

INTERVIEW NO.4

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 12th September, 1991.

**MRS. PAT COLLESS
20 GOVERNOR'S DRIVE
LAPSTONE. N.S.W.**

0.23 Well, my name is Patricia Colless and I live at 20 Governor's Drive, Lapstone. I was born on 1st April, 1922, and I was born at Croydon in Sydney, a suburb of Sydney. I'm an Australian, British/Australian I suppose, and I'm married with two children, and I've lived in the area from the time I was eleven for the rest of my life, which is a long time.

1.01 So, if you could just tell me a bit about your background, Pat. What kind of work did your father do?

Well my father was a driver of steam locomotives which he loved. He was really very wrapped up in his job. We came back to Penrith, he was moved back to Penrith, in 1933 and I went to school in Penrith then after living in Croydon. He died quite suddenly in 1940 when my three brothers were still at school, so that was when I had to give up my idea of being a nurse and go and learn shorthand and typing and get a job. But that was just at the very beginning of the War, of course, and we lived at home in Doonmore Street in Penrith, which was a very nice weatherboard house and they'd only just moved there from my mother's old home in Penrith.

2.19 Where was your mother's old home?

Well that was in High Street which is now where venture stands and it was a very large stone house which was standing on an acre of ground in High Street, Penrith. You sort of think of the value of it now and it's really incredible. They sold that because the rates became so outrageous that they really couldn't afford to keep it, and my father negotiated the sale and after that he bought his own house in Doonmore Street. It was a big stone house which was built out of the remains of Sir John Jamieson's house from Regentville, which was burnt down I think - I'm not real sure about that - and it was built by one of the local ... I think he was a butcher. But I can't remember what year the house was built, except that my mother's family lived in it for about 40 years and it was sold in 1940. Anyhow throughout the War I worked in Sydney at a leathersgoods manufacturing firm and we used to go to Sydney and, you know, a lot of our spare time was spent going to theatre - Minerva Theatre out at King's Cross and the Theatre Royal in Castlereagh Street - this is my girlfriend and I because there weren't too many young men around at that time. Then we used to belong to a CWA Younger Set and we used to have dances every two or three weeks, I suppose, because a whole group of soldiers, you know, military units, moved out over towards the old speedway which was over the other side of Penrith railway station and we used to hold these dances and these chaps used to come and they were really our only contact with young men of that age group, and we had a fine time really. Then, where to now ...

5.18 Well, when you first lived in this area you were how old?

Oh, well I was eleven when we came here and so that was throughout my teenage years.

5.31 So, you went to school when you were here?

Yes, I went to school in Penrith and we all went to Penrith Intermediate High School.

How did you get to school?

Walked. Walked everywhere. We walked from - when we lived in High Street it was almost a mile to school and quite frequently I would walk home for lunch and back again. Actually the old school in Henry Street which was where my children eventually went too, my mother used to go. Yes, so it was a really old school and my husband's parents they all went there too, and it was no different, it was still the same as when my mother was a girl. Anyway ...

no, we all went to school. We had a most marvellous headmaster, F.R. Baker, and we still have ... my husband's class of 1935 still has a reunion every year in Sydney, they do, and every two or three years we have a reunion here in Penrith, and a whole crowd of people still come - because of that one man really, basically. He really sort of ... and he was a tyrant! He really knew every child in the school, he knew everyone by name, and we used to think that he knew exactly what you did until you got to your front gate in the afternoon, you know. But he really was a big influence on our lives at that time. And then eventually, of course, the War came in 1939 which made a great difference to Penrith because most of the people, most of the boys who joined up in 1939 were sent to Egypt and then in 1940 when the Eighth Division left, because they were mostly from Penrith, most of the boys that left at that particular time went into the Eighth Division and they ended up in Singapore and they were all eventually taken prisoner of course. And quite a lot of Penrith boys were lost as POW's.

8.13 Were any of your family involved?

Well, my brother was killed in New Guinea in 1945, but that was later, and my husband's brother was killed in his third operation over France in the airforce. So that was 1942 I think he was, no 1943 I think he was killed. So we were greatly affected - our youth was greatly affected by the fact that the War was so dominant in our lives. Anyhow eventually the War ended and Roger and I got married, actually only one month exactly after the War - you know, peace was declared - and we settled in a house that my mother had built. When my father died she subdivided our block of land and built a house there for income purposes, and Roger and I lived in that house, and we were very lucky because at that time houses were as scarce as hen's teeth. You just simply couldn't, you know, you couldn't get anywhere to live. And so we lived there for 16 years and our children were born while we were living there, of course, and I went to Nepean Hospital which was the old Nepean Hospital - not the present Nepean Hospital - which is now the Governor Philip Special Hospital.

9.54 How old would you have been when you were married?

I was 23. Yes, and our daughter was born a year later, and then we had another daughter three years after that, so I was 27 when I had her.

10.17 Can I just ask you a bit about the house you lived in? You said it was weatherboard?

Yes, weatherboard and fibro, actually.

How many rooms were there?

It had two bedrooms and a lounge room and a dining room and a kitchenette. And we always laugh about ... we had a dinner party one night, or we had a party actually ... and we had all these people there and they all decided to help me with the washing up, and they were all in this little kitchen and I was out in the dining room, and I looked and you could see all this crowd in this tiny little kitchen which was only six feet square ... it was very small.

10.01 Very cosy!

It certainly was!

11.06 Did you have an inside toilet and bathroom?

Oh, no. We had an inside bathroom, but the toilet was attached to the house. It wasn't detached, it was attached to the house, but nevertheless you did have to go out the back door.

11.19 Did you have the sewer on there?

Oh, yes we had the sewer on, and eventually our apple tree roots grew into the sewer and they had a lot of trouble with it at times.

Did you have a garden?

Oh yes, we had a garden and we had fruit trees which had been there on the land before my mother built the house, and we had a very nice little house actually. I used to haunt Beard Watson's in those days and copy all their decor and so it was small but it was nice. And there we built up here, in Lapstone. But in the meantime - do you want to know about the children going to school?

12.05 Yes, and can I just ask you first of all about the house - you had electricity and gas I presume?

Oh, yes. We didn't have gas, no, they don't have gas in Penrith. I think they have gas at St. Marys. No we had electricity, but I had a fuel stove and I didn't like lighting the fuel stove too often. It was nice in winter but I never used it in the summer time. I had a small Bellings electric stove which was really quite ... they were really quite hard to get, electric stoves, just after the War, and this had a hot-plate on top and you, you know, you pulled down the front and that was the oven but you had the grill in the oven, and ... what else did it have ...?

13.04 You used the fuel stove?

Oh, yes I could use the fuel stove, yes. Well I used to use the fuel stove in winter and we had a wood fire in the lounge room which we used too.

13.16 You had to collect the fuel or was that delivered?

No, it was delivered. We had a man who used to come with a horse and cart and he'd back the horse and cart into the ... and always the horse and cart would go over the garden. No, that was delivered and then we had milk delivered by the milkman, and he was the quietest milkman. It didn't matter if you were awake and you were listening to every sound, you couldn't hear Mr. Love come in the front gate and leave the milk. And that was put into a billy can. We didn't have bottles at that particular time. And we had a man who used to come around from Neale's groceries. You know, they had the big store, general store, and he'd come around every Thursday morning and take the order for your groceries which was fine. You just don't get that now. You've got to go down and go around with everybody else. And then they'd deliver the groceries on Friday. And we had bread deliveries every day and, oh well, we didn't have a car in our early marriage. We only had a car from about 1952, and every Sunday we would either walk down with babies in the pram right down to our friends at Jamisontown. That would be a mile and a half and we would walk, and then we'd walk home and, even in the hot weather, we'd go down there at night in the hot weather and walk back in the evening. You couldn't do that now - I wouldn't be too keen about it. And that was, you know, quite a long way. And then we walked the

15.27 children - I walked the children to school every day when they started school until I could trust the bus driver and then they used to get on the bus outside, and then eventually when they went to primary school it was just across the road. The primary school was just across Doonmore Street on the corner there and that was no problem.

15.45 And did you cook preserves and grow your own fruit or keep chooks?

We did, yes. We kept ... we had some, several chooks actually. They were Rhode Island Reds and one was a real big rooster and he was a real, oh, savage sort of beast and if Roger would walk in there he'd fly at him. So one day Roger got a broom and he clouted this chook, and he never came near him again. Every time Roger went into the chook yard this rooster would run up the back and stand in the corner. So there not brainless. Anyhow, so we used to have ... we had about 12 I suppose ... 12 chooks, and we had a dog and budgerigars and the girls had a canary and I had a cat. So we always had pets. We were great pet people. And what else did you just ask me?

Oh, just about the preserves.

Oh, cooking. Well, no I didn't do that. My aunt was an excellent jam maker and my mother was an excellent cook, but I used to cook every Saturday morning in the same way that she

always did. I cooked every Saturday morning and made cakes and things like that. I did make some jam on one occasion and somebody came to the front door, and that was the end of the jam because it was all overcooked. And my husband's mother, she was a very good jam maker too.

17.40 So what would the daily routine have been in the house in those days, you know - your role?

Well, my role was getting up, I suppose, and getting the breakfast and getting the girls off to school and my husband off to work. And he used to ride his bike to work - that might be interesting - and he'd ride his bike and he was in the bank for 12 months, in the Bank of New South Wales for 12 months when we were first married and then he got very fed up with the bank and he resigned and went to work for his father at The Nepean Times. That was in 1946 - he'd just started there when our daughter was born. And he used to ride to work on his bike every day, and come home for lunch always, so I used to cut sandwiches for our lunch and we'd sit out with a radio and we used to Blue Hills. That just seems so long ago, I can't even believe it was Blue Hills! So that's what we did and when his mother died in 1959 then his father used to come home for lunch with him. By that time of course we had a car and they used to drive, but we could no longer sit and listen to Blue Hills, so we got off that. But listening to radio, of course, was the only thing that we had. We didn't have television until ... when was that? 1956 was it? Oh, well we did get a television set when it came out and my father-in-law had one of the first television sets in Penrith because he used to like to have the first. And so we decided to ... we got a television eventually - well eventually, yes, pretty soon I suppose - which I consider was one of the worst things we ever did, because I don't feel that our children gained anything from the television. I feel that our elder daughter spent a lot of time watching television when she could have been doing other things. So that was one part where I think that the youth started to ... well their youth deteriorated, I feel. They didn't have the same outside interests that we had. There was too much sitting around watching television on Saturday afternoon when we used to be out playing tennis. That's another thing we did. We always played tennis and I belonged to a group of girls, all my close friends, and we played. We always had tennis courts because I had a tennis court at home and then after we got married my husband helped his best friend build a tennis court at their place and we had a great group actually. We played tennis for many years and it was a big part of our lives, and actually those friendships are still our closest friendships that we've still got after, you know, in the '90's we're still close.

21.36 Were you all living fairly close together, your friends?

Well, we all lived in Penrith and every fortnight two of my school friends and I used to have afternoon teas at each other's house, and we'd go ... I might just you know, mention, that before we had this afternoon tea we would - each person whoever was having it at their home - would spend the whole of the morning cooking for three of us, making cakes and afternoon tea and cleaning the house within an inch of its life ... and when I look back I think we must have been crazy. It just seems incredible that we'd spend so much time preparing for two other friends to turn up on the doorstep for afternoon tea. However, we did that, we enjoyed it and we're still friends. Actually one of the lasses, I sort of lost touch with the other one. She still lives in Penrith but she's never joined the things that I belonged to. But Heather still does and we're still close friends. We work for Torchbearers for Legacy, we both belong to Inner Wheel in Penrith, and so that friendship goes right back to school 'cause we were in the same class at school. Yes, now where did we get up to?

23.12 When you had your children did you rely on your family or neighbours for looking after the children after school?

Well I was always able to call on my mother, but she was a very busy person so I didn't. I was fairly independent. I didn't like to ask her because she used to play for the ... she used to accompany the school choir at the primary school. She played for all the different organisations through Penrith and Emu Plains and St. Marys. Wherever they wanted a pianist, my mother would play the piano and I didn't really call on her a lot. No, Roger and I just didn't go anywhere for the first twelve months or so that we had a baby, and when we had

the two ... Oh, and another thing was too that my mother and I used to walk down the street and do our shopping nearly every day so that we didn't every have a lot of shopping. Well, as I said we had the grocer calling and the milkman and the baker, but we used to walk down the street as I call it, Penrith High Street, every day practically and push the pram.

25.00 When they were at school did they go to other neighbour's homes sometimes after school?

Yes, I had a very good friend that lived in Doonmore Street and Lesley would come over to play with Robyn and Robyn would go over and play with Lesley. Oh, yes, we had an interchange of .. Lynette had a close friend who were Welsh people. They'd come to live in Doonmore Street and they used to spend time at each other's homes. But that was when they were older, say eight to ten to high school.

25.41 So you weren't isolated? You had plenty of neighbours?

Oh, no. No way. No, our ... Roger's mother and father lived diagonally across a block away and we used to go and visit them every weekend. We'd go to my mother's house for dinner or morning tea on a Sunday, or Roger's mother's house for afternoon tea on Sunday, perhaps, or whatever. But we always went to ... we spent a good deal of time at one or other of those houses, so ... because we were a close family I guess you could say.

26.21 So you had a lot of family support really.

We did. We always had family support. And in the times when the children were sick our two mothers would always help, come and visit and do the washing and the ironing. My mother always did that for me when I was having problems with sick children which you do.

26.47 Did you have a doctor nearby?

Yes. We had Dr. Faulder and he lived down where ... he took over from Dr. Higgins who actually attended the birth of my husband and his sister, I don't know about the two older boys, but Dr. Higgins was there then so that was a long time ago and Dr. Faulder took over from him. He was always on call and they would come at any hour of the night. There was no problem about home visits. They came when they were needed.

27.33 You had your children at the Nepean Hospital?

Yes, where it is now the Governor Phillip special hospital. But the old operating theatre and the old ... those old wards are still there actually, somewhere in that complex, it's very hard to find because it's a very difficult place to find your way around now, it's so big. Yes.

28.01 And when you think back to those days of living in High Street, well near what is now High Street, I suppose it is totally different?

Oh yes, totally different.

What was it like when you were there? Dirt roads?

28.21 No we had ... I can only remember ... when I was a little girl we used to come and visit 'Ormond', which was my mother's home when we were living in Croydon, and I can remember lying in bed and hearing the clip-clop of the horse and sulkies going down the street at night. It was rather nice actually. But they had electricity only in the lower half of the house then, but that was in 1920's and, I can't remember when the electricity was turned on because Prospect County Council had their hundredth anniversary last year.

29.09 Yes, I think it was 1890 - it was very early.

It was 1890 and I think Penrith had it before Sydney was it? It sounds incredible but it did.

29.21 Yes, that's right. Just shortly before, a couple of years before.

And they only had electricity in the lower half of the house. Upstairs they still had oil lamps. So I do remember that - I sound as though I came out of the ark actually. But the roads were sealed, oh I think in the 1900's, I think it was sealed in my memory always. High Street that is, although they had a lot of problems with flooding in High Street, and that wasn't solved until fairly recent years. If it was wet it always flooded down the end of High Street.

30.06 But you would have had a sense of space, even though you were living in what now is the middle of town?

Actually there were ... when I used to walk to school there were vacant allotments in High Street still. They were all filled up and then shops that were there - but they all had the awnings going out over the footpath, and I always laugh because Tat's Hotel, well they had this verandah going out, this wide verandah and one day I was going to school and a man was on his bike and he parked outside Tat's Hotel and this maid came out and threw a bucket of water over the balcony and straight over this fellow. It was just so funny. But speaking about that, the East Brothers, they have one of the butcher's shops in Penrith, and they used to drive their cattle up through High Street in those days - and that was only in the 1930's actually - it just sounds so ridiculous. And then one morning, it was my birthday which was the 1st of April and I used to sleep out on the balcony. My brother and I used to sleep out - everybody slept out. You had a mosquito net of course in the summer, but it was the 1st of April and when I got up I walked to the end of the balcony because it was nice to look out over the tennis court, and the tennis court and the whole of the area was just covered in cattle. The milkman had left the double gates open and all the cattle that the East Brothers were driving up High Street had come into our front garden and on the tennis court. They were walking around on the back verandah, and it was just the most incredible sight, and I said to my father "Dad, come and see what's going on out here" I said "there are cattle, there are cows all over the place" and he said "Oh, yes I know, it's the 1st of April".

32.31 April Fool's Day!

"It's not you know" I said, "it's true". Anyway they eventually rounded the cows out and they went up the road, but one got a bit stropky and it ran up the steps into Tat's Hotel lounge and deposited a calling card.

SIDE B

0.05 So when you think what the shops were like in those days, what were they like in those days and how has it changed? Are many of the old shops still there?

No there are no shops that I can recall there at all now. They've all been replaced. On the corner of Station Street was a garage where Norman Ross is now. Where our house was in High Street, which was next door to Tat's Hotel, is Venture and the Venture Arcade, and the Penrith Centre is where Tat's Hotel was, and across the road which was taken up from Station Street West by a small weatherboard grocery and hardware and sweetshop - that is all now Best and Less and Skipton's Arcade. And then going down to Riley Street corner that was a grocery shop there which was Mr. Master's and he has a place named after his business, 'Master's Place'. Still going west where there used to be a blacksmith - a tankmaker actually - that's all shops now down to that five storey building which I think was built by one of the insurance companies, but I'm not sure. That was all open space. And across the road opposite there, my mother's cousins had a big home and that is now a big service station. Actually there aren't any of those original places left. Maybe down past Wurth Street, which is still going west, there are a few houses there which have been taken over by ... I think it was BBC that pulled those houses down. Then opposite there which is the Penrith Plaza, that used to be all open space until Mr. Huntford (?) came and he was a veterinary surgeon and he had quite a big area there which Penrith Plaza bought. But past there, where the Joan Sutherland Centre is now, was all open space and across the road from that there were Chinese vegetable gardens. That was where ... what gardens are they now? Woodriff Gardens.

3.38 Did you get your vegetables from the market garden?

Well, no. I think he used to come around with a horse and cart. But we used to go down to the milk factory. The milk factory was going, and we used to go down to the milk factory on Sunday morning and buy a whole billy-can of cream for a shilling and ... until they started pasteurising the cream, because of course in those days it was probably all full of bacteria.

4.15 So, shopping in those days was quite a different experience to shopping now. Do you feel that the urbanisation has made shopping better for women now, or did you enjoy it more in those days?

Well I'd have to say that I probably enjoyed it more in those days because I didn't have the trauma of always having to try and find a parking place, which is quite a serious problem because it makes you very cross and you can get very up-tight trying to find a parking place in Penrith now, and not only that, but having made a mall of the central part of High Street and one-way streets where we had two-way streets before. You've really got to plan your *modus operandi* before you can get anywhere now. You can't just tootle around, and to try and tell somebody who's a stranger which roads they can drive up, and as well as that too, that parking area that was behind High Street on the southern side has now been made into a big multi-storey car park. At the moment it's completely, you know, not being able to be used. So consequently it's depleted the parking area again. No, I'd say that our old days of shopping were more leisurely and easier to park. I mean, you used to be able to park your car on High Street - that's practically unheard of now. And then, for any serious shopping I always went to Sydney. We always did.

6.21 When you say serious shopping - for clothes?

Buying clothes, yes. I'd buy some things locally I suppose. Because, you see I was used to shopping in Sydney because I'd worked in Sydney for five or six years anyway, so Sydney was my stamping ground as far as shopping went.

Did you find the fashions better in Sydney or the prices?

Well, we really only had Fletcher's and Neale's and then we had some boutique type shops like the Elliot sisters. Dorothy Elliot and her sister, they had two shops which were really good fashion shops, and they would have a mannequin parade every change of season. They were fairly up-to-date, reasonably, really quite up-to-date, but not cheap. They were sort of expensive. As far as shoes were concerned, I always had to shop in town for shoes because I took a triple A fitting which you simply couldn't buy in Penrith. So consequently I was always only interested in shoes in Sydney because they were the only ones I could buy, you know, get the things I wanted. As far as underwear and general purpose clothing ... oh, in the early days, in the 1940's we had a shop called the Chic Salon. Do you remember the Chic Salon.

I've heard of it.

Yes. Well, I used to spend ... I bought a lot of my underwear and things there and they had quite nice things in Penrith. And then they had another crown called Douglas Stores. I think that was a fairly ordinary sort of a store and ... I'm just trying to think. Then, of course, we had Woolworths and Coles all in High Street. But then, I can't just sort of think now, I think the main stores were Neale's and Fletcher's.

9.01 And when you travelled into the city did you go by train to do your shopping?

Oh, yes. Always went by train. Steam train until the electric trains came, and that was in about 1960 or '58 the line was electrified through to Penrith. I just can't remember that. But it was always steam trains we went by. And when we were going to work from Penrith to Sydney we went in the 'Fish' and eventually the Fish became fairly crowded and they started a second division from Penrith on Monday morning which we named the 'Chips', and so that still called the Fish and Chips now. But they're very different now to what they were then. I

think they still have their personalities who travel every day in there. We always had a reserved compartment.

You'd get know people.

Oh, it was like old home week, and we used to have, at Christmas time, we'd have a sort of break-up party or a Christmas party on the train. The boys always used to play '500' and the girls used to knit I guess and read books. Then the Chips started going down every day and started from Springwood and the Fish used to stop at Springwood and it went straight through. So you'd stand on Penrith station and the Fish would come through with its 36-class engine on the front and it would just thunder through. They were really very emotional about steam trains. Anyway, that was good.

11.21 Was the electric train much quicker?

Well I didn't ever get to travel ... by that time I was married and very settled down being a housewife. No. The electric train's not quicker. The Fish I think broke a speed record at one stage but I can't remember all those sort of details. The Fish used to take 55 minutes from Penrith to Sydney and I actually arrived in my office before one of the chaps I worked with who lived at Earlwood. And I used to leave home and I'd get there ... he'd leave home at the same time ... and I'd get there before him. Yes. It was amazing. So we had a very good service actually, a very fast service, and the electric trains aren't any faster. They're cleaner I guess. From Lapstone up here it takes exactly one hour in the fast train to get to Sydney, so it's very good really.

12.45 Getting back to your children and their education, what grades did they reach at school and did they go on tertiary education?

Yes, they went through the whole school system at Penrith and they both did their ... no, just a moment, no our elder daughter ... the change came. She did her Leaving Certificate at Penrith High School and our younger daughter was the first class through on the Wyndham scheme, and she went and did her High School Certificate. They did quite well really, although I was upset about the Wyndham scheme. It disrupted our daughter's education, I thought. I thought that they did one whole year - wasted. It was just wasted that first year because it was really just an orientation into the high school system. It wasn't anything to do with education at the time. I get cranky about that every time I think about it. However, she did quite well eventually, and they went on to teacher's college, each of them in their turn of course, there was three years difference.

Was that a local college?

- 14.13 No, they went to Bathurst. It was a residential college, and I felt at the time that at the age they were that it wasn't a bad thing to get out of the house and live away from home for a couple of years which they did, because they were both only two-year trained. They're not ... the three-year training didn't come in until later. But by the same token, I still feel that their standard was a lot higher, because they had to each do (and this was with three years difference), they both had to do a spelling test, and this was in conjunction with the Leaving Certificate, and they were only allowed a 2% error, and they both in their separate ways coped with that all right. Fortunately they're good spellers. But also they had to be bonded and we had to have guarantors for their education. They had a book allowance from the Department. Eighty dollars a year I think it was, and they also had to contribute to their keep. So the allowance they got while they were at Teacher's College, this was through the scholarship, the allowances they got really only contributed to their board and lodgings, and then they got the \$80. I think it was eighty. I'm not sure about that, you see - a book allowance anyway. So we had to subsidise their living expenses for tissues and stockings and shoes and, naturally of course, we bought all their clothes until they graduated. After that they earned quite good money themselves. However, they lived at home, each one separately - I'm not grouping them together because they both went through at different stages - and we didn't ask them to pay board. They paid a very nominal amount. It was just a token really, because they were both saving up for a car at the time and actually what my father-in-law did, he subsidised

them buying the car and they paid him back. And they both did that - he did that for each of them - and he let them both of the last \$100 because they were such regular payers.

17.40 And were you working yourself at this stage?

No, I never worked during our marriage until my father-in-law died, and when he died - he'd worked right up until he was 82 and he was still working down at The Nepean Times - and when he died I went down there and I decided that why should my husband be paying this office girl when I could do the work, and I had nobody at home now. Our girls were married, and I thought, well I might as well have the money. So I went down there and I worked there for 17 years in the office until we retired four years ago ... 1987. Yes, four years ago.

18.43 So in the early days when you were at home working at home how did you organise the finance at home. Who was in charge of the household accounts and how did you manage your money?

Well, we've always managed our money together. It's never been, you know, it's always been very much a partnership as far as our money's concerned, although Roger earned it. What did we do ... we had a very strict budget actually because we weren't well off. Working for his father, you know, wasn't the greatest job, and he didn't benefit by the union - not union - the award. Well, I suppose he was paid strictly to the award, not a penny over. So we had quite a battle when we were first married so far as the finances went, and we even budgeted right down to buying two magazines and week and the paper every day. So that kept us fairly, you know, on a fairly tight rein. But we went for holidays with - we nearly always, when our girls were little, we nearly always spent some time with his family with a holiday until about, oh, when our younger daughter was five and then we started having our own holidays, and we used to go to Avoca. And we went to Avoca every year for 25 years! Until we built our own beach house at McMaster's Beach, which was lovely, and then we went there for our holidays of course and every other opportunity we good get because we had a nice house. And consequently, because we always went to the beach in the summer time, and our holidays had to be in the summer because that's when all the printing houses closed, so we were forced to have our three weeks holiday over Christmas which was the most expensive time to rent holiday houses too, especially in Avoca. I forget what I was going to say

21.22 You said, because it was the beach ...

Oh, we never went anywhere else. So I only had a very narrow circle of where I'd been. I hadn't been north of Newcastle, or south of the ACT. So it wasn't until we sold our beach house in 1988 that we started to go anywhere other than to the beach.

21.57 And when you were - talking about managing the money - were you in charge of paying the accounts or did your husband do that?

Well I suppose he paid the electricity - paid all those things by cheque. So whatever it was, we just wrote a cheque. I paid the grocery bills I suppose.

You used cash?

Yes we just used cash. We didn't have plastic cards. Since we've got plastic cards I suppose we book anything up on Bankcard that's big, and a bit of a surprise maybe, you know, if we go out to dinner we usually use the Bankcard.

But in those days it was cash.

Always cash. We paid our rates, electricity, ... what other bills did we have...?

Telephone? Did you have a telephone in the '50's?

Oh, when we were living in Lethbridge Street, no, no we didn't have a phone there. I used my mother's phone who was right next door, so that was no problem. As far as using the phone

was concerned, that's another interesting part I suppose, is that doing everything in Penrith there was very little reason to - and having everyone in Penrith - there was very little reason to ring anywhere else. Although I do remember ringing David Jones 'cause we always had an account with David Jones, and I can remember ringing up - I don't know what possessed me - and I said "It's Mrs. Colless of St. Marys speaking" and I'd never lived in St. Marys and I often wondered what they thought. So, anyway, those are the sort of silly things you do.

24.04 And telephones - not everyone had those - what about electrical appliances, did you have refrigerators etc.?

Oh, yes, we had a refrigerator. We started off with an ice-chest but we had a refrigerator, for which my mother-in-law loaned us the money, and we paid her off and then we bought this block of land here and she loaned us the money for that and we paid her off there. So when you speak of parental support, we had a lot going for us really.

24.39 So you had this land a long time before you lived here?

We bought this land in 1955, I think it was, 1955.

How large would this block be?

Well, I can't tell you in metres and whatever. I can tell you it's 60 feet wide by about 160 feet in depth. I'm not really quite sure about that.

25.09 And where you lived in Lethbridge Street?

In Lethbridge Street it was ... when my mother subdivided it, instead of two narrow blocks of land which her house was built on, she subdivided across so that she had one wide block of land, not so deep, and we have a wide block of land and not so deep. So her frontage was about 100 feet and our frontage was about 100 feet because the block was about 100 feet by 200. It was a big block of ground.

25.55 What about when you had your children, did you plan your family at all?

Oh, very much so. Very much so. That was all planned, and I could always say I didn't have a baby I didn't want. We only had the two.

No accidents?

No, no accidents in our place.

26.23 And did your partner help in the child rearing? Your husband, did he help looking after the children or spend much time with them?

Oh, well that's an interesting thing. Not like the husbands do now, in that he wasn't with me when I was in labour. The one person I would not like to have had near me was my husband. I couldn't wait for him to go. I don't hold with that, whatever anyone else says. I think there's a psychological aspect about that that I, you know, I just don't like them being there. As far as helping looking after the baby, yes, he would get up in the night if he heard them. I used to say "Now, if you want anything in the night call out to Daddy" but Daddy would always lie doggo, so Mummy always got up! But as my mother used to point out he has to get up and go to work in the morning so you can always have a little rest during the day, which is what I did. And when they went to sleep during the day I'd lie down and I'd read, 'cause I was always a great reader, and I'd have a rest then. I've never been a great housekeeper, mind you, I'm not a fanatic housewife. Yes, he always was a great support really, not that he changed a lot of nappies and heated up bottles and things like that, but he was always a great moral support and, if any ticking off of children had to be done, he could always tick them off and they always did what he said, which, you know, didn't ever seem quite fair to me but it still seems to hold the same. They'll still take more notice of a male voice than they will of a female voice, you know.

28.43 And with the introduction of immigrants after the War did this affect your life of the life of the community at all?

Let me see... no, actually we made some good friends from immigrants from Wales and, no, it didn't affect us there. The people who came to Penrith to live were mostly business people who set up in St. Marys ex-explosives factory. They made it into an industrial area, estate actually it was called, and a lot of people with their different expertise came and set up these different businesses there and lived in Penrith and built very nice homes and we became quite friendly with quite a few of them. But they were British immigrants. Now I haven't had a lot to do with other people from the Asian countries. I'm in no way ... have I any racial prejudices. I do feel that immigration as it is, is not quite right because there's always going to be resentment if they come and take the jobs. That's what's happening in Britain now and it's what is going to happen here, and while ever that resentment is there, there'll always be friction. So, basically, I don't believe in this unrestricted immigration.

30.43 And what about at the end of the War when a lot of the displaced people from Europe were coming out here - you didn't actually much contact with them in Penrith?

No, not in Penrith. There were a lot of them in Sydney. A lot of people, and they called them refugees, which became a dirty word really. They didn't like that, and yet I have friends now who came here at that particular time and the people who lived next to us at McMaster's Beach they were Hungarian refugees if you like, for want of a better word. Very nice people and very appreciative of the Australian way of life. Couldn't speak highly enough of Australia actually, the people I've come across. The people I'm thinking of now had a very hard time as POW's - not POW's - they were in German concentration camps. And also our daughter went to school with a girl whose parents were in Auschwitz, and they had out of their four children two retarded children, and they had a very very hard time. So all the people that I came across I liked and respected. I think they've had a very difficult time. So I've got, you know, some good friends who have been ex-European and ex-concentration camps, and they've come out here and they've done very well. Very well, one particular couple.

32.48 And what about the churches in the area. Do you think the churches played an important role in the community in the '50s?

SIDE B

0.21 Oh, yes. In the '50s when, as I said our girls were christened Anglicans but they went to the Methodist church 'cause I was a Methodist and was prepared to take them. They went to the Sunday School and enjoyed going to the Sunday School Anniversary which they had every year, and a new dress was obligatory and everybody got dressed up, and I think they really enjoyed that. And we had a Friendship group which were all young marrieds and we'd get together I think once a week on Monday night, and meet at different homes of our members, and the Ladies Church Aid, they'd have cake competitions and all that sort of thing and I used to cook cakes for those sort of occasions, and won a couple of prizes too, actually. Then as the girls grew older they had, you know, the youth club that they usually have and they used to go to those. Oh, they ... yes the church did take an important role in our early lives, but in the 1970's I think it must have been, they sold the old Methodist church in Penrith. 'Cause after we came up here to live we didn't go down there so often, of course, and we went to the Uniting church up here - well it wasn't Uniting then, it was Presbyterian - and our girls went there. I didn't go to church quite so often then. However, they were very involved in the youth club up here in Glenbrook and they sold the old Methodist church in Penrith which I was very upset about, because my grandfather was on the trust that built that church and I felt that, you know, they didn't do the right thing by selling it because the church has changed so much now that, being the older generation, I guess I still like the set hymns and the traditional service set out. Now of course they indulge in guitars and jazz and heaven knows what else, and speaking ... I just don't like it.

3.34 But it was a good way of people getting together?

Yes, and Methodists were always renowned for standing around the gate talking for an hour after the services, so that always happened, and I think they probably still do in the Anglican church down in Penrith, and they probably still do up here, but I don't go to church anymore except on very rare occasions, and it just doesn't ... it hasn't got the meaning for me now that it used to have. The church itself, I mean. When they sold the old Methodist church, all the memorials that had been put in by my mother and father were discarded and my mother put this lamp in memory of my father for ... it had a different top on it there, but ... I found it on the rubbish heap. So I got a bit browned off and I don't feel the same way about the institution anymore. I'm not an atheist by any means. I still have quite a strong belief in God, but I'm not at one with church anymore I'm afraid.

4.55 What about other community groups in the area that brought people together?

Oh, well, Inner Wheel still does - of course that's the off-shoot of Rotary - and our Torchbearers for Legacy, we still get together and actually I get browned off with everything every now and again and I think I'll resign. But then I realise that they are the things that keep us together and they're friendships that we've made over these years - I still like to go and see the girls. So I still have close friends - and their husbands of course - we're all friends, and I like to say, you know, just the matter of making two or three phone calls we can have half a dozen people for dinner. So it's ...

So they're old friends from the old days.

They're old friends, that's right.

5.50 And what about the choral group that you mentioned belonging to?

Oh, yes I'm very keen about the choral group. Yes, well my father was a singer and my mother was a pianist and so I've been involved in choral ever since I was 12 years old, actually, and before that really I used to sing with the Presbyterian Ladies' College and Croydon's choir on a Sunday morning in the Presbyterian Church. No, I'm very keen on the choral society.

Was it an active group back in the 50's?

Oh, it's been ... it's a conglomerate actually, or ... no, how can I put it? It's come, and it's grown, and it's sort of gone and it's grown again and it's always been rooted in the old Methodist church choir. Well, that's how I see it, but I'd be the oldest member there. I don't mean age wise, I mean longest active chorister, I suppose, in the whole of that group. We're about 56 strong and in a big concert we are augmented by Goulburn Cathedral Choir sometimes and sometimes with the Bathurst Cathedral Choir and we have sung with the Western Choral Society in the Great Hall at Macquarie University on three occasions, and on one occasion we sang with them in the Sydney Town Hall. On another occasion we sang in the Great Hall at Sydney University with the Post-graduate Choir. It was a bit smaller then. So it's an active group, and I'm very interested. The only thing that I'm upset about is that I'm really getting too old to sing, you know, my voice is getting aged.

8.03 I think we have just about covered everything, Pat. Can I just ask you in summing up and after reflecting on life in the old days, how you feel about how the place has changed - the rapid growth and the urbanisation that's taken place?

Well, I don't feel very happy about it as you can imagine. My biggest whinge, I suppose, is the fact that Penrith - this is still very much a nice suburban area - whereas Penrith has developed into a ... from being a ... you know when I went to school this was the fruit bowl of the West, the fruit bowl of Sydney, I mean.

Penrith?

8.38 Penrith and Emu Plains and Castlereagh. They were all under orchards! All under orchards. Beautiful soil and market gardens and heaven knows what, but mostly citrus orchards. Now

when we first came up here to live you could look down here and you could see all the citrus orchards. Now all you can do is see houses and you can see through the trees, but the trees have blotted that out. The thing that bugs me is the fact that they've allowed so many factories and so many commercial enterprises to go up, grouped with housing, and you've got housing on one side of the road and commercial enterprises on the other side of the road, or light industry. All the people who live in the south work in the north, and all the people who live in the west work in the east, and they all meet on Castlereagh Road corner there at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. So you can be sitting there for five sets of lights before you manage to get through. I think that the planning Penrith has just gone to rack and ruin, and where all those ... even that nice rose garden they have down there in Judges Park has been put under a car park. So, those are the sort of things that ... the big changes that I've seen which I dislike. I really think that one of our previous - well one of Penrith's previous Town Clerks, I shouldn't say one of ours because we no longer pay rates in Penrith - he had a dream of coming into Penrith by train and by car where you would see, you know, nice public buildings and gardens and things like that. Instead of that. If you go down by train now, on the left hand side going to Sydney it's just non-stop factories and businesses.

10.48 What are the main industries that have grown up in Penrith?

Well in Emu Plains you've got the big Rocla Pipes and it's an enormous area and it's all covered by concrete pipes. The ugliness is just awful. It's just awful. And then when you go out of Penrith Station you go past all those factories that back on the railway line, and they've all been vandalised by graffiti of course. There are all sort of businesses. St. Vincent de Paul has one of their big stores there, and I think Lifeline has. There's a funeral headstone, you know, a headstone monument mason there. It's just non-stop factories and down the line further you've got that big hire place, MacBros.(?) or somebody like that, with acres of, you know, road-making material, machines ... what do you call them? Graders and tractors - and that covers acres. When I was going to work in Sydney that would just be all farm land. Green - trees, here and there, you know - so, it's just changed out of all proportion.

12.19 That sense of space?

You just can't believe it. You wouldn't believe it. And when you're talking about it - we're only speaking about the last twenty years, you know, we're not speaking about back in the olden days. This has all happened in the last twenty years, and it's just grown out of all proportion.

Since the '70's?

12.36 Well, yes. Yes, definitely. Even these houses that you can see over here, that's Glenmore. This is this new Glenmore Estate, and there are just houses all over that area that used to be all covered with bush and, you know, nice places to ride horses when we were young. We used to ride out every Saturday morning and ride out all over there. But that's a long time ago - that is 40 years ago. But this is only in the last 20 years that this has been allowed to happen, and I just think it's dreadful. And our river's polluted. Our river which lived in, on, up, down, you know, we spent all our youth in the summer time up and down the river - and in it - and it's polluted now, the Nepean River.

13.32 Oh, and one thing I didn't say when you were talking about facilities in the '50's, we were still getting our water from the Nepean River and in the flood times we'd have ... you'd fill the bath up with mud and you'd let the mud settle to the bottom, or you'd fill the copper up and let the mud settle to the bottom, and you'd skim off the top which was reasonably clean. But we put up with that, and that was, you know, in our early married life - it was all in the '50s I'd say - with small children, and you'd be washing for them in this muddy water. In the flood times in Emu Plains - and they didn't have a water supply then, they were still on tank water - and they'd have pumps from the river and if the river was going to flood they'd have to rush down and bring up their pumps and that's right up until recent times, actually. So, it's only since Emu Plains went over to Penrith Council that they got water on, otherwise they wouldn't have it yet. They'd be waiting for the Blue Mountains City.

Very primitive.

Very, yes.

15.01 Well I think that's just about covered everything, so thank you very much.