

INTERVIEW NO.22

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 5/12/91

**MRS AMY JACKSON
20 DEWDNEY ROAD
EMU PLAINS.**

0.35 My name's Amy Jackson. I live at 20 Dewdney Road, Emu Plains. I was born on the 18th July, 1916, born in Penrith. I'm a widow. I'm Australian and I have three children.

11.02 How long have you lived in the Penrith area?

Well I was born in Penrith and I've always lived ... I did work down Sydney way for a while before I was married, but I've, you know, in my married life I've always lived around the Penrith area.

So you were born in the Penrith area. Whereabouts did you live then? Where was the house you were born in?

The corner of Mulgoa Road and High Street.

So that's quite in the centre of town now?

Yes. Oh, yes, yes. And the house is demolished now.

Oh, right.

Then when I was - well I was born in 1916 - in 1919 my parents moved to Emu Plains to the old place down there. That's where we lived then. My parents lived there then and ...

Down near the river?

Yes. Yes. On the west ... the one they called the old police station.

And was it an old police station?

Oh, yes it was. Yes. The police lived there before they built the other police station next door.

2.09 So lived most of your childhood in Emu Plains then?

Yes, I did.

And you went to the local school?

Yes. At Emu Plains and Penrith - the convent. I went to Emu Public School for a while and then into the convent in Penrith.

2.24 And how did you get into school? Did you walk?

If we got our jobs done in time and managed to catch the train we caught that, but if we were running late we'd have to walk. Sometimes we'd get right down to the station and the train'd just go out and then we'd turn round and walk all the way up to Penrith, when we were going to Penrith School. Because at Emu School though, we always walked, always had to walk.

That was a long walk then to Penrith!

Yes. It was quite a good walk from the old place down to the Emu school too because it was just over a mile. Of course we started there when we were six.

3.06 How many children were there in your family?

Five.

Were you the eldest?

No. Second eldest.

And so you always had someone to walk with when you were walking to school?

Yes. Because my brother was going before me?

3.21 And how did you - did you travel by bus at all in the area then?

What during the school time?

Yes.

No. No, there were no buses then.

No buses. So how did you get around if you didn't walk?

Well, we only walked! (Laughs).

3.37 Did your parents have a car?

Oh no. No.

So you just had to walk everywhere?

Yes. Oh yes. Like if you were going any distance, you'd go by train. But I mean just around the area - we'd go to Penrith - you'd walk up to Penrith and do the shopping and walk home with it.

So your mother had a lot of walking to do then?

Yes, she used to walk into Penrith quite often.

4.04 Did she get her groceries delivered?

Not ... Oh yes, when we were young a chap used to come from the store in Penrith. That's going back a long time because he'd ride a horse in and get the order.

Really!

Yes. And then the things would be brought over.

4.23 And what was the house like that you lived in - the old police station - what was it made of?

Just ... some of it was brick and some timber and plaster inside.

And was it large? How many rooms did it have?

About ... five rooms in the front part of the house, you know, the old place, and there's the verandah and the dining room and the kitchen and the laundry in the back. But the laundry was added on later. There was no laundry when we were young, really young.

And I suppose you had the toilet down in the backyard in those days?

Yes. (Laughs) That's right.

And so your mother wouldn't have had any electrical appliances or anything like that?

Not till later, no.

5.30 So did you go to high school after you left primary?

No. I finished at the convent school in Penrith in what they called ... we just called it seventh class, you know, but it would have been like first year I suppose. I was 14.

Right. And was that as far as the school went, was it, or ...?

Oh no, it went further, but I didn't. I left.

And what did you do when you left school?

I just ... I was home for a few months and then I worked for people in their homes.

In and around locally - in the local area?

I went ... I was working for someone on Emu for a little while, but then I left there and then I worked for someone down in Strathfield, and I was there for quite a while.

6.15 You lived there too did you?

Oh, yes Lived in the places, yes. Then I went and worked for -the woman I was working for at Strathfield - I worked for her daughter at Bondi for a while. And I came home again for a while. (Laughs) Then I got a job up at Lawson and I worked up there for a long time. It was a Church of England Girls' School and I worked up there doing everything. Whatever they were short of I'd do. Cooking, laundry, anything! Housework, waiting on tables!

So you were 'Cook and bottle washer'!

Yes. (Laughs) Yes and when I left there, then I was home for a while and then not long after that I got married.

7.08 So what year would that have been that you were married?

In 1943.

1943. So when you were married, then I suppose you moved into your own home?

Yes. In Castlereagh Street.

In Penrith?

Yes.

That's different to Castlereagh Road?

Oh, yes. Yes.

Yes, so that's in the heart of Penrith is it?

Yes.

7.29 So about the time you got married then - that's the period we are really wanting to look at, the '40s and through the '50s - so what was your house like? Did you build a house?

Oh, no, no. It was renting it. Yes. A weatherboard place.

A weatherboard house. And how many rooms would that have had?

It had three bedrooms and what we used to call the front room, and then the kitchen and then the laundry and bathroom.

And did that have an inside toilet?

Yes.

And sewerage?

Sewerage, yes.

8.06 And so what sort of land was around it? Was there much garden?

Oh, it was a good area down the back, but it was a very narrow frontage. It was just the width of the house and then just a drive, that was the whole width of the block.

I meant to ask you what sort of land was around you lived in as a child?

Oh, I see.

Was that ...?

Oh, yes it was lovely, yes.

A big acreage?

Oh well it was not like acreages, but it would be like, I suppose call it four or five building blocks.

8.49 And did your father keep a garden there?

Oh yes. He grew stuff.

Grew vegetables?

Yes. Yes as well as that he had - where the caravan park is at Emu Plains, I don't know if you ever noticed the caravan park just beside the bridge?

Yes.

Well first of all Dad and his brother were renting that from Mr. McGrath, I think, owned it and then they ended up buying it between them. But Dad always grew stuff down there as well.

9.20 So what was your father's occupation?

He worked down at the gravel company with his horses and dray, you know, carting the stones, you know, up to the crusher. You know, getting the stones and that out of the river and ...

He actually got them out of the river did he?

Oh, yes. Wherever it was down there at the Gravel Company down there.

9.51 So, the landscape was fairly countrified in those days when you were a child?

Yes. It was a lot of orchards along here, all along here was orchards.

How would you describe it?

Nice and peaceful. (Laughs) Yes, it was nice.

And they were mostly orchards were they? The properties around here?

Yes. Yes. Well both sides of the highway along, all in here was all orchards. They were orchards.

10.21 So you had a nice feeling of space around you, I guess?

Yes.

Did you feel - did you enjoy living here as a child?

Oh, yes.

You didn't feel isolated?

Oh no, no. Because we had our family.

Did you have close neighbours too?

Yes, the people who lived next door - mostly the policemen, you know, families - most of them had children. Not that we had a lot of time to play or anything because we all had our jobs to do with the amount of land Dad had to attend to.

10.58 What sort of jobs would you have had to do?

Oh, my brother and I, because there was not much difference in our ages, when we'd get up of a morning we'd have to go down and - 'cause we always had milking cows at home, usually two, you know to keep the butter and milk for our own use - and Dad had the cows down ... I spoke about the farm over the line - and well we'd have to go down and bring the cows home and milk them and separate the milk, put it through the separator and take the cows down to the river to have a drink and back down to the farm again. And then come home and get ready and go to school!

This was all before going to school?

Oh, yes. That's right. We thought nothing of it. That was just a thing you did. It was just our way of life. It was no problem. You know, we didn't think we shouldn't be doing it or anything like that. That was just it.

And what about after school? Did you have jobs to do then too?

Oh, yes. Usually it would depend on the time too. It might be time for something to be cut down on the farm like sorghum or corn to be, you know, picked or something. It'd depend, you know, that was mostly at the weekend because Dad was working through the week, but at the weekend we had a lot of corn picking and cutting sorghum. Then when the corn was brought home it was put into a shed. We had to husk that, you know, sometimes with a hurricane lantern out in the shed at night, my brother and I you know.

Did you?

Yes. And then you'd put ... the corn would have to go through the corn-sheller, you know, to get the corn off the cob and we had to turn that.

So you had a busy life.

Oh, yes. Yes. Good though. Yes.

13.03 And as a child what sort of things did you do for recreation - if you had any time left?

(Laughs) Mostly reading. Yes. I used to like reading. And more getting around games then, you know, chasings, rounders, hiding, you know - anything like that - hopscotch even.

13.33 So, getting back now to the '40s, when you were a young married lady, your house was on a much smaller block?

Yes. Well it's deep going back, but it was a narrow frontage. It was part... there's a place it was identical to - there's one in Castlereagh Street right next to the Salvation Army Hall. I don't know if you know it at all? But our house was identical, but the Salvation Army took it over and it was demolished. It was exactly the same as that - it's an X-ray place that's there.

And you were actually on that site where the Salvation Army is?

Yes. The Salvation Army has extended on to it now, yes.

14.16 And how did you feel about that being demolished?

Oh, a bit sad. You know, when you've lived in a place. It's the same with all the different houses we were in, you know, you feel a bit sad.

You get attached.

Yes. For a while.

14.32 And so did you say that you kept a garden there? Your husband grew vegetables?

At Castlereagh Street? Yes we had some vegetables there and some flowers. Mostly he always had sweet-peas growing. Wherever we went we always had sweet-peas.

14.52 They're lovely. And did you have modern conveniences in that house? Stoves and fridges and things?

Oh, we had a fuel stove. Oh yes we had a fridge, but had a fuel stove for a while and then I got a small electric stove.

And when you say you had a fridge, did you have an electric fridge?

Yes. We got the fridge whilst we were living there.

15.22 And I suppose you had the milk and bread all delivered to the house in those days?

Yes. Yes. At that time you had a hook hanging from the front verandah and you'd put the billy out - hang the billy out - the milkman would bring the milk and tip it in. (Laughs) Yes. We had the milk delivered.

15.43 And what about the rest of your shopping? Did you go shopping locally?

Oh for a while I used to order my groceries and then they'd be brought to the house, you know, whilst I was at Castlereagh Street part of the time. Then of course things got a bit worse and you sort of went and got it yourself. But probably the War affecting things.

So deliveries stopped I suppose due to the War, did they?

Yes.

16.21 And what would your - how many children - you had three children?

Three.

And how far apart were they?

Oh, well the one boy - my husband was a widower and he had the two children at the time, but Peter, the elder one - he had rheumatoid arthritis and he died when he was 17 and a half. That was in 1949, and that left Ronnie, you know. Ronnie was my step son, really, and then I had two children of my own.

And so did you have those two children close together?

Well, Lennie, the one I'm living with now, was born in 1947 and Betty, my daughter, was born in 1949.

So there was two years between them. And how old was your husband's son?

Oh, he was born in '34.

So he was a little bit older.

Yes.

17.28 And did you plan your family? Did you plan to have the two children?

No. It just happened, you know. Oh, I did have one baby before but it was born dead. It was full term but it was born dead. That was in '44 I had that.

17.47 What were the medical services like in the area then?

Oh well there were only a couple of doctors, I think, really. But it was all right, you know, the doctors we had were good doctors.

Did you have your children at the hospital or at home?

No. Oh well the first one that I had and then of course my husband - I was pregnant again - 'You're going down to Crown Street' he said, so I had to go down there

18.16 So the first one, the baby that you lost, did you have that in the hospital here?

Yes. In Penrith. Of course it was the one that's the Governor Phillip Hospital now which was the hospital in those days. It was the hospital ... yes I had the baby there. But the other two ...

You went to Crown Street?

Yes.

That's a long way to go from Penrith!

Yes. Yes well I was in quite a few weeks before Lennie was born and then I was in a bit longer before Betty was born. I had blood pressure and kidney problems with the pregnancies.

So you didn't have that last minute dash from Penrith to Sydney!

No. I used to ask the doctor could I go home. He said 'What do you want to go home to Penrith for?' he said 'Way up there!' (Laughs). You know, you'd think it was the back of Bourke or somewhere!

19.12 And so when your children were young, what was your daily routine then, when you children were small?

Oh, getting my husband off to work. Or do you mean before the children went to school, like before they were school age?

Well, yes before they were school age and , I guess, when they started at school too.

Yes. Well, I'd get my husband off to work and then we'd have our breakfast and - the children and I - you know, and then I'd get the jobs done that had to be done about the house and that sort of thing.

That was enough to keep you busy I suppose?

Yes. Oh, yes. Then I had ... of course when the ... I used to do, you know, a bit of knitting and that sort of thing too. When Peter was still ... oh well that was before ... Peter died just before Betty was born. But we'd have games. Sometimes Ronnie and I'd have a - you know, board games - and that sort of thing when he was on school holidays.

20.33 And did you cook jams and things like that?

Yes. I used to make jams. Yes. Not a lot, but mostly tomato jam because I loved it!
(Laughs).

And you grew tomatoes I suppose, did you?

Oh, yes.

Nothing like home grown tomatoes for jam!

Yes and melon - I used to make melon jam too.

20.59 And did you make your children's clothes at all? Did you sew?

Only the baby clothes and I made a couple of dresses for my daughter. Then I made her first Holy Communion dress, but I didn't continue on with it.

21.15 When your children started going to school, did they go to the same school that you went to in Emu Plains - or Penrith they went to I suppose?

They went to the Infants' Public School at Penrith. That's where they started.

And they walked to school?

Yes. Yes they walked to school. Then when Lennie was about six we moved. That's when we moved to Cambridge Park, and then they went from there. They'd travel in the bus to school and back home again.

So when would that have been that you moved there?

'53.

22.04 Had the area changed very much in that time? When you left Penrith in '53 had it changed very much from when you first went to live there?

No. Not a lot. A few shops might have changed hands. It wasn't anything like it is now. Not all those different shopping malls and things.

They came later.

Yes.

And what was it like at Cambridge Park when you moved there?

Very quiet, you know.

Very countrified?

Yes. Yes, lots of trees just opposite us, you know. Still blocks that wasn't built on or anything. Quite nice, though. Yes we went out there because we wanted get a place of our own.

Because you'd been renting?

Yes. That's right.

23.01 Do you remember how much rent you paid in those days?

We used to pay - in Castlereagh Street - we paid a pound.

A pound a week?

Yes. A pound a week.

Really. It's incredible by today's standards!

Yes. Yes. I was up at the Catholic fete a few weeks back and I met the lady who used to come around and get the rent, you know.

Really!

'Cause they were people from in Penrith that we knew. Yes. That's a lot of water flowed under the bridge since then.

23.39 Yes. And so you built your house in Cambridge Park did you?

Oh, no. It wasn't quite completed when we bought it and then my husband and his brother finished it off, yes.

And what was it made from?

It was fibro, yes. It was a tin roof.

And was it on a large block of land?

Yes. It was quite large. It was a 100 feet by 200 feet. They did end up, like after we'd sold and that, they ended up dividing it up and made two blocks out of it.

So that house was demolished after you left it too?

The one ...

At Cambridge Park?

No, no. The house is still there.

Oh I see, they just cut off some of the land.

Yes. They divided - well it was 100 feet wide, so you know, 50 feet each one.

24.39 And so did you have a garden there too?

Oh, yes. My husband always had gardens. Oh, yes. vegetables and we grew our flowers. It was horrible soil though. It was clay and ironstone, but we still grew stuff. To dig you used to use the pick - you know, the mattock - to get...

Did you do it too?

Oh, yes. Only the flower garden I used to do, you know, dig some of it up. Oh yes.

Was that just for your own use? Or did you sell the flowers?

Oh no. Just for our own use. Yes, just to make it look nice.

25.05 And what were the roads like around there when you moved there? Were they sealed roads?

It wasn't tarred. It was just that road base stuff, you know, metal dust. It was quite good, even in the wet weather it didn't bog or slip or anything. The metal dust was really good.

25.24 And did you have neighbours close by?

Yes. There was people not ... you know, one building block between us on one side to the next place, and then the next house was next to our block. There were a few vacant blocks around, like every block wasn't occupied, but we did have houses around.

And did you make friends with your neighbours? Did you have a close community relationship?

Just, you know, neighbourly. Yes.

Yes. Not too close.

Yes. Not in one another's pockets or anything?

26.01 What about in Penrith while you were living there, when you were renting? Did you have close neighbours there?

Well there was only like the one side, Mrs. Kinsela. Yes we were always good neighbours. And then the next house up too, Mr. and Mrs. Street, they were always very good too.

26.24 So what was the shopping like at Cambridge Park? Did you have shops nearby?

Just one little shop. (Laughs)

Only one?

Yes. We used to just go across amongst the trees and the bush to go. It was on a road, but we used to cut through, you know. A little sort of mixed business.

And for any more serious shopping you'd go into Penrith would you?

Yes. By that time I had a car and I'd drive into Penrith.

And what about shopping for clothes - did you do your shopping locally or did you travel further?

Oh, I'd just always used to shop in Penrith for my clothes.

Did you ever have to go to Parramatta or Sydney for any shopping?

No, not really. What I needed I could get in Penrith.

27.12 And did your children go to high school locally too?

Yes. Well Betty ended up going to ... she was going to High School and then she left ... I think she left Lennie went to High School and he left from there and Betty ended up changing from the Public School to the Catholic School, and she left from there.

27.39 Right. So when the children were a bit older did you start working again?

No. When my parents were getting older and they wasn't too good and my two brothers were working, so I used to go over - I forget what year it was now I went over - I was going over and looking after them for quite a long time, I think about five years. I'd pop over of a day, after the kiddies went to school.

Right. Helping your parents and looking after them.

Yes. Yes, and then go home of an afternoon in time to usually pick my husband up from the Kingswood station, or wherever I wanted to pick him up from work, and take him home.

So you were looking after the whole family really then.

Yes. My two brothers were home, but they were working and I'd go over and be with Mum and Dad and do the work around the house and leave the food ready for Jack to cook when he came home, and do their washing and all that sort of thing.

You must have been busy!

Yes. But you didn't .. you know ... 'cause it fitted in, even though you didn't have that many, you know, conveniences you seemed to have more time than the young ones do these days.

Yes. I wonder why that is?

Yes. It's strange isn't it?

22.06 So what about finances? Did you - how did you manage your household accounts. Did you manage the household money or ... you did?

Yes. Yes.

Your husband gave you a certain amount or ...?

Just about all - just hand the wages over.

And you managed it?

Yes.

Women are wonderful managers! And I suppose you paid everything off as you went along did you? Or did you use hire-purchase at all?

Oh, yes. When we bought our fridge and our first TV and things like that. But I always saw that I had about half of what the thing was going to cost and then paid that down and then just paid it so that it would be paid up in a short time, because interest always bugged me. I didn't believe in interest - paying out dead money!

Yes. That's right.

30.14 And what about the churches in the area? Did you find the Churches played a big role in your family's life or in the community generally?

For our own family, sort of thing? Yes. Yes, I was always ... 'course we were all Catholics and ...

You went to the local Catholic Church?

Yes. In Penrith. Yes. I went - my brother and I went for a while, then my two sisters and our young brother, and of course they followed on after.

30.48 And did you belong to any social organisations connected with the Church?

No. I didn't.

Did your children?

No.

And did you belong to any other sort of community organisations?

No I was never into that sort of thing.

No. Not Red Cross or ... ?

No. I had my family and we had our things. We had ... my husband's brother - he and his wife and children - they'd visit us pretty frequently and we'd pop down to their place on a weekend often, you know, and visit.

Visited your family?

Yes. Yes, and probably sometimes stay overnight or something on the Saturday night.

31.36 And that was your main form of entertainment I guess, was it?

Yes. And then we'd - before then - like sometimes of a night we'd go over home to Mum and Dad and have a game of Yuka. They liked their game of Yuka, and we'd go over there and have a game.

And did you go on family picnics at all?

Occasionally, not a lot.

32.00 And did you take holidays during the school holidays at all? Did you go away?

Sometimes with the family I spoke about - my husband's brother and wife and children - and we'd go up north or down south camping sometimes.

Oh did you?

Yes. Just in tents.

Did you enjoy that?

Oh, yes. Lovely. I liked that.

The children would have liked that?

Yes. My husband too. He always liked that. We all fitted in the one tent but we all enjoyed it.

Cosy!

Yes. That was good.

32.32 What did your children do when they were a bit older, as teenagers, you know what did they do for recreation? Did they go to the pictures?

Yes, to the pictures and, you know, getting around with their friends.

Dancing?

No. They didn't.

END SIDE A.

0.08 So what about after the War when a lot of European migrants came out here from Europe to settle, did you come across many of them in your life? Did they live around you or did you notice ...

What do you mean just during the War time?

Just after the War.

Just after the War? No, not really.

0.35 And did you keep any animals apart from the cows when you were younger, did you keep any household pets?

You mean during our married life?

Yes.

Yes, we had cats and dogs and we had birds.

Did you? And chooks too do you mean!

Oh, yes. Early, you know, not in later years.

No. And you had your own eggs too.

Yes.

1.08 So when did you notice that the place started to change, or did you notice more buildings going up?

Yes. I think the first thing that struck me was when ... we had a shop in Penrith and it was called Handley's - 'course this is going back a long time - they had the electrical goods - that's where we mostly bought our fridges or anything we wanted electrical - and then Eric Anderson took over!

Oh, yes.

That was the first thing that stuck in my mind, you know, about the Sydney crowd sort of coming into Penrith. It didn't seem the same, you know, the shops were always just like ... friendly. You knew the people, they knew you. But now you go in to a shop, you're just another cog in the wheel! You know, you're not ... it's nothing personal with shopping, really, now. In my opinion, that is, of course.

It's become impersonal really?

Yes.

I suppose you'd describe it more as a village atmosphere earlier on?

Yes. Oh it was 'cause you'd know people and they'd know you, like even ... although when Layton's came in to Penrith ... cause there's a chap running it, Reg Galvin, that we knew. Well he was good, you know. He was just like the local person, you know, we didn't mind that sort of thing. Then of course all these other places they sprung up everywhere!

And the big supermarkets came in?

Yes. That's what I mean.

2.54 And how do you feel about the change that's taken place now, you know, in Penrith?

Oh I suppose it's good for people. I suppose it's made a lot of employment and that sort of thing. But for myself personally I find I can go up to Penrith with something in my mind to get, and I can go to all those different shopping areas in Penrith and I might not even get it!

Really!

Yes. And going back years, the main shops in Penrith - the big stores - was Fletchers, Neale's - up on the hill - and then Murray's, the hardware shop. And anything you wanted you'd go into Penrith to either of those shops and you get just anything you wanted. I suppose people's needs are different now and they've got to cater for so much more stuff. But whatever we needed you could get from just those shops. But I find I'll go up to Penrith looking for a certain thing - I've got no hope of finding it, I don't know why!

Maybe it's because there's such a diversity of shops, you've got to cover such a lot of ground to find it!

Yes. Yes. Probably, because there's the Plaza and the bottom part and the Nepean Square and, you know, all those shops.

It's a bit confusing, really, isn't it?

Yes.

4.15 And so I suppose you must have seen a lot of change in the landscape too in that time?

Yes.

How do you feel about that?

Oh things have got to go on, you know, you've got to accept it. But things were nice when you could go along the road and you could see a nice orchard, you know, trees growing instead of ... and of course the things the whats-a-names done a lot of damage to, hasn't it, to the river now according to the news, you know, the build up of places.

The pollution, and now the algae's threatening too!

Yes. Oh people's got to live. I mean they've got to have homes and that. I liked the things the way they were, you know, but you've got to ...

And do you think it could have been better planned?

Oh I don't know. I think it's not too bad the way it's done, so far. But I don't think they should be going ahead with too much building along the river really because it's getting a bit much for the river.

5.25 And what are the things that you - when you think back - what are the things that you miss or that you're sorry have changed?

Such as?

You know, you said the friendliness of the area - that's one thing that you've notice change, the impersonal shopping - and I suppose the traffic, would that be something that wouldn't be so pleasant now?

Yes. No, I have a, you know, a car but I never drive to Penrith to do my shopping because it's a bit too much of a problem getting a parking space, so I get the bus!

Do you?

Yes. The bus goes right past the door so I go in the bus instead of the car.

6.09 And what about the sense of security in the area? Do you feel that that's changed?

Oh, yes. Certainly.

What was it like in the old days, say in the '40s and the '50s?

Well you didn't have to worry about it at all, because on hot nights we'd just sleep with the whole place open. You wouldn't have your front door closed or anything like that, you know, you'd just sleep. Often we'd just drag our mattress to the door where you'd get a bit of a breeze, you know, and that. And of course people just slept out on sleep-outs outside. You didn't worry, but you couldn't do it now. You've got to lock up and that sort of thing. Yes we'd have our doors all open all night. We wouldn't dream of closing our doors.

6.54 And I suppose walking around the area at night too was a lot safer?

Oh yes. That's right. If someone's a bit behind you now you're, you know, you're wondering if they're going to bump you or something or grab your bag. Yes you've got to walk ... when you walk along streets you could walk, you know, swinging your purse or anything. But now you've got to hang it over your arm, you know, clutch it.

Yes. That's one of the not so nice things about suburbanisation?

Yes. Of course the unemployment and people, you know, not having things is part of it. And of course the drug business too, you know, they're out to get anything they can for nothing too.

7.40 So just generally, just looking back, how do you feel that, say, the young mother today - bringing up children - do you think she is better off than you were in your day, or your mother was?

Oh they have more conveniences, certainly, but I think the pace of life though - I think it counteracts all that sort of thing. Myself, I would have rather have lived at the time I did through my married life and that than what the young married ones now...

Would you?

Well they seem to be racing everywhere don't they and dragging the little children with them.

It was a more relaxed lifestyle than now?

Yes. Yes. You know, when we lived in Castlereagh Street, I'd just pop whichever one was the young one in the stroller, you know, and just stroll down the street, do your bit of shopping, or look around. You know, you wasn't driven by time. Everybody seems to not have enough time now - and there's still 24 hours in the day, but they don't have time.

That's right.

So, no, I think they're worse off, and I think people are slipping up a bit too on the rearing of their children actually.

Do you?

Yes. I don't think they, you know, make the children respect them as much as they should.

9.20 So then the family as a group doesn't seem to be so important today?

No. That's right.

You used to spend a lot of time visiting family and relatives!

Oh, yes.

Visiting is something that doesn't happen so much these days?

Oh, no. There's ... well, families living, you know, breaking away and living far apart. You know the kiddies haven't got others - you know, close relatives - much to fall back on have they. It's only just a case of their parents and that sort of thing.

10.03 And how do you feel about some of the landmarks in the area having - you know the old landmarks that were always there when you were a child - and now they've gone and been replaced by things. How does that make you feel?

Yes. It feels sad. You know, like the old Catholic Church in Penrith, St. Nicholas, you know. I was really sad when that was taken down.

And now it's a big modern church?

Yes. It's a modern one now, you know. But I'm glad that they preserved the Methodist Church in Henry Street in Penrith and it's used as offices or something now. That's good and I think things like that's good. And the - they call it Uniting now - the Methodist Church that was up here at Emu Plains. You know, it's still there and it's nice, you know, the old building. I like the old buildings.

Well they're part of your memories of the past aren't they?

Yes. And the old Public School - the building is still there at Emu.

That's still used as a Public School is it?

Oh no No.. I think it's a sort of recreation place and a library, and that's there. I think that's what the ... yes, but the building's there anyway.

11.22 And did you use the river much?

Oh yes. We used to go swimming a lot, yes.

Did you?

Yes. Yes, we loved swimming. That's one of my good past-times.

You wouldn't want to swim there today?

We used to go down ... we'd walk round the bend we used to call it - and down under the bridge and go down just this side of the weir a bit. We'd swim in that part and of a hot night

sometimes Dad would even come down with us and have a swim. But we were never allowed to go swimming before about four o'clock of the afternoon. Mum would never let us go out in the really hot sun to swim or anything. Never before four.

She was sensible!

Yes. And that was the real four o'clock in those days!

12.21 And so things have changed, and I think it's interesting the way you said that there's still 24 hours in a day but we don't have the time to fit things in - but it's still 24 hours in a day.

Yes. That's right. Because the young ones are taken up too much with work. They've got to do so much, and of course they expect too much these days. You can call it 'greedy' really, because they get a home and they have to have everything in it to start off with. When we started off getting our home - especially the one out at Cambridge Park - as I said before the place wasn't really quite finished and my husband and his brother finished it off and then we just bought things as we could afford it. When I had some money saved up we'd get the things. We didn't have any problem, didn't have to worry about paying it off or anything. But now, they want everything. They go into debt, and caught up with these sharks with the high interest, and they've both got to go to work. Their kids are just put anywhere for someone to look after or something like that - this is my opinion - and what's the house?. They come home of a weekend. They're flat out, if their interested in the garden, working. The only thing is, the enjoyment they get out of their place - what you can see - is to lay their heads at night because they're out working every day of the week. They just want too much too soon, I think. We didn't. We didn't do that. We were just satisfied to have what we could afford at the time and what we went along with.

And you were able to enjoy life as you went along?

That's right. You didn't have the worry of things hanging over your head to pay off and that sort of thing. When we bought our house out at Cambridge Park, I kept the payments up regular. Well, we paid that place off in about three and a half years, and what with people these days it's 25 years thing, or something like that. You can imagine the interest that they're paying. Well they're really paying, for the house, they'd be paying three times the actual cost of the place. If the place was 120 thousand they'd be into paying 360 thousand by the time they paid it off. That's me working it out anyway, round enough.

15.23 So they really just seem to be working ...

Yes. Just working for the money and just for the interest. Yes.

So that they can have the house they want, but they don't seem to have the time to enjoy it?

Yes. No. they don't. How can you enjoy it. They might have organised stuff in their houses but they haven't got the time to enjoy it and enjoy it as a family. They're not there when their little children come home from school of an afternoon, instead of meeting them. I was always home with my kids.

15.56 And so some things haven't turned out for the better, but you know, I guess there are some things that have?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. You wouldn't want to go back to the days of boiling your clothes and all that sort. And then of course they go in for this ... even dishwashers now! You know, sort of thing.

All the labour saving devices.

Yes. Yes, I don't know a lot of the things - a lot of these electrical goods - by the time you get them out, pull them apart, and clean them after you'd used them, you can do quicker the old way really. All these mixers and things. I've have quite a few things, you know, given to me by the children and that as presents. I've never used them. I'd just as soon ...

Do it the old-fashioned way?

Yes. Yes, it's sad though the way things are with the ... you know, what you see the young ones doing. It's really sad too with the way the teenagers and ... they don't seem to ... I suppose it's the breakdown of the family, like, they seem so aimless, the kids - in my opinion - they've got no ... You look at the young ones moving around. They're just ambling around. They've got no purpose. You can tell by the way people move whether they've got a purpose, but they don't seem to have. It's sad.

Yes. There's probably no work for them either.

No. No, there's nothing really. Well they drum it into the kids, you know, to go to school and do your best and all the rest. Well the kiddies are going and their learning. They've gone there for so many years and in their mind, I suppose they think 'Well when this is all through I'll have a job and have my money' Well it comes to the end - they've got no job have they? You know, it must be very demoralising for them. No, it's sad. It would be nice for them if they lived in an era, you know, when it was a bit better.

Yes. It's not a good time is it at the moment.

Of course there's always been a certain amount of unemployment and that sort of thing. But it's the way people handle things of course.

Well, you've lived through the Depression yourself haven't' you? And that was a hard time.

Yes. Dad was put off where he worked at the gravel company when that 1930's Depression was on, but we always managed. We was never broke. We always managed 'cause Dad always grew his stuff and even when the Depression was on he got work up the Mountains. They used to call it relief work, in those days. You'd work, I think, a couple of weeks and then somebody else would have work, you know, they worked it that way. But he always managed. We never went hungry anyway. We always had a roof over our heads. (Laughs).

19.25 Well thank you very much. I think we've covered everything now, so thanks a lot for your time.

Thank you. Thanks very much.

END OF TAPE