kept the shine on it, by regular polishing. In one part of it were stored lots of 78's "records" as today's "vinyls" were called. Geoffrey has this today. It has a hand-winding arrangement to get the record to turn and play. A highly prized possession and we treated it as such. When Allen and Brian were in their teenage years there was a lot of carting back and forth of records from the home of one pal or another for sing-song nights, as some others had record turntables, which by this time were electric and some portable.

Where Dad's records ended up, I have no idea. There was quite a bit of polishing went on, actually. There was this flash, round tin, of about 5 inches in diameter, containing a yellowish wax, brand name, Wundawax, which was applied with a cloth, then another cloth and a bit of elbow-grease brought up a nice shine. There were occasions when I had the job of polishing the "kitchen" table and used Geoffrey as the shining medium. We put his little botty on the cloth and sent him from one end of the table to the other, to be pushed back by Allen or Brian (or both) for me to receive him and send him back. Geoffrey must not have minded or he would have yelled and Mum would have heard him, I doubt she would have considered that a good idea.

We could only do that when she was at the line or sweeping the verandah. The other parts of the home which received my attention in this way, were stained boards around the carpet squares, but I did buff these by hand, after the Wundawax was applied and left for a few moments to do its work. The table in the centre room of the house was used for a multitude of exercises, Mum and I ironed on it, on a blanket and a sheet, with the iron connected to the power by a cord hanging from the ceiling with a pin type receiver. It was also used for homework, for modelling projects, for preparation of meals, for baking and of course, for eating. I think Dad even used it for some woodwork. Many years later when it was replaced with a lovely modern setting, the table was set aside and after a time Dad made me a sewing table from it and I had it for a long time in the back porch at Fontaine St., where hundreds of garments were sewn over the years.

Always rushing ahead, as one story leads to another and leaves something still to be written about the first one. Oh well, you poor reader, put it away or read on, best of luck to you! I think of an occasion when I was Dad's little helper and he was making something with a hammer and saw in the fernery, which he had built at the back of the house, where Mum had lots of ferns and growing things. There must have been a roof of some kind near the back door because Dad was often there working on some project or other.

This day I asked him what we were making (I must have been pretty dumb not to be able to tell, but I was only a little kid) and he told me it was a present for the little girl up the street, a fib of course, because it turned up in my Christmas stocking - a dresser for my doll's house. I don't remember the doll's house! There seems to be a lot of things I don't remember!!

During our childhood, the boys and I were fortunate, as we went on holidays with Mum and Dad to the beach. Black Rock, early on and then later to Half Moon Bay. It was probably to do with getting the appropriate accommodation as we kids grew and Geoffrey came along. Anyway, it was all good stuff. There were times when Adeline, from Ballarat, would be with us, other times the Grandparents. Dad made a succession of boats. The first one was a small row-boat, the second a catamaran and later on an outboard motor boat. These were very well used and loved. There are some photos in the albums of these and the aforementioned relatives. To travel to Black Rock, the family must have had to pack everything needed in suitcases, travel by tram to Flinders St., board the train to Sandringham, then board the tram to Black Rock. What a tiresome journey it must have been with three or four youngsters in tow.

I remember Dad used to take us to the beach in the mornings and Mum would do the necessary house stuff and then come down with lunch. There was oatmeal and water bag for sunburn, after a day in the sun, and also cold tea would sometimes be swabbed on us. I do know that we had sou'wester type sun hats. I loved the water and Dad used to piggy-back me to the breakwater, which was the beached, dis-used warship, Cerberus. It was at right angles to the pier but not very close. Dad was a good swimmer and there must have been some method of us climbing up onto the deck of the ship and we would fish.

There were also lots of mussels on the sides and Dad would always get a bagful of those to pickle. I smell pickled goods now and think of the mussels being shelled and pickled in the holiday house. When we were at Black Rock, the accommodation was beside and behind a

shop, rented to us by a Miss Moody. It was very close to the now roundabout, at Beach Rd. and Balcombe Rd. At one time we stayed in the home of a retired minister of religion. It was on Beach Rd. and I remember how sometimes we would wait for ages, to safely cross the busy road after being on the beach. And the hot tar on the road on our bare feet! On the beach I had a pair of rubber beach shoes. They were very colourful, thin, rubber pull-ons, which were worn in the water. (Sorry, Allen, you probably didn't have a pair. But you did have a hat!!)

There was a time, also when the "Sayers" came to visit, while we were there. They lived for a time, in No. 13 during the war. Alf, the father of the four little ones, was serving in the Army and Lil, his wife and mother of the children, rented the house off Mrs. Harris next door to us, for a time. Mrs. Harris came back later with Edna and the Sayers went to live in McGregor Ave. around the corner from Wales St.

They seemed to be there for quite a while but later on again, went to Mornington to live...coincidentally, a minute or so's walk from where Alan and I came to live so many years later. The house where Lil and Alf lived with the family is still looks the same, but it has been nicely restored.

There were lots of holidays spent with Nin and Grampa at their house in Whitehall St. Footscray. It was to me a beaut house and I was very much at home there. Apparently when I was very young, Brian and I spent time there when Mum and Dad went to Sydney for a holiday. That particular time is what I was told. Other occasions I recall vividly. One I clearly remember is of cooing pigeons. Nin used to take in boarders. As was the case in those days, single people would come to the city to work or find work and they would live as a family member for a weekly rate. Nin had one time, two policemen living there and it fascinated me that they came and went at all hours and didn't seem to have a key.

Another time there was a Scot, his name was Don Robinson, and I remember he had a little moustache and a broad accent. There were days, when, I was asked by Nin, to take Grampa's lunch to him at his workplace, which was the wood-pipe works down on the riverbank. These works were immediately ahead and two streets below Whitehall St. where the house was situated. These pipes, as the name suggests, were made from tongue and groove timber, very long, about 1 metre, in diameter, painted in tar and then rolled by many hands, in sand to coat and seal. I don't know for what purpose they were used, but I remember very well going down one day to see Grampa, on his own, rolling this enormous pipe in the sand. The others had knocked off for lunch already. The essence of the man! All his life he had worked very hard, as less schooled folk did. All the labouring jobs were just that, hard labour. By the standards of today, the women worked very hard also!

Clothes were washed by hand in a tub or bucket of water, heated on the wood stove, or boiled up in the copper. The copper was usually situated in a wash-house attached to the back of the house. It was encased in concrete with a small area for a fire beneath, which on wash days was lit and the linens boiled up and pummelled with a copper stick, which was about 80cms. long and 4cms in diameter. The clothes were given about 10 mins. to cook, then lifted out on the stick and into the trough, to be rinsed in clear water. Sometimes there was a second trough with clear water swished with a blue bag, to dump the clothes in for a further rinse, before being wrung by hand and hung on the lines to dry,

or not, depending on the heavens. This was all dealt with by the washer-woman in the worker's homes, i.e. Mum. There were few who had electric appliances. Mostly, eggs, cake mixes, cream and the like were mixed by hand with a fork or wooden spoon. Linoleum covered the floors, sometimes also a mat, and these were cleaned with a bucket of water, sand-soap and scrubbing brush, with the cleaner on her knees. This is two generations ago, but to me, now, it seems not so far back. In the copper was heated water for bathing. Mostly, workers washed after daily labours and bathed on Saturday.

So many things come to light after one has written a passage or so of memories. Of Footscray there were many things of interest but I don't know how much would be so, written down. Grampa and I used to walk miles around the streets and gardens of Footscray, when I stayed there during the school holidays. I can recall Saturday afternoon when we would stand on the road over the railway line and watch the Footscray team play on their ground, almost underneath.

Until recently I had no idea whether Grampa barracked for a football team but I learnt from Allen that yes, he certainly did, he was a Geelong supporter. Allen says that Grampa also had a soft spot for Footscray, I suppose when he lived there. All I can say is, I did not gain any enthusiasm for football because of this.

Grampa and I, also would walk to the Footscray Park, which was then and is today a very nice park. From there we could get a brilliant view of the Flemington Racecourse, across the Maribyrnong River. I'm sure Grampa had no interest in wagering but it was quite a spectacle. Visited recently, I was not able to get a clear view from high on the hill, because, would you believe it, there are very large trees in the way! They, of course, were either not in those positions over 60 years ago, or have grown mightily.

The entrance gate-posts remain the same but the iron gates are not those which would have been there in those far-off days. When it was shopping day, Grampa would tuck his rolled-up hessian bag under his arm and Nin and I would walk with him around the corner, into Bunbury St., a short way to the shopping centre. (No steps now, two concrete ramps making a gradual climb across the lines.) If he should spy a piece of wood or a length of string, it would go into the bag that Grampa was carrying and when the shopping was completed, the goods were taken home by that method. These were hard times and my Grandparents were very thrifty and nothing was wasted. It was a way of life.

Another memory of Footscray, was the first cash and carry store I ever saw. An S.E Dickens. It was a grocery shop and one carried a basket over one's arm to collect from the shelves and then went to the cash register, to pay on the way out. This was a very unusual thing to do, as it was usual for the shop assistant to go and collect things for you, after giving your order to him at the counter. Whilst a novelty then, it, of course, was the fore-runner to the big super-markets of these days. Years later, when I worked at Love and Pollard in Brunswick, there was another S.E. Dickens on the corner of Victoria St. and Sydney Rd. I think this chain of stores sold to Coles, and thus became Coles-Dickens for some time.

A short distance from Whitehall St., near the river end of Bunbury St., was a swing bridge. It was a railway bridge and it was a wonderful thing to watch it swing about, mid-river, parallel to the banks, to allow ships to pass by, on their journey up or down the river. This

was a very busy, industrial river for many years in early settlement days and right up to the 1930's; the years of which I am writing. It was demolished a time ago when ships were no longer an essential part of the life of Melbourne. I saw in my recent visit that there is a regular rail bridge which picks up the line as it appears from under Sunbury St. When the goods train came out whilst I was watching, it was a bit like seeing a caterpillar emerge from the cocoon. I had a few youngster friends in the district and we were able to play cricket and skippy in the street. I loved the times I spent there.

During this time I seemed to know that Nin was a seamstress but I can't recall seeing a sewing machine, she must have had one as sewing ladies had to have a Singer to help them do the work. It was a good way of earning money and the Singer would have been a good investment. I don't think I had any tuition there, because when I later was in the sewing class at school, I was often kept behind to practice on the treadle machines.

There was a little front yard, where Grampa would cut, with the garden shears, the bit of grass there. I think there was a hedge of some sort along the fence. The small back area had a solid surface, perhaps bricks or bitumen.

Until today every time I hear a pigeon cooing, I immediately think of Footscray. I don't know where they lived (probably in a coop in someone's yard) but they were a constant background noise.

At times Nin and Grampa would visit Ballarat and sometimes I would go also. It was, to me, a wonderful journey, by train. There would be a stop at Bacchus Marsh, where tea was served in the Railway Refreshment Rooms on the platform. There would be great slabs of fruit cake to have with the tea. That seemed to be the menu, and no complaints from me, I thought it was beaut. This may have been included in the ticket price. (Allen heard this tale recently and said he was deprived, he recalls no such adventures, my answer was that I was sorry but we can't go back now and remedy it. Perhaps because I was the eldest and only girl.) Grampa and I trudged around Ballarat to visit the various relatives, sometimes Nin came but we must have caught the tram on those occasions.

We usually stayed with Auntie Hett (Henrietta) who was Grampa's sister and her daughter Adeline, who was a single lady and worked in the big department store in Ballarat. It was Morsheads. Adeline was a buyer there in Ladies Accessories. Adeline was very good to me (sorry Allen), I would go to tennis with her and chase balls players hit out of bounds and over the fence. (I see that there was a method in taking me with her, now!) Adeline wore very smart clothes and sometimes I would get a nice present. She knitted beautifully, I remember. There were times when she came to stay with us at Wales St. There was another Aunt, Nell, who was also a sister of Grampa. She also lived in Ballarat, and at times also came to stay. They were nice agreeable people.

Dad's mother came regularly to visit us at Wales St. and stayed with us often. She was called Big Nin to distinguish her from Mum's mother, Little Nin, who was small. Big Nin and her gentleman friend, later her husband, Alf Cron, would sometimes take me with them to Ballarat to visit the other side of the family, B. Nin's brother and their families.

They seemed very happy people and appeared to me to be very well off. There were young lads there at one household and I had good times with them. Climbing trees and suchlike, lots of tomboy games. There was nice food and good times. Not that it was unusual to have good food, for we always had that at home.

A big adventure of the Ballarat days.....One time when we stayed with Big Nin's side of the family, Pop Cron must have made an arrangement with the family that he and I would go to the New Year's Maryborough Gift Day, from Ballarat. Pop was very interested in foot running. I don't remember much about the journey there and only vague bits about the races but I do remember getting off the train in Ballarat in the dark and knowing it was very late. How late was brought home to me when Pop and I were walking back to the relative's home in the pitch dark, and Pop said that the street lights in Ballarat were turned off at midnight!

I was quite young when I began making steamed puddings for dessert. They became a bit of a specialty for me and were always welcome to fill up empty spots left in tummies after meat and vegetables. A time later when Allen was wiping up the dishes after I washed them (where were Brian and Geoff?) in the sink in the laundry and Allen saw that my steam pudding basin had crazing all around and a crack and he turned and gave it a bang on the concrete surround of the copper and broke it, saying it was not nice to use it in that condition. I might say the basin had been like that for quite a while. Anyway, did I find another basin or discontinue making pudds? Don't know!!

Writing of puddings, I remember at Christmas time, little Nin would take the hot pudding out to the sink bench to cut up and put a 3d. piece in each person's portion, to make it fair for all of us, she said to me, on the quiet. But Grampa would get a ½d. piece, which was quite large by comparison to the 3d. Whilst he was eating he would make a great to-do about what he had found in his pudding and when he took out the ½d. we would exclaim that we had 3d. pieces. What lovely times we had!

There are many things one wonders about as memories flood in. I can see Big Nin sitting in the back verandah room, on a hot Christmas Day, with a bowl of cream on her ample lap, beating with a fork to thicken. With the heat of the day and of her body, it was a difficult task. Why couldn't we have had runny cream with our pudd? Or custard? Perhaps we did, in the end!!

Long before I had a bike of my own I would cadge rides of the bikes belonging to others. I was not alone in this, it was something that most of us did. There was a family called Allison, which lived on the corner of Culloden, Wales and Bayles Sts. Bernie had a bike, pretty new, I think and I managed to get him to let me ride it. This bike had a fixed wheel and when I set off from outside the front door of the school, on top of the hill, there was no need to pedal. The brakes were on the handles and I found out how it wasn't easy to stop, when I went crash, bang, into the lamp-post on the opposite corner from Allison's house. All the kids around were watching! I know the front wheel was buckled and I suppose I had a scratch or two, but I don't know any more. I suppose I was punished and I daresay the bike had to get fixed. It was a terrible thing to have happened. Alan says he's heard this story too often and it's a pity it has no ending!

When I went to work in the city I saved enough to put a deposit on a bike of my own, I bought it at a bicycle shop in Elizabeth St. City and paid it off at about 1/- per week. It was a ladies bike with a skirt guard, a pump holder and a free wheel. I seem to recall it was painted blue and red, with Malvern Star printed on the bar. There were many times when I rode it to work. I would ride along Melville Rd. to Grantham St., Park St and into The Avenue, into Elizabeth St., and up to the corner of Franklin and Swanston Sts., where Gossard's office was located.

The bike was wonderful for getting to the cricket with the junior team of St. David's. We would cart mats, bats, bodies and pads on the handlebars and ride around the district to the matches. I was the scorer. On some occasions one member would borrow his Dad's open tray truck and we would all pile on the tray and be driven by Bob. This was not such hard work, but Bob was a pretty reckless driver and we would have to hang on like mad as we went around corners or over the bumpy railway crossings. I don't think Bob had a licence at the time, why bother? The bike was great for visiting the local lending library.

Falvey's, the news-agency in Albion St. had shelves of books, novels mostly, I think, and Mum, Dad and I would borrow books from there. We must have read Falvey out, because I often went to another on the corner of Hope St. and Melville Rd. to bring home books. It seemed we would mostly read mysteries. This lending library was up near St. David's and that was somewhere else that the bike took me, actually, the bike must have known the way around pretty well, because I did spend a lot of time on it.

Some Saturday nights I would go to the Western Theatre to the pictures, as the movies were called then. Bernice Elliott was my companion on the occasions. Her Mum and Dad had a regular booking in the dress circle and on the occasions they didn't want to use the tickets, we were allowed to do so. We would see Abbott and Costello and other Comedians, Elizabeth Taylor, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, Robert Taylor, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Lionel Barrymore, Betty Grable and hosts of other stars of the day. We saw wonderful films and if we sometimes see them today, on an old movie channel, they are still great!

Bernice's father operated a silver-plating business, in a factory situated at the bottom end of Hope St. W.B. On my 13th birthday, Bernice gave me a silver serviette ring, with my name engraved on it, and I use it still today. We had a good deal to interest us, at home, during the war years and we also, as you will have previously read, had lots to do to keep the home fires burning. Most of these last couple of paragraphs dealt with the years immediately pre-war and early war, and I have indicated things changed pretty drastically once the war became serious. We grew up amidst it all, and on the whole people I still know of, in our age group, have grown up fairly good citizens. Probably because of a stable childhood. At a later date, I may, dear reader, try for something about later years.

A very wonderful event happened for me during the time I was at Gossard. To me it was anyway! In the office there were several lads and lassies who, each pay-day, had placed an amount in a fund kept by our accountant, so we could buy war bonds. This was something that would have been happening all over the country, in the cases where ordinary workers would pool their resources to help the war effort. Well, the big thing that happened was that a large Lancaster bomber which had seen dozen's of "sorties" over enemy territories,

was being sent to Australia to give rides to those who had bought bonds of large amounts. Well, the office staff had done this very thing and Miss Campbell, our accountant, had the job of deciding who should be the ones to ride in the bomber. As she had more than two who indicated that they would like to have the opportunity, the names were put in a hat, so to speak, and two names were drawn out.

Most of the staff were pleased that mine was one of them, because I was the one who really lived for and loved the planes, which were constantly overhead. My companion and I went to Essendon Airport, and although most details elude me, we got on board this massive, camouflaged, four-engine plane, were instructed to sit on the planks of timber, which were actually over the bomb bays, and off we went.

It was difficult to see out, no windows, like in an air liner, but we were up over Melbourne and Albert Park Lake and city bay beaches for about 20 mins. The noise was incredibly loud and the plane shuddered fit to bust. It didn't, of course, burst but one wonders how those young men could face all that, night after night, plus the dangers and bitter cold. I lived with that thrill for the rest of the war.

There would have been probably 12 or so people taking that trip, and I daresay lots more trips and lots more cities and towns were included in the War Bonds drive. Brian and I have concluded after much discussion and research, that this plane was "Q" for Queenie. (The planes had affectionate names). Her brother, so to speak, is "G" for George and recently has been beautifully restored to reside in the War Museum at Canberra.