Wounded in the Trenches
- a Taringa Childhood 1935 to 1950

Eric Marggraf 2004

Taringa History Group
Wounded in the trenches – a Taringa childhood 1932 to 1950

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Eric Marggraf, 2004

Taringa History Group

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Cover: From the family album

Taringa History Group holds regular meetings throughout the year at which topics of local historical interest are discussed and recorded. Guest speakers are also invited to give presentations on relevant subjects. For further details contact Bruce Sinclair burrowes@gil.com.au or visit the website https://brisbanehistorywest.wordpress.com/
FOREWORD

Wounded in the Trenches – a Taringa childhood 1932 to 1955

These notes are the recollections of Eric Marggraf who grew up in Taringa, his family home at 62 Manchester Terrace. Eric was born and spent the first few months of his life in Berlin, his father Walter, the only son of German immigrants, having decided his first child should be born on German soil. Walter’s decision, when announced, appears to have come as a surprise to the family, including to his Australian born wife Fan who was five months pregnant at the time of departure.

Once Eric was born Fan found herself isolated in a strange country, unable to speak the language and without her family and friends. In the tough economic conditions of the time Walter also had difficulty establishing himself in business. In the end he wired home to his parents for funds to book their return passage. Had they stayed life could have taken a very different path for Eric. Germany would shortly be under the control of Hitler’s national socialists.

Back in Australia they lived for a short time in the family’s holiday home at Surfers Paradise before Walter purchased their own home at Manchester Terrace. Walter’s mother and father also relocated from the Gold Coast, their house in Princess Street being in part exchange for their boot and shoe business in Nerang Street, Southport.

Eric attended Taringa State School and in common with children of his generation considered the adjoining suburbs as his ‘backyard’, when not at school only returning home for meals and to sleep.

Eric and Olive Marggraf have been long-time members of the Taringa History Group and have contributed to the findings and research effort of the group. This memoir, originally handwritten, was transcribed by Bruce Sinclair, has had some minor edits (clarification and supplement) by Dotti Kemp and Andrew Darbyshire, but remains substantially as written. Eric prepared the sketches, and unless noted, the images are from the Marggraf family archive. Like his father before him, one of Eric’s hobbies is photography.
Of course I can’t remember anything of the earliest period of my life, but in the first couple of years at 62 Manchester Terrace, I came to know the house, a timber ‘worker’s dwelling’ with high stumps at the rear, and the yard and local area very well. I could not wander far as the yard was fully fenced – pickets to the front, and split post, rail, and paling slabs down the side and back. These palings were four feet high and all the split stuff was extremely splintery. The house had a straight flight of 19 steps at the back, while in front there were about five steps leading onto the verandah. Through the front door was the living room (lounge-dining room combined) leading into the kitchen. On the left hand side was the main bedroom, bathroom, second bedroom and another verandah across the back (later closed in). The bathroom had a claw-foot cast iron bath with cold tap, and an equally cold shower overhead. A wash basin served the small washings, with its cold tap.

The kitchen consisted of a white enamel sink, with a wide pine draining board at one end, and open underneath, exposing all the pipes. This also was only serviced with cold water. To the right was a tin-lined stove recess with a Crown wood stove in place with four removable hot plates and an oven under, and the flue pipe going up through the ceiling and roof.
From the back verandah a splendid view was offered – almost from Flinders Peak in the south, to Mt Gravatt in the east, and including Tamborine Mountain, Springbrook, and Lamington National Park (Macpherson Ranges) in between. From this verandah those 19 steps led down to the back yard, a nicely grassed area with an old fashioned dunny in the right-hand corner. Behind this, half the width of the property was fenced for a fowl yard with the fowl house as centrepiece with three perches and nesting boxes. Mum always kept about a dozen chooks, and quite often there would be a batch of chickens – maybe hatched at home or bought in as day-old chicks from Woodville Hatchery diagonally opposite Indooroopilly State School.

My first recollections were of this cosy little area. There was plenty of room to play on the back verandah, down in the yard, or under the house where the dirt was great for scraping out roads for our toy cars.

The wash tubs were situated beside a 2,000 gallon household tank also under the house, and the whole area enclosed by 3 x 5/8 inch tarred battens and a solid gate to match. Just outside this gate there was a fireplace of stacked bricks with a couple of bars across to hold two four-gallon kerosene tins. This provided hot water for washing and the bath tub. Under the back verandah Dad had made a nice fernery, with all sorts of forestry-looking plants, while just out from the back steps Mum had her vegetable gardens measuring about 30 x 15 feet, growing carrots, beetroot, lettuce, cucumbers, cauliflowers, and peas and beans. (A sign of Fan’s days on her father’s farm at Ashmore).
There were a number of established trees such as mango, loquat, persimmon, orange and lemon, a Queensland Nut, and even a cooking-apple tree. Many ornamental trees and bushes occupied other areas of the garden – gardenias, a may bush, plumbago, bauhinias and others I can’t tell by name. Garden edges were lined with reject concrete roof tiles. This was pre-WW2. Dad established gardens around the house growing roses of all sorts, while across the front Mum grew her annuals – zinnias, gerberas, stocks, phlox, dahlias, snapdragons, and anything else that was in season. In springtime it was a real picture. So this was the environment I grew up in.

Eric M sketches of the locale and Tinniswood’s Store. The Moggill Road/Coonan Street intersection (between Service Station and entrance to Stamford House) has changed significantly over the years, a large roundabout replacing what was a simple T junction

The view out the back was always especially of interest as it overlooked the Moggill Road – Coonan Street intersection, and beyond that the Brisbane to Ipswich Railway Line, and one could see from the Swann Road cutting to the Indooroopilly Bowls Club area. It was on this section of railway that I became acquainted with trains of all sorts – long goods trains, coal trains, stock trains, suburban passenger trains, as well as the long-distance mail trains running to Toowoomba, Wallangarra, Dirranbandi, Cunnamulla and Quilpie. They were pulled by magnificent-looking
steam locomotives large and small, with smoke and steam billowing out of their respective places. This and their heavy beat while making their way uphill through the deep Swann Road cutting became engrained into my very young mind – so much so that I was quite sure I would grow up to be an engine driver.

Over our back fence was Tinniswood’s grocery and produce store – a typical store of the day with counters all round the main shop, and goods piled high on the shelves behind. A couple of shop assistants served a small but constant trickle of customers, piling their purchases on the counter to await delivery. On the left hand side of the shop a corrugated iron lean-to shed was attached to keep all the stock and fowl feed, as well as bags of potatoes, corn, wheat, sugar and other large commodities such as pumpkins.

Across Moggill Road on the corner of the Coonan Street intersection was the rambling old Stamford House hidden by the many trees that surrounded it. Only its large red painted iron roof was visible above the scrub. The gravel driveway went off Moggill Road, and after what seemed like several hundred yards ended at hidden garages attached to the house somewhere. The fence bordering Moggill Road was a red-painted sawn paling type up to four feet high topped with two rails with vertical spacers, which were painted a cream colour. The gates to the drive were built to match. The Coonan Street side seemed less important as the fence was only post and rail, painted white, with four feet of K-wire attached in the usual manner. This fence allowed a limited view of the single storey ‘mansion’, of brown to red weather boards and cream trim. In the yard beside Coonan Street were a couple of Bougainvillea bushes trimmed and pruned into the shape of a kangaroo and emu – no doubt representing Australia’s Coat of Arms.

During the early 1930s a motor garage went up on the diagonally opposite corner of Moggill Road and Coonan Street. This was known as Moore’s Garage and Service Station. It had an office and sales counter, petrol pumps out on the footpath, and a large workshop on the northern (Taringa) side. The main office building was of fibro cement. Part of the front was curved to match the corner of the intersection. The workshop was of corrugated iron, and neatly set up, with a large hydraulic hoist included and a free air outlet.

Marggrafs were always lucky enough to own a car. In 1924 they bought a brand new Dodge Tourer, then, after the episode in Germany, they acquired a 1931 model A Ford 4-door Tourer with canvas hood, side curtains, and spare wheel set into the front mudguard. I saw more of my surroundings from this car.
Manchester Terrace at that time was only a single gravel road at the southern end beyond Payne Street, and as with the rest of it, the houses on the lower side of the road were largely below footpath level. This applied to our house, Number 62. Access to our property was gained by a rough bush track from the main gravel road, about 50 metres long ending at the front double gates. This served No 60 as well. But there was no access inside the gates as our yard was two feet lower than the Council land. For this reason Dad stabled his car at his parents’ place, a mile or so away in Princess Street up from Taringa Station, driving from Manchester Terrace via Rokeby Terrace and Swann Road.

As I grew up a bit I would accompany him walking either to get the car or when taking it back. My grandparents had a weather-board garage in their back yard with a narrow driveway beside the house. The route from our place to theirs was down our street, down Payne Street to the big gum tree (still there), up Moggill Road then right in to Swann Road, across the spindly wooden bridge that spanned the deep narrow cutting for the two-track railway, down Cunningham Street, then right into Princess Street to the second house on the left (still there and restored).

It was during these walks that I began to take more notice of my surroundings and the houses. Sometimes we would walk via Taringa shopping centre and the Station, and see the different road vehicles that used the mainly bitumen roads in the area. I suppose my real grounding in the neighbourhood came as I started school and walked from home to Taringa State School.
The first real change in my young life came when I started at Taringa School. What a shock to leave Mum’s apron strings and set out on my own. Mum took me along to enrol at the school on 26 August 1935 shortly after my fifth birthday.

We began in what was called the Prep (Preparatory) Class, a sort of Pre-School of the day. This was in the lower floor of the two-storey block at the eastern end of the school. After being accompanied by Mum or an older girl (Merle Lyell) down the street for a couple of months, I started to walk by myself or join other kids going in the same direction.

The teacher was Miss Allen who had been there since ‘God knows when’, and was there for many more kids after me. The Headmaster was Mr Popple who drove a tiny Austin 7 Tourer motor car, with motor cycle wheels (yes, same size) and a little toy motor.

I was worried about the teacher ‘minding’ me. Mum must have told me ‘the teacher will mind you’. We went about learning our A-B-C parrot-fashion, and learned to count and do simple sums (arithmetic), fancy work, cut-outs, paper weaving, pasting together, slate drawing with a scratchy slate pencil, and plasticine modelling. The scheme was that we did three or four terms of these short Prep grades, before starting Grade 1. This step became the first rung of the ladder towards Grade 7 at the western end of the school. Prep 1 was in the lower floor, and Grade 1 above in the two-storey section via the steps on the northern verandah. Of course we paraded with the rest of the kids on the
parade ground between the school buildings and Morrow Road \(^1\). We marched in to the tunes of the Taringa School Fife Band, accompanied by bass drum, kettle drum, cymbals and triangle. So many children were in my grade that it soon became necessary to form two classes – such as Grade 3A and Grade 3B, with about 30 children in each.

Miss Lane was a Grade 1 teacher at the time, and as I progressed through the school I came to Grades with various types of teachers such as Miss Kidd (was she a relative of the famous Captain?), Mr Ferguson who was a sadist with the cane, and Mr O’Shea with his pets and dislikes. Mr Popple died in office, and his place was taken by Mr WH Morrow (privately called ‘Gus’ or ‘Biscuits’ after Morrow’s Biscuit Factory on Coronation Drive near the City).

His office was just along the walkway-verandah between the two-storey section and the original part of the school in the centre, where women teachers had a similar room to the office, this being for their private use and lunch room etc. This was also outside the music room which boasted a piano, and where we all went once a week to sing our little hearts out – but singing was no match for the shouting of our Miss Kidd who I’m sure could be heard all over Taringa.

As the years went by we did our exams, and yearly went up into the next Grade. I, not having much interest in school, just managed to make it in the B grades, leaving the smart ones to get A grades.

Some of the more compatible teachers of that era were Mr McMahon, Mr (Jock) Campbell, and Mr Henry Schoenheimer (a good bloke, some said he was a German Jew). Jock Campbell was a bit of a clown, spending a lot of the day telling us jokes, instead of school work. But by this time it was the war years and teachers were in short supply. Our last teacher was Henry Schoenheimer who taught our Grade 7 Scholarship Year, and we were in the last classroom at the western end of the school.

Around the parade ground over by Morrows Road it was all hard and stony – not a blade of grass anywhere. As the school was on high stumps (except for the two-storey section) there was plenty of shelter from the elements for the students. The toilet block was below Miss Kidd’s Grade 5 classroom, and was a concrete affair of two storeys built into the hill. The top section was for girls, the lower part for boys, down a flight of concrete steps from the general play areas under the school. Outside the boys’ toilet there was another small area of playground which continued around to the east of the two-storey section and above the basketball courts. This latter area was dug up during the dark days of World War 2 for slit trenches.

\(^{1}\) Morrow Street
Part Street Map (QG 20 Chain series Sheet 2533 – 1958 DNRME online) and 1946 aerial photograph (BCC 000234649 QImagery)
To the east end of the school yard, on a built-up level area surrounded by concrete walls both above and below, was the girls’ sports area for basketball and vigoro (a sort of Rounders game). The boys went down to The Flat, an area behind the Masonic Temple, where they played cricket in summer and football in winter.

Back in the school grounds there was a small flower garden just out from the two-storey section near the office, tended by students who didn’t attend Religious Instruction. I was marked down as Lutheran when I was enrolled. The classes were staffed by clergymen of various other religions – Church of England (Anglican), Baptist and Methodist - hence my gardening efforts.

**TARINGA VILLAGE**

**Police Station.**

Nothing much altered in Taringa in the pre-war days. Probably the biggest change came when the Police Station was shifted from Moggill Road (half a dozen houses and a small store down from the Masonic Hall at Frederick Street corner) to a brand new building up on the top end of Morrows Road opposite the school’s southern gate.

**Council Chambers**

At the lower end of Taringa School grounds, Harrys Road went right through from Stanley Terrace to the Railway Station, and on the eastern side of this road stood the old Taringa Shire Council Chambers, left over from the days before all Councils were amalgamated in 1925.

The yard around this brick slate-roofed building was used by the local Works Depot, packed with the trappings of a depot – some cars, small hand-cranked tip trucks, and a couple of graders to manage the few gravel roads in the area or road shoulder work. Many bitumen roads were just a strip with gravel on either side to the gutters.

Probably their best possession was a great steamroller of Invicta brand. This could travel at about four miles per hour, with an iron-wheeled wooden tool box coupled to the back of it as a trailer. This magnificent machine was driven by one Sandy MacPherson, and as this smoking juggernaut trundled along the road it was always escorted (out of school hours) by an army of bare-footed boys hoping they might even get a ride to its new location of work. It was sometimes left at its different work locations as it was too slow to bring back all the time.
Starting at the intersection of Stanley Terrace and Moggill Rd and coming back towards Taringa, the first business encountered was on the left, between Moggill Road and the Railway. This was Roobottom Motors: a car repair business with its long weather-board shed set at right angles to Moggill Road, and accessed by an equally long gravel driveway. The building was adorned with the name of the firm, and the usual petrol/oil advertisements.

Crossing George Street (which went under a timber trestle bridge carrying two tracks of railway) and going on up Morrows Road, there were a couple of houses on the left before the large block of land at the corner of Harrys Road. On this block an imposing brick mansion was erected just prior to World War 2. Between this home and the railway station a second house was erected, also two-storeyed in brick with a tiled roof just like the first one, but this house was different as they only built the rear half leaving a blank brick wall going right across the entire front facing Harrys Road. This place was never finished.

**Taringa Station**

The railway station was down the end of Harrys Road, where a walking path led straight onto the inbound platform and ticket office. One of those in charge as station mistress was Miss Moffat, helped out by a lad porter to do the sweeping, collect tickets, fill the lamps and the like. Miss Moffat was a large elderly person incapable of executing many of these jobs.

The station was built on the side of a steep hill and had a large cantilever awning above the ticket office and platform. There were two rail tracks, and another platform on the other (up) side was connected by a timber footbridge over the rails, coming down to a gate on the Ipswich-bound
platform. Here a bootmaker had established a repair business in a small building at platform level, no doubt re-soling many shoes worn out by long walks to the station. All the walking kept people fit. There was a set of concrete steps leading from this area down to Princess Street.

Back up to the top corner of Harrys Road and Morrows Road stood the Taringa Private Hospital – a fairly large single-storey building like a house. It was equipped with a small operating theatre, and a number of private rooms and wards, and was supervised by Matron Mold. My younger brother was born there in March 1937. I thought it was great during school lunchtime to go over the road to see Mum and baby, and to grab a plate of dessert left over from Mum’s lunch. The building became a guest house but in 2003 caught fire and has been demolished.

Morrows Road at the time was just a narrow strip of bitumen not used much by traffic as Moggill Road was still two-way and not as steep for the small number of road users.

Further up Morrows Road on the left, opposite Taringa School was the Baptist Church. At the time it was like a large wooden hall, and at some time in the 1930s it was slid down to the back yard, and a more imposing brick structure erected. The old church became the church hall where groups such as the Brisbane Boys’ Brigade and others made use of it during the week and at weekends.

Next door on the corner of Briggs Street was the local dentist who had his surgery in the front of his house. One could imagine his rooms fitted out with all the instruments of torture of the day.

As mentioned, the Police Station was changed from Moggill Road to the site in Morrows Road almost opposite the school gate. The police house had been built in true Queensland form – weatherboards, iron roof, verandahs, and of course the Police Office up front, and the back of the house acting as a dwelling. This was in the charge of Sergeant Vincent Crank, an admirable man, who kept good control of his charges, especially us kids. He seemed to know everybody by their first names, even in an era when most people were addressed as Mr and Mrs.

Next door to the police precinct was the school kids’ mecca for lollies, ice creams, drinks and ice blocks – both penny and halfpenny ones (about an inch cube). This shop, which also sold smallgoods, was opposite the school’s south gate and in the late 1930s and early 1940s was run by Spiro Peters (Greek) who had a deep guttural voice, and on seeing boys come into his shop would blurt out ‘Yezz boys?’ to ask their requirements for any of his goodies.

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3 44 Morrow Street, building still there in 2018
The next shop was the paper shop and it was here that an array of the comics of the day were displayed, as well as magazines such as Women’s Weekly and Women’s Mirror, and all the newspapers – Courier-Mail, Telegraph etc, and the free paper in this area the Sennight. Their ‘screamers’ were clamped in flat wire cages out the front, announcing Joe Louis’s recent fight, Bradman’s century, or the latest international situation both in Europe and the Far East.

A boot and shoe store was next, then a private house, before coming to Bert Hill’s bakery on the corner of McInroy Street (which also led down to the railway line) – a delight to us kids. Hill’s bakery was the place to be when fresh hot loaves were being hauled out of the brick ovens. The hot bread tins were placed on large tables to cool, then the bread taken out of the tins. On the footpath beside the bakery was a cord of stacked firewood for the ovens. There was a convenient door at the side of the bakery where we could take in all the sights and smells of this exercise: smells that one would never forget. With the factories of today, people don’t know what good bread is. Many a loaf that a lad had to pick up from the small bakery shop in front ended up at home with half the inside eaten out.

Further along Moggill Road on the left was the Doctor’s surgery, his waiting and consulting rooms being in the front of his residence. While you shied away from there at times of immunisation, it was a comforting place when you were sick as the medicine he prescribed would make all well, you hoped. This place was occupied by Dr Croll and later in the early 1940s by Dr Fothergill. Later came Dr Bennett, a man with a great bedside manner. These men would think nothing of turning out at any hour of the night to see a sick patient in those days of service on all home fronts.

Next to the Doctor’s surgery was another smallgoods shop run by Mr Lauriston who had lost an arm but worked with great gusto. He used small aids to help serve Peter’s Ice Cream (out of large vat-like containers), Tristrams and Helidon Spa soft drinks, and to cut ham off the bone and so on. He had a small moustache, and his straight grey hair dropped over the left side of his forehead – so much so that at home we reckoned he looked a bit like Hitler. Lauriston’s shop also acted as Taringa Post Office – for selling stamps, posting small parcels, and for other postal services. A post box was outside as well as the public telephone (two pence).

Next to this shop, opposite Moorak Street, was the local financier Mr E George Humphrey whose small office seemed to be attached to Lauriston’s store. He was the Queensland National Bank, a Justice of the Peace, Estate Agent, and no doubt had some interest in the share and investment markets.
Continuing up Moggill Road, just beyond and opposite Moorak Street, was the barber shop, later to become a Dentist where I had a couple of teeth filled while still living in Manchester Terrace, prior to 1957. This was in a large cream brick building which also contained a general grocery store. It was known as Watson’s Grocery.

Out the front it had a large awning with posts down to the edge of the kerb, like a lot of shops of the day. The large windows displayed some of the wares available inside – pots and pans, grocery items etc. This building survived until the tornado of late 1973, when the entire roof was destroyed and the walls buckled and collapsed.

Up from this grocery and general provision store was Powell the chemist, an old-time apothecary who, when a script came from in from the doctor down the road, would get down large bottles of ‘concentrate’, mix an amount in exact proportions, put the solution in a small glass bottle, and stick on a label with the name of the patient and the instruction to ‘shake the bottle before use’. Of course he sold all sorts of other products as well – soaps, ointments, shampoos, powder, personal stuff and Kodak film for those cumbersome box cameras, or the older large folding cameras with speeds up to about 1/50th of a second. The films were displayed in stacks of 116, 120, 620 and 127 Verichrome.

There was another boot and shoe repairer in a small annex on the side of Powell’s chemist shop, or was it on the side of Taringa Motors, the next business we would come to?

Taringa Motors was in a large corrugated iron shed about 80 x 50 feet with 15 feet high walls, iron roof, timber floor, and 20 foot stumps at the rear where the land sloped down to the Brisbane to Ipswich Railway Line. The floor was of 8 x 1½ timber on close joists, and thickly covered in grease, oil, dirt or car grime making it a candidate for a major fire, as did happen to a similar garage in Station Road, Indooroopilly.

The front of Taringa Motors was lined with fibro cement, the top parapet sporting a large ‘Plume’ sign on it, and under it a smaller sign with ‘A. Stein, Prop.’ At the kerbside stood five or six petrol bowser each with pump handle, hose, and a glass bowl showing how many gallons were to be delivered to the car. An owner would ask for six gallons, a lever was pushed up to that level, then the petrol was pumped from the tanks down under the building. This was hand-pumped using a large handle on the side of the bowser. When the required amount had been pumped up, another lever released the fuel down the hose into the car’s tank – the hose being gently lifted to drain out all the fuel. Names like Plume, Purr Pull, Golden Fleece, Shell and Texaco adorned the bowser.
A free-air hose was looped on a hook on the front wall. Tyre pumping involved laying the hose across the footpath to reach the car. It was dangerous to stand well out in Moggill Road when doing the far-side tyres. On the right hand side of the building was a small office and sales counter. A plate glass window faced out to the street and pumps. This sales area sold items like spark plugs, head and tail light bulbs, radiator hoses, fan belts, tubes, and some tyres and batteries. This building was always a source of fascination to us kids on the way home from school, if you were able to get a look in. They didn’t like children in the workshop, and old Alf Stein had a pretty loud barking voice. (I ended up working there for a year in 1945).

![Eric’s painting from memory of the general arrangement and typical activity at Dopson’s, the Taringa Village blacksmith on Moggill Road](image)

But if the car garage was a bit of a drawcard, the next establishment up Moggill Road really was the place to be. This of course was Wally Dopson’s blacksmith’s shop. The ramshackle work area always seemed to have a crowd of boys around – until they got too close, when Wally would shout in a husky voice “Get back out of it, you bloody kids!” The building was an L shape, a weatherboard storage area came in from Moggill Road, then at the back and to the left a battened-in area under a low pitched roof sheltered an ash-covered earth floor. This contained the forge with a hand-cranked blower, a large anvil, and all sorts of hammers, tongs, pincers, bars and rods. Stacks
of steel in neat racks were behind the closed-in section. Around the batten walls stood or lay picks, crowbars, levers and cold chisels waiting to be attended to.

Outside in the corner of the L, a cut-down water tank served as a cooling trough for when Wally was fitting a new steel tyre to a timber cart wheel. It was fascinating to watch if one was lucky enough to be there at the right time. After the tyre was made into a large hoop it was set on the ground with a wood fire covering it. When the tyre was almost red hot Wally and an offside would pull it out of the fire, quickly hammer it onto the prepared cartwheel rim, lift the lot and drop it into the tank, before the hot metal had time to damage the wooden rim. A great cloud of steam was released as the hot tyre hit the cold water. As the metal cooled it contracted tightly onto the wheel.

Inside the forge, red hot steel was hammered into all shapes, and shoeing horses was another interesting entertainment. War time was like an Indian summer for the horse and cart because with the shortage of petrol, the horse provided backup transport. Alas, all this is now gone and kids of today will never see the horse in its truly commercial form, maybe only seeing it in limited displays at shows.

View back towards the city along Moggill Road from its intersection with Swann Road and Rokeby Terrace (two way prior to the opening of the bypass) c1956

Williams Store, the last shop on the left side of Moggill Road was another grocery business, run by Jack Williams and his brother. The building was up on two-foot stumps, with a set of timber stairs
up from the footpath in front. Like most grocery stores of the day, shelves were fixed to most walls and piled high with items. Counters were fixed in front of them except where a refrigerator took the place of a counter, with enough room for staff to move between shelf and counter. In this way grocery items were kept out of reach of the general public and shoplifting would be kept to a minimum. Attached beside this store was a corrugated iron shed for storage of all the bagged items – corn, wheat, laying mash, pollard and bran, sugar, potatoes etc, plus hardware items, nails, wire netting, even things like china eggs (to fool the hens).

A private house (Mrs Williams Snr) stood on the knob of hill at the corner of Moggill Road and Swann Road, above the cuts in the hilltop that allowed the roads to be more level before Moggill Road headed off towards Indooroopilly.

Just around the corner, a hundred yards or so into Swann Road was the precarious and spindly overbridge that carried the road over the two-track railway line as it passed through the deep narrow cutting. The rock sides of the cutting were of dark blue stone which seemed to make it look darker and steeper. The bridge itself was all timber, very splintery, and the road surface was cross-planking only, which meant a car crossing would rattle all the timber and be heard for hundreds of yards around.

Back on Moggill Road and down through the cutting towards Indooroopilly (past Waverley Road on the right) there was another house on top of the hill, then only one dwelling between Swann Road and Moore’s Service Station. This house was once occupied by a family by the name of Stanton. The children attended Taringa School.

Moggill Road ran upon an embankment until Payne Street and its large gum tree (eucalypt). This embankment was protected by a post and rail fence – 3 x 3, or 4 x 4 posts, and 3 x 3 top rail set on one corner and held there by a hoop-iron over-strap.

On the other side was an extension of the two-lane bitumen road. This formed a footpath, protected from the road by heavy 10 inch round posts with a one-inch diameter cable bored through these posts. On the other side of the footpath was another post and rail fence with intermediate wires, and its top rail set on the corner.

There was no separate inbound lane or Taringa bypass at this time. The area between Waverley Road and Payne Street was just long grass, mostly paspalum with its sticky seeds.
Following a slight rise in the road we are now at the corner of Coonan Street with Moore’s service station and the rambling Stamford House.

*Eric’s sketch of the Moggill Road embankment and a c1956 photograph of the ‘Payne Street’ gum tree which is still there*
Moggill Road, Taringa (outbound from city)

Let us now go back to the Stanley Terrace intersection with Moggill Road, in fact another hundred yards towards Toowong. Here were a couple of corrugated iron sheds with a driveway between them with a picket gate (albeit in poor condition). This whole complex was ‘Jackson’s Wheelwright Works’. Maybe this place just managed to stay in business in the war years. From one of the gable front walls was a vertical flag pole, with a wooden cartwheel fixed to it.

![Drawing of flag pole and cartwheel]

Travelling outbound, through the cutting at Stanley Terrace and down into the hollow opposite George Street there stood a two-storey timber shop with residence above. This was Harbottle’s Bicycle Works where repairs to all sorts of bikes were carried out; new bikes sold; and parts and bits and pieces supplied. Of course the range of bicycles available was limited, unlike today, and most bikes were Australian made. Bikes of the day were Malvern Star, Ashby, and Tom Wallace. This building later became a sort of home workshop for the now famous Alvey Fishing Reels (or maybe just sold from there ³).

At the corner of Harrys Road (leading towards Stanley Terrace) there were several large sheds with iron roofs, low iron walls and wire netting the rest of the way up. This was some sort of egg farm or chook raising venture. Years later a large bakery was erected on the site belonging to JJ Sheeran, who took over from Bert Hill in Moggill Road.

On up past the Council Depot on the left, then the high concrete wall of the school yard, on the right was the old Taringa police house just past Harrys Road, then another smallgoods shop dispensing

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³The Alvey factory was in Macquarie Street, St Lucia before relocating to Carole Park in the 1970s
delights to schoolkids – lollies, chocolates, soft drinks and ice creams (‘Peter’s’ of course). Who remembers the little threepenny bucket ice creams, or the two-in-ones – a sort of conjoined ice cream covered in chocolate – and Z sticks in a paper packet?

Just across Frederick Street stood the Masonic Temple with its two-storey chamferboard walls and iron roof, all well painted, and a small portico facing Frederick Street with handrails painted in white. A wavy maroon stripe above the portico proclaimed its use in white lettering.

Down the lane beside this building (now Walker Street, the inbound lanes of the Taringa Bypass) was the way to The Flat – extra playing fields for Taringa School used for football, cricket, and break-up parties at the end of the school year. Other sports included tunnel ball and running etc.

A house stood on the other corner of this lane, with its stumps just near the roadway.

Next up Moggill Road stood the Church of England (Anglican). Its entry was at road level but it was on stumps behind that, and the Hall underneath at the back. A small flat area beside the church, cut into the hill, was used for group activities such as fêtes.

Beyond this flat area was Mr Deakin’s grocery business. (Taringa was well catered for in grocery shops). All the kids knew him as Mousey Deakin, no doubt some parents did too, but poor Mousey Deakin was a true Aussie Battler. His shop was not all that clean; his display windows either side of the door usually dusty with the remains of dead insects amongst the goods on display; and the harder to reach places of the shop were hung with cobwebs. Mr Deakin didn’t seem to own a car, or even a horse and cart, so his few deliveries were made on foot. He could be seen walking down Moggill road in his long white apron, his basket over his arm and his deliveries within it. And the kids were cruel to him. Cheekier boys would go into his shop and ask for ‘two pennies-worth of those cockroach-infested lollies out of the dirty jar please.’ Mousey would come running at them and threaten to take them by the ear over the road to Sergeant Crank at the Taringa Police Station.

Further up the road was a collection of boarded-up shops and sheds – old style buildings of timber and iron with awnings out over the footpath on posts. Only one of these shops seemed to be let, to a plumbing firm. With the doors open one could see rainwater tanks under construction, as well as stocks of galvanised iron ware, guttering, flat sheets, and a hand-cranked machine to roll out corrugated iron from the flat product for the making of those water tanks. I have been told there was a dress shop along there too, which stands to reason as that was about the only sort of shop missing from Taringa.
Now the next building, on the eastern corner of Moorak Street was the centre of Taringa’s entertainment, this being of course the cinema or Taringa Pictures as it was known. It was a large tin shed covered with corrugated iron, its great laminated trusses forming an arch effortlessly spanning, I’d say, about 130 feet. Rafters were then fixed above these trusses to form an ordinary ridge line, as well as a gutter line at the lower end. They were anchored onto large blocks of concrete at their bases. The whole building stepped down the slope of Moorak Street, while the timber floor was built on a similar slope to the street. Lattice vents high on the walls provided ventilation, but these had to be covered with canvas blinds during daytime shows.

The furniture consisted of rows and rows of double-size canvas deck chairs for the whole width of the theatre except for the central aisle and two side aisles past the concrete blocks. The entrance was right on the corner of Moggill Road and Moorak Street, with a ticket office in the inner corner surrounded by posters of coming programmes. On Moggill Road the face of the building was timber covered with pressed iron, made to look like stucco. On the lower parts were some small display windows, and framed metal boards where large posters of the week’s movies were advertised. Those typical cinema posters featured everyone from Humphrey Bogart and Betty Grable to the Marx Brothers, and hundreds of movies. Half a dozen casement windows opened out from the projection room high up in the centre of the building, and a fancy gable parapet graced the roof line.
When television came in 1959 it spelled a sudden decline in patronage of suburban cinemas, and many were forced to close. Instead of a reasonably cheap night out, families were content to sit in front of a little box of tricks, watching vastly inferior pictures.

After the war a new proprietor took over from Arthur Chesterman and installed some new upright seating, new projectors, and new experiences. Three-dimensional films were a bit of a gimmick, but some seen through Polaroid glasses were almost beyond belief. Who would ever forget the 3D version of ‘Miss Sadie Thompson’ shot in the South Seas? Images were so real you felt you could have jumped off the wharf into the water, or flung your arms around Rita Hayworth who played the lead role. Before the theatre closed even Cinemascope was offered but it still didn’t hold the crowds.  

Back on Moggill Road, across on the other corner of Moorak Street from the pictures was another old-style shop which in the later 1930s or early 1940s was owned or leased by Sid Bryant the tailor. We would see him sitting at his machines, or in amongst his rolls of suiting cloth. This place was later taken over by Cardell the electrician. A dwelling was attached to the shop which took up some of the room along Moggill Road.

Next to this shop and house, and directly opposite Wally Dopson the blacksmith, was the butchery business owned by George and Wally Bagster. The sign on the front parapet spelled out ‘GE Bagster, Butcher’. The Bagsters were a couple of middle-aged chaps in their 40s always resplendently clean in their white shirts and dark pants covered by an apron of broad horizontal stripes of mid-blue and white reaching almost down to their ankles. The front of the shop was white-tiled with large cooled windows presenting quite a display of the meat of the day.

Inside, the work area floor was covered in clean sawdust. There were a couple of log chopping blocks, three feet in diameter, set up on short legs and meticulously scrubbed every so often during the day. The counter had a large white Toledo Scale on it, and you would watch to see that the butcher’s thumb was not resting on the scale as they weighed the meat. Near the door there was a chrome-plated cash register of the day, with large numbered levers to press. These would cause the price to pop up in the glass display part facing the customer. At the rear of the shop was a large well-insulated cold room where half-carcasses would be carried in from a van in the street and hung on great meat hooks on rails. A strong man would do this job, with a clean corn sack draped over his shoulder. Quite often there would be a couple of other employees there too. When I worked at

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4 Eric's fuller description of the Victory Picture Theatre is available under separate cover
Taringa Motors in 1945 it was George Bagster who said of Alf Stein “How do you manage to stay with that fellow? He’s like a horse’s arse with convulsions.”

Separated by some sort of house or other building was a second butchery which seemed to change hands quite often (competition from Bagsters?). At one time I thought it was run by Penhaligons but I could be wrong as someone has told me they had a shop at Indooroopilly.

Next to this butchery was a modern fibro cement (asbestos) dwelling with Super Six corrugated fibro roofing, scribed ridge capping to its hipped roof, and with leadlight joinery. A very neat place indeed. This was the residence of the Mold family. The wife was Matron Mold (nee Mawhinney) who ran the Taringa Private Hospital, while her husband Cyril Mold ran Mold’s grocery shop next door (yes, another grocery store).

Like most others it had one step up from street level, had counters all round and stock on the shelves behind them. To the side and back was the bulk storage area for fowl feeds, potatoes, pumpkins, bags of sugar etc. The day of the supermarket had yet to arrive, although there was one in the city – BCC Brisbane Cash and Carry in George Street.

Just around the corner in Rokeby Terrace was the Methodist Church, a typical timber building painted grey. The Minister dispensed his particular type of worship to the faithful in those days when most people were God-fearing. The Taringa Bypass had not been built at this stage.

Moggill Road continued downhill from here to the big gum tree at Payne Street near the Tinniswood’s’ store. As can be seen, Taringa was like a township in itself. It had most services and suppliers, all in their separate establishments. Brisbane City was only a place to go if you wanted big stores, insurance business, or banks which still were centred there in large impressive premises.

A diversion to Rokeby and Manchester Terraces, and Nelson Parade

Going along Rokeby Terrace, after the Methodist Church you passed a good number of impressive Queensland colonial houses on the high side; lesser workers’ houses on the low side. Then you came to Manchester Terrace at right angles to Rokeby Terrace. Turning left into its northern end, on down past Broomfield Street and more houses, you came to the corner of Waverley Road where on the top right hand side was the home of Chris Berndt. Chris and his brother Charlie were the owners of the Stanley Terrace Bus Service of Taringa. This was in the days before City Council took over Brisbane’s transport needs, which will be dealt with later.
Opposite Chris Berndt’s place on the high side lived a family by the name of Gradwell. I knew this place well as one of the sons had a large ‘0’ gauge Hornby Train layout under the house. Opposite Gradwells on the low side of Manchester Terrace was a small shop on the corner with iron roof, awning, posts to the kerb, and painted grey. This belonged to the Buxton sisters, a couple of elderly spinsters who ran a haberdashery business there. The store was packed with all sorts of fancywork stuff: cottons, wool skeins, needles, buttons and some cloth for those women who wished to occupy themselves with that sort of thing. This was one of those isolated corner stores with not another shop in sight, but people walked everywhere then. The shop was actually to one side of the Buxton property which ran from Waverley Road through to Payne Street along Manchester Terrace.

The large old house with closed-in verandahs occupied the Payne Street corner, with some old sheds and an old written-off 1910 truck. This had solid rubber tyres, a long tray with a rotted canopy over it, and a tiny little engine bonnet at the front. It sat for years in the long unruly grass that grew up around it. Opposite this house on the high side of Manchester Terrace was a dwelling occupied by the Hanley family. Little Eunice Hanley aged about six died in the mid-1940s when struck down with pneumonia, and was buried in Brookfield Cemetery.

In the mid-1930s, and probably after pressure from Manchester Terrace home owners, the newly-formed (5 years) Brisbane City Council decided to do something about the lack of road access at the
southern end of that street. The single gravel road up the centre, with rough tracks and paths to gates on both sides, was not good enough.

Machinery of the day available from the Taringa Council Depot included a steam roller, a motor grader (with iron-rim wheels mounted well up on the chassis on either side to raise or lower the large blade), and tip trucks with hand-cranked cable-operated hoists. These trucks carried about three tons. Lots of men were willing to take any pick and shovel jobs in those times. The old road was cut out, a lower road dug in, and the fill moved to the top road to be compacted and to raise the road to be level with front fences. When this job was finished people at last had car access to their properties both on the high and low roads. This new road went past about 22 properties before both levels met at the southern end in a hairpin bend, and a united road went down the steeper slope for a short distance to finish at a small cliff above Nelson Parade. Just where the roads separated at Payne Street, a white wooden signboard proclaimed ‘Dead End Road’.

About the start of the Second World War, relief workers (sort of work for the dole) came in with more picks and shovels, concrete boxing etc and put in concrete gutters and kerbing. They also erected a post and cable safety barrier just off the high side of the road.

Some of the resident families who lived in the southern end of Manchester Terrace (on the left hand side after Payne Street) included Scorgie (he was the cleaner/yardman at Taringa State School, Barclay, Heathwood, Spottiswood, ourselves at 62, Henzell, Irwin, plus a few more families down the steep slope I cannot name.

On the other side were Lyell, Gardiner, Garraway, someone in the big old house right on the top of the hill with two large bunya pine trees in the front yard, Delmodes, and Matthews, plus more down the slope. When we kids went to the far or southern end of our street where it dropped steeply onto Nelson Parade, we could overlook a large area of houses (and a single little shop like Buxtons’) from Stamford and Moggill Roads right through to Station Road, Indooroopilly. This area in later years would become the huge Indooroopilly Shoppingtown, with Myers, Woolworths and other big stores we only ever saw in the city.

Beside Nelson Parade a chain of waterholes existed, with interconnected waterways, and the banks lined with melaleuca and paperbark trees and other small shrubs. This area was a constant source of adventure to the local kids for the waterholes were filled with little (what we called) rainbow fish up to about two inches long, and a number of tortoises. The challenge was to catch them and take them home as pets – or until Mum ordered them taken back because of the smell.
These waterholes were deep, fed from springs as well as runoff, and the whole stream went into two large pipes under Moggill Road, then underground all the way to the ‘Rec’ (Recreation Ground, now known as Jack Speare Park) in Fairley Street over by Lambert Road, Indooroopilly. A number of us kids once walked through the big cockroach-infested foul-smelling drain pipe to the Rec through dirty grey water: a stupid thing to do really. But as the ends were unprotected in any way there was really nothing to stop us. Thank God the torchlight stayed on in the pitch dark, as nobody would have known where we were.

West from these holes, right up to Stanley Street (not Stanley Terrace) were open horse or cow paddocks. This little creek continued upstream towards Payne Street where it crossed Nelson Parade via a shallow concrete ford. This became a drawcard after heavy rain when the stream at this crossing could be almost two feet deep. Kids loved playing there or riding their bikes through the water.

**MOGGILL ROAD TOWARDS KENMORE**

If one continued out along Moggill Road, past the little shop that always seemed to be closed, past the empty horse paddocks (behind today’s Police Centre), past Musgrave Road now running beside Shoppingtown, one soon came to Station Road where a few more shops existed – not close together like in Taringa, but more scattered among dwellings.

Going on down the western slope one passed many houses, until Taringa Parade and Indooroopilly State School were reached on the right hand side. Brisbane suburbia finished abruptly at Taringa Parade. Along its length there were well-established homes in the streets on its eastern side –
Waverley Road, Broomfield and Payne Streets etc but no spill-over on the western side. Of course there were many spare allotments also in this area.

Taringa Parade wound its way northwards along the low ridge all the way up until it met Crag Road (the western end of Stanley Terrace). Crag Road continued into the foothills of Mt Coot-tha as a bush track, finishing at an unofficial rubbish dump – a constant source of interest to us kids hell-bent on transferring a lot of the debris back to our homes. One of the items we tried to retrieve was a disused WW2 gas producer. (This dump site would now be in about the middle of the high cutting on the Western Freeway). From here a rough bush walking track wound its way up the spur through thick open forest all the way to One Tree Hill or Mt Coot-tha as it later became known with its picnic area, kiosk and timber-framed lookout. This track was closed during the height of the Pacific War 1942.

Other than Indooroopilly State School and a couple of houses around it, there was no development west of Taringa Parade. Here was grazing land, bush, and a few isolated farm houses further out in the Chapel Hill area. The empty area around Blackstone Street contained quite a few old mine shafts from bygone operations for gold or silver lead. They were mostly filled in, with small tell-tale mullock heaps outside.

At the road junction near the Indooroopilly School, Moggill Road was met by Taringa Parade on the north and Woodville Street opposite going south, joining Finney Road which then made its way back towards the old Indooroopilly shopping village. On the corner of Woodville Street and Moggill Road diagonally opposite the school was the Woodville Hatchery – a large conglomeration of sheds and wire netting, incubators and pens. Here fowls, pullets and mostly day-old chicks were sold. The roosters usually lost their heads in the cause of Sunday dinners, while the chickens were destined for the fowl pens that adorned every second backyard.

Further along off Moggill Road to the south Isles Road ran at an angle up to the top of the hill that contained the great hole in the ground that was the open-cut part of the Indooroopilly silver lead mine. Closed in the early 1930s, this had been a great resource for a population of boys looking for adventure, clambering up and down. This hole must have been drained as it never held more than a few inches of water. No doubt the water got away through several shafts that emptied out near Witton Road and Creek.
Eric’s sketch showing the approximate location of the old quarry on Moggill Road, The Pound, Indooroopilly Bus Depot and Doyles Farm

Continuing down Moggill Road towards Kenmore there was the remains of a quarry on the left. I don’t think this was part of the mine, but I suppose the diggers kept their fingers crossed. A bit further down before Witton Flat was reached, up on the hill on the left was the Indooroopilly Pound: a collection point for stray animals, mainly horses and cattle. I’m not sure how they could stand there, the hill was so steep, but no doubt there were level pens in the timber stock yards.

On the right, after Indooroopilly School, and across Russell Terrace there was bushland to the bottom of the hill, then maybe one house before Burbong Street which at that time was a short gravel bush road going nowhere. On the left hand side of Burbong Street were the shelters for the privately-owned Indooroopilly Bus Service, this depot being the base for about six or seven buses of the transport company. These buses served the population of Indooroopilly, Kenmore, Brookfield, and two days a week Moggill, taking passengers into the city.
Wounded in the trenches
Eric Marggraf 2004

Witton Flat was over on the left of Moggill Road below the pound yards, and on the right side of Moggill Road was the first of the dairy farms up on the hill where Moordale Street is now. The farm house and sheds were well up on the hill and belonged to the Doyle family, a battling family indeed with many children living in a ramshackle house with no reticulated water or electricity let alone sewerage. Sewerage did not exist even at Manchester Terrace. Imagine. Only five miles from the centre of town, here was a homestead with no conveniences at all. The dairy sheds up the back were also in a run-down condition. The Doyles milked about fifty cows, starting about 2 a.m. After milking they washed up, loaded their milk into the appropriate cans with taps at the bottom and put them in the cart hauled by the poor horse. This was all done by the light of hurricane lamps, while a pot of tea stewed on the old wood stove in the house kitchen which was lit by one of those kerosene pedestal table lamps (that bring great money today).

I know all this as I worked for them during school holidays when I was just 13. I sometimes slept at the place (on the couch as no bed was available) and it was a different life from what I was used to at home. I had tea and toast before taking to the road on delivery runs where milk was delivered warm out of those pint or quart measuring containers with pop-up lids on them. There were three carts and horses for the different areas. It was a lonely place, hard to imagine today, but that was the way it was 60 years ago, about 1943. The farm house was later shifted down beside Moggill Road – no doubt to make use of the modern convenience of electricity and water that ran along that road.

Kenmore was a little isolated village a few miles away over a couple of hills (great billygoat cart country) – almost, it seemed, in another land.

Along from Witton Flat where the creek cut through, on the left of Moggill Road stood the forbidding-looking Salvation Army Home for wayward boys. It was an old place with verandahs, and I was often threatened with being sent there, not that I thought I was that bad. (Mum thought so).

Not far past this place a winding road swung off to the left and wound up the rest of the hill, before going downhill again to Cubberla Creek. This was of course Fig Tree Pocket Road. A Chinese market garden existed where Fig Tree Pocket Road crossed Cubberla Creek. The gardener’s corrugated iron shack was on high ironbark stumps and was closed in underneath. It stood on the edge of his farm which served properties out to Lone Pine and Mandalay.
From the top of this hill Moggill Road continued down towards Kenmore while Chapel Hill Road went off to the right past a church and into the bush, its gravel surface usually very corrugated. The church was another of those small wooden affairs so common throughout these rural areas. Down at the bottom of this hill Moggill Road crossed Cubberla Creek (which began somewhere at the back of Mt Coot-tha) by a narrow arched concrete road bridge with high concrete sides to it. It was just wide enough for two cars to pass.

On the flat just past the bridge and over on the right was a high-stumped timber farmhouse. With its iron roof it stood almost under a very high silky oak tree, in an area completely devoid of other houses. The shopping centre is there now. When the place was demolished it left a very tall chimney standing all alone in the paddock. At one time this was presumably occupied by the Johnson family as the twin daughters Rita and Phyllis were in my class at school in 1944 and because of my friendship with them I was ribbed by the other kids.

Beyond this house on the rise opposite Marshall Lane was a small sawmill, a rook shed - a long iron-roofed shed with no sides – a pile of logs, stacks of air-drying sawn timber, and saw benches and other machinery that usually surrounds these establishments. Were the house and sawmill linked at one time? The sawmill was once known as Watson’s Sawmill 5 and I believe it was demolished in the late 1950s, being packed with scrap timber and set on fire in a controlled burn. My brother was a mate of one of the Watsons.

5 Established by Watson and Bow in the early 1930s, Percy Watson and his family are understood to have lived on site
On the left of Moggill Road at the corner of Marshall Lane there was another major farm, its imposing log arch and white printed gate proclaiming the name of ‘Wongabel’. The homestead was up on the hill, surrounded by a number of typical farm buildings. When this area was cut up into one of Kenmore’s first estates it was called ‘Wongabel Estate’.

Marshall Lane ran off as a bush track over a small watercourse and bridge until it started to go up the first hill, where it petered out at a farm gate. No doubt this farm was once owned by the Marshalls. (In the 1950s I worked on a long home under construction by BH Stevens at the top of Kowhai Street off Marshall Lane. The house was burnt out in the early 2000s but rebuilt on old brickwork).

On the U junction formed by Moggill and Cedarleigh Road was the Kenmore Memorial Hall, a large oblong box-like building, on high stumps to suit the slope of the ground. This was unpainted or of dark grey weatherboard construction and iron roof, with a gabled portico and wide steps at the entrance facing the intersection. The whole thing was typical of so many country halls – the scene for dances, balls and all those activities a hall is used for.

Shire of Moggill War Memorial in its original location in the fork of Moggill and Brookfield Road, Kenmore c1956

Around some sharp curves on Moggill Road, cut into the side of the slope, a road went on to the isolated village of Kenmore, where one was greeted by the soldier memorial in the triangle formed at the junction of Moggill and Brookfield Roads. Around this memorial was a low brick or concrete
wall, painted white to match the statue. Cedarleigh Road ran up from this corner, in true rough gravel style, to emerge north-eastwards at the Kenmore Hall corner.

A lone store (a sort of general provider) with an awning and the usual posts on the corner of Brookfield and Moggill Roads dispensed grocery items, produce, poultry feed, even petrol at the kerbside pumps. This was the only petrol available along Moggill Road after Taringa (Moore’s). A couple of houses stood around this store, as well as a few more uphill on Moggill Road, but in general it was a thinly-populated area.

Further along Moggill Road, before it curves to the right on its long grade down to Moggill Creek stood the small one-teacher Kenmore State School, on an equally small block of land. This school was shifted or rebuilt at its present site as the population of Kenmore grew.

Kenmore Road branched off as a narrow corrugated gravel road merging at the other end onto Fig Tree Pocket Road. Jeweller Wallace Bishop had a large home and property (mostly under eucalypts) on Gem Road (what else) running off Kenmore Road. A smattering of houses was situated along here including one on the hill overlooking the Brisbane River, just east of today’s Western Freeway and the Jindalee Bridge. (Later on I was foreman carpenter on a number of houses along this road).

Moggill Road continued west down to the creek of that name, past open grazing country, some scrub, and the large flat area in the pocket of the creek. I think there was one house along here. At Moggill Creek, just down from the narrow timber bridge was a large swimming hole. It had a clean gravel bottom and was overhung by a large gum tree with the usual stout rope hanging down from one of its lower branches. Beyond here I knew very little after Rafting Ground Road except that there was a very small (two car) ferry out at Moggill.

**Brookfield Road**

Going down Brookfield Road from the Kenmore Junction Monument there were a couple more houses on the left. Up on the hill to the right, facing the view and Bielby Road, some far-sighted soul built what must have been Kenmore’s first ‘mansion’. This was a two-storey home in brick, put up just before World War 2. It has watched the area grow from a rural village to a busy suburb with all its traffic problems, houses and the drive-in shopping centre, as well as the soldier statue being moved from the centre of the road to the side of the shopping centre.
Continuing outbound Brookfield Road crossed a small creek at the bottom of the hill, then rose up the other side where a rough track led off to the left and went down to an area on Moggill Creek, (but known to us as Hayes Creek) another great spot for swimming and small picnics where space was limited between the scrubs. The main road, still bitumen, wound out towards Brookfield up and down hills until at the top of the last hill before Brookfield there stood over on the right a little wooden chapel. Further down on the left was the local store, no doubt another grocery and produce store which changed little over the years. What set Brookfield apart from other places was the inclusion of Show Grounds, just beyond the store. Beyond the arched entrance gate it had the show ring, exhibition hall, pens and stockyards.

Beyond here was the junction of Brookfield and Gold Creek Roads just before the narrow bridge over Moggill Creek. It was here that the bitumen ended at a cattle/horse trough.

Across the road from the Showgrounds was the Brookfield Cemetery where little Eunice Hanley from Manchester Terrace in Taringa (corner of Payne Street) was laid to rest, gum trees and bushland protecting the area from the harsh summer sun. Graves here were later shifted further back to make room for a bus station.
Farms abounded all round this Brookfield pocket. There were nice picnic places downstream from the Moggill Creek bridge under shady paperbark and callistemon trees. There were also some very thorny bushes in this area, and fallen twigs from these bushes played merry hell on the bare feet of youngsters who fell foul of them.

A church above the junction of Brookfield Road, Rafting Ground Road and Upper Brookfield Road took charge of that denomination, while on the right hand corner stood a resplendent farmhouse surrounded by the usual collection of farm sheds.

Rafting Ground Road went off to the east as a narrow one lane affair, with only room to pass in a few places. It was all gravel to its junction with Moggill Road. Almost half a mile down from Brookfield after a steep-sided section of road was the first creek crossing on a small slab of concrete usually with a few inches of water over it. Another half-mile along was another crossing of Moggill Creek but this time it was long and flat with high grass either side of the road, with the stream just in one spot. But in time of flood this could be as wide as a river.

**Moons Lane and Rafting Ground Road**

Moons Lane ran off Rafting Ground Road, serving farms in this small valley. Opposite the lane stood Tuckett’s dairy farm on a large area of land north of Rafting Ground Road with Moggill Creek bordering it for about 180 degrees. It had a nice big farmhouse of the late 1920s, and there
was a big concrete silo with a long feed shed attached to one side. There was a barn, dairy bails, a shed for separating the cream from the milk, and other small sheds for whatever purpose. We knew this place well as Percy Tuckett was a distant cousin of my mother’s and had relatives around Ashmore (Gold Coast) also. He was also our milkman, delivering ‘warm’ milk from his large herd of cows morning and afternoon.

Up Rafting Ground Road above Moon’s Lane we come to where Westridge Street is now. At the time this was just a grass and mud track up the hill to service the many pineapple farms in the area. A farmer by the name of Fiedler had a farmhouse on the corner here, and grew pineapples right up to the top where Royston Street is now. (My brother and I worked on his roughly-built house in the 1950s, trying to bring it up to scratch). This area was also dotted with pineapple packing sheds. One between here and Moggill road still survives (2004). From the hills here it was a downhill run to Moggill Road near the creek bridge.

**INDOOROOPILLY VILLAGE**

Back to Coonan Street and Indooroopilly proper. Coonan Street ran parallel to the railway line from Moggill Road to the Indooroopilly Toll Bridge. Opposite Stamford House in Coonan Street houses were to be seen all the way to Westminster Road near the Indooroopilly Station. The first house along the way, and next to Moore’s Service Station, was that of Clarksons. A mother and son lived there while dad was away. I was quite friendly with the son Jimmy as we had a fair bit in common, such as wandering up into the Mt Coot-tha bush, or playing in the groundsel-infested paddock between his place, the railway line, and the Swann Road hill.

The bougainvillea topiary sculptures of emu and kangaroo around Stamford House were always visible but seldom taken notice of. Nice houses adorned both sides of this street, but down in the hollow by Underhill Avenue there was an open paddock obviously owned by the Council as the large drain pipes that came from Nelson Parade went underneath this area and there was a manhole about half way down the grassland. Access to the pipes could also be gained at this location.

At Belgrave Road the bitumen went west to the many fine houses that were built on the eastern side of the hill above Stamford Road itself (this area is now Indooroopilly Shoppingtown), and east under the railway overbridge. A spare block of ground became the Indooroopilly Bowls Club in the late 1930s. One of my earliest memories is of a circus (Wirth’s?) being on this vacant site, which would have been in the early 1930s. We walked down to see the wild animals on display, which didn’t cost a penny, but didn’t attend the performance. It was not far from our house.
1936 aerial photograph. Coonan Street (running parallel to the railway line) the main road connection to the newly completed Indooroopilly Toll Bridge. The main shopping area was the lower end of Station Road which ran down to the railway station forecourt (1936 ADA00106259 AAM Group QImagery)

Up the hill, one soon came to Westminster Road with the timber road bridge crossing the railway line just north of the station, and next we were in Indooroopilly Village with the railway station just downhill on the left. This station consisted of two platforms – one inbound, one outbound – and the main building was on the inbound side, and was built of the concrete post and slide-in slab principal, with an iron roof. The entrance was through the centre of the building. A timber footbridge graced the southern end of the platform, giving access across the line from Station Road to Lambert Road. Waiting sheds were on the outbound side, while down in the yard there was a siding, and a goods shed just before the Albert Rail Bridge.

In Station Road, at the end near the station there was a car park capable of holding quite a few cars. (It was at this station that I first saw an AC16 steam locomotive, imported from USA. Its number was 220A, and this was at the height of World War 2, 1943. This loco is featured in a Sunshine Express Magazine). The Indooroopilly Hotel was across the road from here, an older brick and timber structure, a forerunner to the present remodelled one.
View down Station Road from the intersection with Westminster Road c1956. Stamford Hall (Left) has subsequently been demolished, the Memorial relocated to Keating Park and the railway station buildings replaced with a more complex structure

On the corner of Westminster and Station Roads was the light red to orange coloured Stamford Hall, a solid-looking structure with a small brick and timber arched portico out in front facing the sharp corner of the two roads, and a ubiquitous iron roof covered each part. This was the place for the dance set, and in 1953 the scene of the square-dance craze that lasted until that Christmas, then fell flat. A photo in this area in June 1963 shows the hotel being worked on, so this may have been the time when the hall was demolished, another victim of television. Near the entrance of the Hall in Westminster Road was the horse trough, a leftover from past ages when there were so many horses working the streets of Brisbane. The trough was a half-pipe concrete affair with a closed section at one end housing a float and valve that kept the water level about three inches down from the rim. The whole thing was about ten feet long and two feet wide, and set up on concrete (or timber) legs, and no vandalism was apparent. Shops lined the street up Station Road, including a chemist and barber, as well as a milk bar/ice-cream shop on the corner of Coonan Street.

In Riverview Terrace there was a Private Hospital like many throughout the suburbs catering for the not-too-sick population. There was also a kindergarden not far from the Station Road corner.
There were many other shops but I don’t know who occupied them as I was more centred around Taringa. As mentioned, there was a reasonable parking area in front of the rail station. This was used by all and sundry for hotel parking, picture show parking, as well as for those catching the train. The Indooroopilly railway station was the first station out from town where the engines of terminating trains could manoeuvre to the other end of the carriages to do the trip back to the city or beyond.

Continuing along Coonan Street towards the bridges there was the ‘Indooroopilly Pictures’ as it seemed always to be known (Lyric, now the El Dorado). It was another of countless movie houses. A little smaller than Taringa’s it usually showed films that had ended their run in the city up to 12 months before. Construction of the cinema was little better than Taringa’s. It had brown weatherboard walls up to about 15 feet before the roof went off on trusses crossing over the main hall. Its brick and timber entrance was in Coonan Street with a couple of concrete steps leading up to the ticket office. You then walked to the right to the main door.

Because of the reverse slope of the land, the screen was right beside this door, with rows of deck chair seating all the way up the slope to the projection boxes that were up near Riverview Terrace. A small rough car park was up there for many years. The toilets were also up that end (and at least they were not down the front like Taringa).

In summer there were lattice air holes in the walls for ventilation, but with an unlined roof it could still be pretty hot, especially during Saturday arvo’s matinee when blinds had to be drawn to cover these vents because of the daylight nuisance. In the cold of winter it was the opposite, a freezebox. The owners tried to make things more pleasant by providing two 44 gallon drum firepots, one each side, each filled with clean burning coke. These drums were a dull red on the outside, and gave little relief from the cold, so overcoats were still the order of the day. How the place never burned down is a mystery, yet this theatre is one of the great survivors, and is still part of an eight-cinema complex operating today. The old theatre stood to the north of the present building. It had a concrete floor and posters adorned the outside walls. There was plenty of car parking but most people seemed to walk.

Just beyond the picture show stood the police station, similar to the new one at Taringa. Up on the hill, it had concrete walls and steps at the front. Cars must have parked around the back. Radnor Street intersected right down at the toll bridge in those days. A service station was erected after the war, and I don’t know whether this replaced an earlier garage.
Up until 1936 when the toll bridge was opened, pedestrians wishing to cross the river could do so by walking via a fenced-in pathway at the end of the rail yard to gain access to a footbridge attached to the side of the railway bridge. This took them across to the Chelmer side where another walkway led down to Honour Avenue.

I can just remember the ferry (prior to the toll bridge) which was accessed by going down Radnor Street for a couple of hundred yards, and making a sharp left turn to the ramp down to the river. The concrete apron that formed the actual ferry ramp was lined with cross timber stripping to give car tyres some better traction. A ramp of similar proportions was on the Chelmer bank with a road leading up to Honour Avenue. These ramps were visible for many years after the opening of the toll bridge which spelled a quick demise for the ferry.

A toll booth was set up at the Indooroopilly end of the bridge, with a flat above for the toll keepers, and a flat at the Chelmer end. Tolls were six pence for a car and driver, and a penny for each passenger. The toll collector had a constant job counting heads in some rather full cars. There was a charge of three pence for a motorcycle plus a penny for a pillion passenger, tuppence for a push bike, and walkers were free.

**Chelmer Beach**

The bridges gave many Indooroopilly people access to the nice sandy Chelmer Beach just downstream from the Albert Rail Bridge which took the rail traffic of the day as well as pedestrians on the walkway attached on steel brackets to the eastern side, with handrails and wooden planking. There were a couple of concrete steps at either end to reach the walkway. On the Chelmer side a track led down under the bridge to the eastern side where Chelmer Beach was situated at the end of Wharf Street.

It was here that many a picnic and swim in the river was had by the local population. The place even boasted its own changing sheds and toilets – built of corrugated iron of course. The sand was clean and the water fairly clear. Better swimmers went out to the central pylon of the rail bridge for races and the like. The beach seemed to decline from about war time when the walkway on the bridge was closed for security reasons. It was all wrapped in barbed wire and pedestrians were forced onto the toll bridge which until then had been charging a penny a person to walk over.

Somerset Dam (begun 1935, delayed by war, finished 1953) was holding water so the river was no longer getting as much periodic flooding. The sand gave way to silt and mud which soon engulfed
the beach. Mangroves started to grow there, and that was the end of it. No sand being washed down so no beach. Dredging operations (gravel for building) have been blamed. Today the river is a little cleaner after dredging has ceased, and a little sand returned in the 1974 flood, but with Wivenhoe Dam now in place it seems further improvement is unlikely.

**Lambert Road, Harts Road and Long Pocket**

Back at the Indooroopilly Station, the wooden footbridge crossed over the rail lines to Lambert Road which goes off in an easterly direction. Between Lambert Road, Clarence Road, the rail line and the river was a derelict two-storey house ‘Tighnabruaich’ (more recently part of Witton Barracks) in a state of disrepair with bits falling off, needing paint, and its yard overgrown. It was known to us kids in the 1930s as the haunted house. A man was supposed to have hanged himself from the stairwell, so the local kids kept well away from it.

When the Second World War broke out it did not take long for the military to take it over, de-ghost it, do it up and move in. There were smaller buildings down by the railway bridge, and down in this area a compound held a few Japanese prisoners of war. Their upper bodies could be seen from the top of the rail footbridge, or the Picture Show steps, but walls and barbed wire kept them well and truly confined.

Lambert Road continued out to its junction with Harts Road which went off to the right. At the top of the hill stood a large red brick home now part of St Peter’s Lutheran College. It was set well amongst trees, and could clearly be seen from our place in Manchester Terrace. Further along on the right one home had an extensive bougainvillea garden, later donated to the City Council 6.

Suburban houses petered out round about here, and the area became grazing land for cattle. We used to drive out along here and pick up a few bags of manure for Mum’s vegie garden. Harts Road became Meiers Road further along, a rough gravel road with grass on both sides and between the wheel tracks, and there were a couple of farm houses on the high side to the left with their associated sheds, one belonging to local milkman Redhead.

On the right side of the road as it went down into Long Pocket the river flats had agriculture and ploughed paddocks stretching down past Indooroopilly Island. The track fizzled out well short of the point where Meiers Road ends today in parkland.

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6 Henry Thomas specialised in cultivating bougainvillea, his gardens were famous and attracted local and international visitors. The Thomas Park Bougainvillea Gardens are heritage listed
Chelmer to Corinda

Our wanderings around the place took us as far as Corinda Station, to watch locomotives shunt wagons, or tank engines move to the opposite end of their terminating trains, including those from South Brisbane. But there was one big drawcard on the way there.

Just below the Chelmer Rail Station was a large area of swamp land bordered by Halsbury Street, Oxley Road, Chelmer Street East and Queenscroft Street. Here were many acres of floating weed, grass and peat, bottle brush, paperbark trees, hyacinth and reeds. The wildlife was quite plentiful when one looks back, with birds of all sorts – ibis, water hens, ducks, waders and the like. This also made it a haven for black snakes (we used to get these fellows at our place when we lived in Glenwood Street after 1956), and no doubt there were carpet and green tree snakes as well.

Oxley Road was still a rough gravel road up until the 1950s at this northern end, and many a snake could be seen in the area. The Chelmer Hall occupied one corner of high ground up by the railway cutting. It would have been a foolish person indeed who made their way from the hall to the outside toilets at night without a torch.
During the war a start was made to fill this swammy eyesore (nature lovers would have thought otherwise) and a dump was begun opposite St David’s Anglican Church in Chelmer Street East. The American Forces were great dumpers of all manner of things, and we kids were equally great retrievers of all these goodies. There were tins of food, plywood boxes, timber, clothing, even revolvers so some say. This dump continued after the war taking everyone’s rubbish, and slowly the swamp land gave way to ash covering, then grass, until it was developed into two football fields, the birds and snakes now just a faint memory.

In the Chelmer area there was another picture show, and like Indooroopilly it survived the television onslaught to become the Regal of today. The next theatre along did not. It was in Sherwood Road just down from the level crossing on the southern side.

But all this end of Brisbane was sort of ‘out of bounds’ beyond the dump. It was a long walk, and in the push bike days there were more interesting places to ride – like the Archerfield Aerodrome.

Central Indooroopilly

Back again to central Indooroopilly. Westminster Road came off Clarence Road, went west up over the rattley wooden rail bridge and across Coonan Street. On the right side, opposite the hotel stood a fairly large two-storey home (‘Keating House’) not far from the corner. But there was another house on the corner, a timber one on high stumps. Unfortunately one night in the 1940s it caught fire, was burned out and later on demolished. The block remained vacant, but in more recent times the City Council have resumed some land to widen the intersection.

Up Station Road, past Foxton Street, stood a motor garage much like the one at Taringa, with wooden floor, galvanised iron roof and walls, but with a fair bit of fibro cement (asbestos cement) at the front. One night in the late 1930s it also caught fire. Explosions could be heard from our place at Taringa. The fibro had all blown out and the place had burned to the stump line. I don’t know what happened to the cars in there. If they weren’t got out there would have been little left of them.

Further along the Anzac Memorial Methodist Church was on the corner, and Station Road went on to join Moggill Road at the top of the hill where there were a few shops, including a butcher shop (some say Penhaligons?).

On the eastern corner of Stamford Road and Station Road there was a doctor’s surgery – another one of those in a house – where Dr Fothergill had his rooms. I don’t know if he lived there. He served Taringa too.
Radnor Street, Witton Road.

Eric’s sketch of Radnor Street and the various installations on the river bank

Radnor Street follows the river bank westwards bearing right from the Toll Bridge, and past the road down to the ferry ramp. It then passed over a small culvert and creek draining gullies up by Finney Road. Just beyond this creek on the right was a gate painted white and a driveway to a house up on a prime spot well above Radnor Street where its privacy was complete.

A little further on, on the left hand side of the street, a white picket fence determined someone’s private wharf at river level, and shelter or boat shed up almost at road level. Some palings were missing and access was easily gained to the wharf. Once, six of us left the ferry ramp for a cruise upstream in an old bogged-up, flat-bottomed, flat-fronted punt, but it was leaking so badly that by the time we were 100 yards past the wharf water was leaking in exceedingly fast. We turned around and just made it back to the wharf with only about two inches freeboard. I clambered off as fast as I could, and in no time water came over the top and down it went. At this time I could not swim a stroke. The things kids got up to!

Just along Radnor Street were some blind corners below the hill, and cut into the rock was a narrow bitumen road. Those corners were protected by white signboards that warned ‘Slow Down. Sound Horn.’ which was a common practice on blind corners or when overtaking another car. A narrow, sharply curved timber bridge followed, crossing Witton Creek down in the mud below, and surrounded by all sorts of water plants, lantana and lilies. Continuing further, a large shed and pontoon could be seen on the river bank. This was the premises of the Indooroopilly canoe club and the place was lost in the 1974 great flood.

From the intersection of Radnor Street and Witton Road and down to the river bank public gardens were developed. It was called ‘The Cascades’ because of the artificial water courses following the hillside down to the river. One could go there by walking or by car, a small charge being paid as an
entrance fee. Alternately one could go by boat from the city (just upstream from Victoria Bridge) in Sullivan’s boats – either the *Luana*, or the *SS Majestic* – a small steam launch with graceful lines and a small steam engine in the middle of the boat where passengers could watch it working through an open door.

Continuing along Witton Road the next place of adventure was the lower entrance to the Indooroopilly Silver-Lead Mine. This entrance was down a bush track near Witton Creek by a shallow crossing and in among lantana and scrub, where a square concrete portal led to one of the tunnels under the hill that was mined some years previously. Fallen timbers and slop water repelled any kid adventurer from penetrating further into the darkness. This no doubt was why the deep open cut up the hill never filled with water, if it came down tunnels and emptied out through the concrete portal into Witton Creek.

Just prior to World War 2 Nudgee Junior College was erected at the bend of Witton Road and Kate Street. It was a grand two or three-storey brick building with a tiled roof, surrounded by a nice area down to the riverbank, then sloping the other way towards Witton Flats where there were extensive playing fields. Witton Road continued on, joining Moggill Road just below Doyle’s Dairy, where Moordale Street is now.

**TARINGA TRANSPORT SERVICES**

**Indooroopilly Bus Service**

Three or four bus companies serviced this region in the pre-war and early post-war days until the Council took over. I suppose the main one would have been the Indooroopilly Bus Service, the depot being up that little track that is now Burbong Street. Next would come the Swann Road Bus Service, the Stanley Terrace Bus Service, and further afield the Duke Street Bus Service. The Toowong tramline terminated in Dean Street up from Sherwood Road.

The Indooroopilly Bus Service was the most commonly seen as it passed through Taringa along Moggill Road both outbound and inbound. Our nearest bus stop was at the ‘gum tree’ on Moggill Road near Payne Street.

In their private livery the buses were painted red below with a green waistband below the windowsills, and cream beside the windows and over the roof. Some earlier models were painted a beige colour on the roof similar to railway carriages, and I suspect these had a hard canvas roof. Along the green waistband ‘Indooroopilly Bus Service’ was printed in yellow. The colour stood
out, so even at a distance you would know where it was going, and be able to find it at a glance among other buses at the Roma Street bus stand diagonally opposite City Hall. While they were classed as Indooroopilly buses, they went further afield as during the war they ventured as far as Moggill, Upper Brookfield, Chapel Hill, and Nudgee Junior College as well as Kenmore. Doyle’s Dairy adjoined the western boundary of their depot. One bus that stood out in that fleet was the Gilford, a semi-forward control where the driver sat in a little box beside the half-engine bonnet.

**Stanley Terrace Bus Service**

Chris Berndt and his brother Charlie ran the Stanley Terrace Bus Service with a forward-control Reo (later re-engined with a Perkins diesel motor), a 1939 Ford truck type, and still later the ‘Butter Box’ – a bus built on an International truck chassis.

The route ran from Moggill Road outbound swinging off into Stanley Terrace north of Taringa, along the length of Stanley Terrace, left into Hillsdon Road, right into Waverley Road, left into Taringa Parade, left again into Disraeli Street, left again up a steep part of Stanley Street (not Terrace), right into Payne Street, left into Manchester Terrace, right into Rokeby Terrace then into Moggill Road again and into the city. Our stop was at the corner of Payne Street and Manchester Terrace opposite Buxtons. This route always took an anticlockwise direction, which must have been a disadvantage to many folk. The buses were painted a sort of green colour with a blue band under the windows, and ‘Taringa Bus Service’ printed on a cream background.

While the first two buses were fairly conventional, the forward-control Reo had its plywood engine cowling inside the front of the bus hiding the great Perkins motor, and the driver sitting beside the motor with a great long gear lever coming from behind the engine cowl. A small sideways-facing seat was on the opposite side of the motor, usually occupied by two or three people wanting to talk to the driver. Gear changes were made by double-declutching, an art lost on automatic gearboxes nowadays. Buses are now all forward-control where the front is flat and the driver sits right up front.

The Ford was a more conventional nose-out type of bus, with the driver sitting in with the passengers where it was easy to collect fares. With the motor out front the bus had a much cleaner smell than the Reo/Perkins where fumes leaked out everywhere from the plywood cowling.

The third bus in the fleet was the ‘Butter Box’ built at the height of the Second World War to augment a totally inadequate fleet trying to handle the excessive wartime loadings. It was not
unusual to see passengers on the bottom entrance step, hanging on outside the bus. The Butter Box name was derived from the fact that the bus body was all of plywood construction on a timber frame, and was said to have been built by a boat builder. It was totally box-like in shape and sparsely furnished inside. Seats ran along both sides until about half way, then there were half a dozen rows of conventional cross-seating, plus a long bench across the back. The seats had thin leather upholstery on the seat itself but only a four inch wide strip of padding along the top of the backrest, to touch just below the shoulders. (Leather must have been used as vinyls had yet to be invented). Needless to say, being on an extended truck chassis, the bus was as rough as hell and the state of the bitumen roads at the time of no help at all.

The Berndt brothers persevered. Where the buses were housed I know not, but there always seemed to be one at Taringa Motors where servicing was carried out.

**The Swann Road Bus Service**

This outfit was a little more off our beaten track, serving the east of Taringa down Swann Road, to Gailey Road, Ironside, and I think some went down Lambert Road, but I don’t know much about them. Colourwise they were a deep cream all over, no different waistline, and black lettering under the windows spelling out ‘Swann Road Bus Service.’ They generally terminated up on the corner of Swann Road and Clarence Road, turning on a dangerous intersection just over the crest of the hill. Their general route seemed to take them along Swann Road to the Fiveways, then down Gailey Road towards Toowong. Others used Ryans Road, serving the Ironside School area. Where their depot was I don’t know, but Sylvan Road, Toowong seems to ring a bell.

**Duke Street Toowong Bus Service**

This was even further afield than Swann Road. We never used this service, except maybe in an emergency or if visiting in that area. The Duke Street bus served the area between Stanley Terrace, the tramline and the Cemetery, and some ran down Sylvan Road. The buses were painted dark green in colour with yellow lettering on the side announcing ‘Duke Street Bus Company’. If the buses were not polished the dark green became a sort of drab olive not unlike the colour of military vehicles.

All these buses terminated in Roma Street, between Turbot and Ann Street, diagonally opposite City Hall and just below the Roma Street Police Station. During the war about six concrete air raid
shelters were set up here. When hostilities ceased, a centre column was built in each one, the walls taken out, and these served for many years as passenger shelters.

The privately-operated buses didn’t seem to have bus stop signage. Most street corners were a pick-up, set-down point. When the Council took over the running of all or most of these bus services the better vehicles were absorbed into the already substantial fleet and the colours changed to silver with a blue number on them. Those with an engine bonnet out front had it painted dark blue, no doubt to reduce the glare from the bonnet. The Stanley Street ‘butter box’ was never seen again.

**Trams**

The closest that trams ever came to Taringa was to the Toowong tram terminus. That line came out along Milton Road, some trams terminating at the cemetery gates, and others continuing on a single track up Dean Street then just around the corner into Woodstock Road. Here a quite imposing passenger shelter shed was constructed. The 6 x 6 inch timber posts were painted red and white, and proclaimed Toowong Tram Terminus, or just Terminus. Other posts just said Hail Trams Here and the stop number.

**Trains**

The most obvious transport in the area was the railway, from Ipswich to the City as a suburban service. Trains terminated at Indooroopilly, Corinda, Oxley or Darra, and Ipswich. Tickets were sold before the train arrived, and carriages were marked ‘First’ or ‘Second Class’, ‘Smoking’, and some compartments were labelled ‘Women and Children Only’. Cases, boxes and the like could be posted from any station which could also be a receiving point, the arrival of an item being noted on a blackboard with the receiver’s name.

In those days the train would have carried more than twice the number of people from Taringa as the buses, largely because the fare was about half the bus fare. What’s more, the day-return fares were not much more than the single fare, so it well and truly paid to buy a return ticket, even to such places as Southport where a weekend excursion ticket was available over three or four days.

Trains were mostly hauled by black tank engines (D17s) working bunker-first towards the city. A tank engine carries its water in on-board water tanks instead of in a tender. Around World War 2, most trains were steam-hauled by D16 and D17 locomotives. Being tank engines designed for suburban use they were able to terminate at Indooroopilly, Darra, Oxley etc without turning
facilities. On the odd occasion, a tender locomotive could be seen working up to the Swann Road cutting in reverse, with a suburban train in tow.

Carriages were of the original ‘Evans Coach’ type, with side opening doors and cross-bench seats holding up to about seven people with more standing between the two side doors making up to 24 in one compartment (war years). There were generally no toilets, except if a special coach was on from some country area.

Peak-hour trains were packed, as could be the Taringa inbound platform in the mornings. There would be a rush to get a seat but gentlemen usually stood for the ladies if the compartments were standing room only. Those on the outside edges could perch on the door window sill. Those on the inside had to keep their balance with nothing to hang on to.

Milton School had a manual training block under one of the buildings, and it was customary for the upper-grade Taringa boys to march to the station, board a Brisbane-bound train, alight at Milton Station then march to the school. Here under the guidance of a woodworking instructor you learned to saw, hammer, and chisel odd shapes and pieces of wood into little objects like tooth brush holders, trinket boxes, and to inlay. Handling the triplanes (big hand planes for smoothing straight) took some balancing indeed. At home Dad had a nice serrated bottom plane, a Stanley No. 4, which I ‘borrowed’ at the start of my apprenticeship and am still using today (2004).

At the end of the morning’s/afternoon’s instruction it was back on the train to Taringa and straight home, or as my grandparents lived up Princess Street I could go there to taste some of my grandmother’s German delights.

Central Brisbane was the true city heart. There were no suburban drive-in shopping centres (Chermside was the first) as there are today, only small main streets of shops in the suburbs. So even on a Saturday morning trains were well-patronised with families going into the city to shop at the big department stores, or go to the banks (yes, they were open) or the large grocery stores like Manahan’s, Barry & Roberts, or the odd one out, Brisbane Cash and Carry (BCC) in George Street. In the BCC you wandered around amongst the shelves packed with groceries, served yourself then paid at the front till (checkout). This was a major difference from the suburban grocery stores, and proving popular, and was the beginning of the end for them.

There were other businesses in the city such as the Roma Street municipal markets, Sargeant’s Foundry down in Alice Street, and tool shops. Patronage reached them by public transport as few
people had cars. People had to watch every penny they spent, and cars were out of reach for most.

Threepence could buy quite a bit so it was worth saving – hence the walk to and from the station despite the price of shoe leather. Taxis were around, and Taringa had a rank near the railway station.

The working week was five and a half days or 44 hours and a lot of people worked 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday mornings.

My first wheels

Northwards from Taringa lay some country fairly unknown to us kids. While we knew the way to the city by train and bus, a lot of exploring was to be done between Taringa, the river at Toowong, and westwards towards the ranges. Just down Moggill Road from the corner of Stanley Terrace (near Jackson the wheelwright) the road crossed a small creek ⁷ that had its source up by the unofficial dumps at the end of Stanley Terrace. I am fairly sure that Toowong High School is built on a Chinese market garden site set among tall gum trees that seemed to abound in the area beside this creek.

Just prior to the Second World War I received for my ninth birthday a scooter, which I later learned had cost my parents 11 shillings and 9 pence. This was a rather rudimentary affair – two 7inch wheels, solid rubber tyres, a flat unsprung footboard, a handlebar and little else. It didn’t even have a brake. But it did allow me to get around with the kid over the road who had a Cyclops one with pneumatic tyres, sprung footboard, roller bearings, mudguards, rear brake and prop stand.

I had to put my foot on the tyre to stop mine, but as we all went about bare footed our feet were as tough as old leather. The hilly country of Taringa was not the best, but with well-oiled axles the scooter did allow me to explore a lot further. I managed to fit a sprung board out the back, hinged at the front end, so I could put my foot on it to act as a brake, but it was hard on tyres.

Now wanderings were available to other places and one of these was The Dams in a creek at the foot of Mt Coot-tha (J. C. Slaughter Falls today). Here were two concrete structures, one standing, one collapsed in amongst thick lantana and weed rubbish.

You could ride over Stanley Terrace using Miskin Street’s big hill, or go down Duke Street to the tram line in Dean Street, then turn left up to the imposing log-and-paling Mt Coot-tha Park gates. The park itself was rather undeveloped except for the gravel road up to the top.

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⁷ Toowong Creek
By going off the right hand side edge of the road at this point down to the creek, and following it upstream for a short distance through dense lantana scrub you would come to the first wall, which was the collapsed one lying in large foot-thick slabs all across the creek bed. Up a bit of a wallaby track and under more lantana was the second wall, still standing but with a two-foot hole blown in its base so it could no longer hold water. These survived for many years, even during the war when the whole area was turned into an ammunition dump. A rough track made its way up to Mt Coottha, but this was well and truly closed during the war. These dams remained in position until the rejuvenation of the area into the J. C. Slaughter Falls area in the 1970s.

**TOOWONG**

The first establishment after Taringa along Moggill Road towards Toowong Village was the Brisbane Boys’ College and it is still there with its playing fields of course. The little creek near Whitmore Street ran down to the river bank at Kayes Rocks. Further on was Burns Road on the right with its timber overbridge across the two-track railway line that ran beside Moggill Road at this point, and after that came High Street. At the corner of Jephson and High Streets was St Thomas’s Church.

The centre median strip of High Street was planted with palms and surrounded with rock edging, leaving two lanes each side – one for traffic and one for parking. This strip set Toowong apart from other suburban shopping areas.

On the right was the Toowong Police Station in the front section of a dwelling of those times. Opposite was a two-storey shop occupied by Peerless Dry Cleaners. Over on the right again were a few more shops before the corner where a brick-fronted building with a large workshop space was the premises of Warendorp and Pitt motor engineers and dealers for Rover cars.

Next to this establishment was the Royal Exchange Hotel, a closed-in sort of pub more akin to those down south. This pub overlooked the railway so accommodation there must have been very noisy with steam trains leaving Toowong Station, going under the High Street Bridge, then passing the hotel on an up-grade and curve to the Burns Road Bridge. But the bar trade here was good. In those days of the ‘beer swill’ the noise of men talking could be heard for a considerable distance.

The bridge over the railway was another of those rattling wooden affairs that added to the noise at the hotel.
View up High Street, Toowong c1956

The intersection of High Street and Sherwood Road was rather large and in its centre was a threesided rock wall following the lay of the land and in the middle a large Moreton Bay Fig (or Weeping Fig?) giving welcome shade to all the surrounding area. Here were a couple of seats, a horse trough I think, and a small taxi rank on the Sherwood Road side. It was a wonderful retreat from the summer heat and a great entrance to Toowong along with the High Street centre gardens strip. The road designer for all this was far-sighted.

Back on the north side of High Street just before the rail bridge, the old Post Office was not far from the Station and was a typical two-storey gable-roof building adorned with signs for the PMG (Post Master General’s Dept) which ran both postal and telephone services.

The truly big employer in Toowong was Patterson’s Sawmill and Joinery Works. Here was a large establishment occupying land from Sherwood Road along the railway line through to Lissner Street. Patterson’s main office was in Sherwood Road, a fairly small shop-like structure with a timber post awning out the front. The gable though faded displayed the Patterson Sawmill sign and the telephone number ‘Telephone: Toowong 8’. A vehicle track entered the premises proper through a gate to the left of the office, and made its way down to timber racks in the yard.
Central Toowong 1936 showing the extent of Patterson’s saw mill and timber workshops adjoining the railway station yard (ADA00096152(1) AAM Group)

Inside the office/shop itself, shelves and racks were stacked with the popular hardware of the day – screws, hinges, nails, fasteners, stays, locks and the like; as well as a moderate collection of most-used tools such as saws, hammers, chisels, planes etc. Behind the shop and office, away from the street, were the log-unloading ramps and a large tripod crane or derrick to lift logs off the rail wagons shunted in on the short spur line from the station. In the centre of the yard were the breaking-down saws; further over, smaller saws; and finally the planing mill. Around the edges were the timber racks for large and small hardwood and pine. Off to one side was the ‘ship’s boiler’ as well as the large steam engine used to drive the entire plant using a system of axle rods, pulley wheels and belts to the various machines.

By the time I started buying there in the 1950s (I bought my house lot of timber for our Chelmer home from them) it was all electrified as during the war years the whole plant burned down. The engine and boiler lay disused in place for many years, surrounded by weeds and scraps of timber.

I still remember the night of the fire. The kid over the road from us in Manchester Terrace raced over and told us they could see flames reaching the sky, and it would be a good idea if we went to investigate. It was still early in the night so it was out with our trusty scooters and away we went, thinking the fire could have been Taringa School (it had once been targeted in a failed arson attack). We rode on (no lights of course) over the next hill, past BBC to High Street. By that time I had
guessed where it was: the sawmill we saw so often from the train. We were able to get as far as Sherwood Road where a large crowd of people had gathered to watch the spectacle.

Daylight later revealed quite a lot of damage to the centre of the place, but it didn’t put it out of business. The shop and office survived, as did the joinery and glazing shop (a heavy-floored building like a large warehouse) on Lissner Street. Some timber racks survived as did the crane. Pattersons closed down finally around June 1985 to make way for the construction of Toowong Village that also took in the airspace above the rail line, as well as the Post Office.

Toowong Station was just off the old High Street Bridge, the platform starting almost under it, with a set of stairs down from the footpath on the bridge to the platform which was an island type with a rail track either side. The goods shed was between the station and the sawmill, accessed by a gravel road beside the post office. There was a loop siding here and off this ran a spur line to Patterson’s tripod crane. Round logs would be delivered, and sawn timber taken out on timber wagons. On the inside of the curve to Pattersons was Queensland Rail Trolley Shed – a typical lean-to corrugated iron structure with batten gate. At the end of Lissner Street, after quadruplication of the rail lines 8, a concrete footbridge was erected to connect with Benson Street.

Over the High Street Bridge a sharp left turn into Benson Street led towards Coronation Drive and the City. Not far inbound down Benson Street stood the Toowong Swimming Baths with a half-sized pool, stands and part-roofs, surrounded by a barricade of red-painted corrugated iron walling. A small entrance at the city end gave the passer-by a small glimpse of the activity inside. Many a child was taught to swim here, in connection with the schools’ ‘Learn to Swim’ campaign. I started, got conjunctivitis and left.

Further along by the river was Coronation Drive, known as River Road pre-1936 until King George VI was crowned king. Just on the curve before Coronation Drive another motor garage existed, not unlike Taringa Motors but on flat ground. It dispensed petrol, oils, tyres and other motorist needs. Beyond this workshop was the iconic Regatta Hotel that is still there.

Sylvan Road ran off to the side, under the railway line, past the northern end of Jephson Street and came out near Toowong Cemetery. Between the hotel and the railway was a conglomeration of small businesses such as upholsterers, coach or body builders, small workshops and the like. Toowong Park was on the other side of the line, to the right. This had playing fields, and for many

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8 Adding two additional tracks and preparing for electrification in the 1950s was a major project including replacing timber bridges with concrete and steel structures
years was the parking lot for one of the Council’s steam road rollers until it was deemed too dangerous to leave it there.

Down Sylvan Road around Quinn Street was another large set of iron-roofed sheds, with one closed in. These were rented from Bill Carroll and one was a Cranley feed store shed where bales of hay, lucerne, and bags of stuff were stored. (Cranley’s main store shed was up by Grey Street Bridge). In front of this was a small fibrous plaster manufacturer, his glassy-top tables set up for the making of this popular house wall sheeting, in pre plasterboard days. In front of this one, in the closed-in building, was a shop and mannequin repairer and model maker. If you looked in you could see all parts of models and fellows doing their best to repair them.

The last rental was to a builder, BH Stevens, who used a large area under a lean-to roof for timber storage, plant lock-up, and small pre-fab work, especially in wet weather when men could not work outside. I know this place well. I was introduced to it in my early apprenticeship days with BH Stevens. It was a bit like a sentence to hear the catch cry “You’ve got to go down to the yard”.

![View up river from Coronation Drive, St Lucia Reach in the distance c1955](image)

Back opposite the Regatta Hotel at the start of the very bumpy Coronation Drive was the river bank with rowing shed and pontoon, its timber ramps protruding into the Brisbane River. This was the home of the Brisbane Boys’ College Rowing Club ⁹ and was lost in the 1974 flood. Just upstream

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⁹ BBC shared Toowong Rowing Club’s facilities until their new facility was built in the mid 1930s approximately 100m downstream. Both rowing sheds were lost in the 1974 flood
another pontoon was the western destination of the little river ferry that plied across from this point to the West End tram terminus. A big old colonial home stood on the river bank where Benson Street swung in from the river, and this was later taken over by the ABC.\footnote{There were two significant houses on the ABC site, Sidney House (demolished to make way for studios) and the heritage listed Middenbury}

Back in Toowong itself just beyond Pattersons sawmill in Sherwood Road were a couple of shops, one a shoe store owned by Albert Wabiszewski, trading under the name of Albert Stanley’s boot/shoe store. We knew him well. He would close his shop at lunch time for several hours so he could have his siesta.

More shops were along Sherwood Road until Jephson Street where they petered out, giving way to housing. Just around the corner north in Jephson Street was the Toowong Jubilee cinema or picture show as they were then generally known. Theatres were in town. This cinema was one of two in Toowong and was the less fancy of the two. The other was the Elite over on the Toowong tramline, a more upmarket affair with a solid-looking brick front. It was well lined inside, with theatre-type lounge seats at the rear, and had an altogether first class look about it. It was just on the city side of Croydon Street corner of Milton Road.

A funny thing was that with the advent of television in 1959 these two picture theatres soon disappeared (along with the revamped Taringa Victory Theatre) while the two lesser or real tin-shed picture shows survived, these being the Indooroopilly and Graceville cinemas now known as the Eldorado and the Regal respectively.

A change came to Toowong when some shops on the sharp curve at the intersection of High Street and Sherwood Road were demolished and a new building was erected. This was to be a push into the suburbs by the Brisbane Cash & Carry (BCC) Stores. This was one of the first supermarket-type stores to appear in a suburban shopping centre. Another came at Graceville later on. This chain was merged with, or taken over by Woolworths.

Back on the other side of the railway bridge in Benson Street, Toowong, a right turn took us southeast towards Taringa Fiveways. It was a rather bendy sort of road near Toowong, passing a collection of houses built from 1900 to 1920 or maybe earlier. The boat builder Ygosse had his sheds here at the mouth of Toowong Creek near Perrin Park. This little creek came down from around Miskin Street, dived under the rail line at Whitmore Street, ambled across empty paddocks to Burns Road, and finally entered the Brisbane River at this spot. Ygosse had a number of sheds
and lean-tos with small slipways sloping down to the river. The sheds had a bit of an untidy appearance about them – timber, sawdust and bits and pieces lying around – with a couple of large stands of bamboo nearby. A big sign facing the road told of its owner Ygosse.

Further on, in 1955 there was a garage/service station at the corner of Gailey Road and St Lucia Road. I was foreman on construction of the house right behind this service station in St Lucia Road. Along St Lucia Road, past Ryans Road and down the hill were the St Lucia Pictures (Avalon). I don’t remember much about the place but it was near Laurence Street. There was a shop over the road, and the building was a bit like a hall with steps up the front to the entrance. I didn’t frequent this area so my recollection is fairly sketchy.

Further on around Keith Street there was a yard full of stacked steel, containers, air locks, steel bits and pieces, and timber. This of course was for the proposed bridge to be built across the river from this point to link up with Boundary Street, West End. The flyover on Dornoch Terrace, Highgate Hill, still crosses a bit of road down below it that goes nowhere. This bridge was something that should have been built, but World War 2 interfered with this plan.

Lastly, out along here, still among paddocks, stood the makings of the University of Queensland – at that time only the main buildings and some of the quadrangle – and this was also halted during World War 2.

Back at Gailey Road a turnoff to the right took us to Heroes Avenue. The road at this time went on around the hill to join up with Alpha Street, Taringa. On top of this hill, and bound by Indooroopilly Road, Alpha Street and Bellevue Parade, was a large old mansion with a lot of big pine trees around the yard which covered quite a few acres.

It seems the property was owned by Miss Ivy Philp. In the 1940s she sold off some allotments along Heroes Avenue/Alpha Street east of Burns Road, and during my first years of apprenticeship I worked on a solid brick home about four blocks east of Burns Road intersection. This home, the first along this stretch of road, was being built in 1948 by BH Stevens, a builder from Bellevue Terrace, St Lucia, for the Rev. Mr Sinclair a retired Presbyterian Minister in poor health. Stevens later built two more homes along here as spec houses. I worked on a varnished cypress pine house

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11 Now Sir Fred Schonell Drive
12 The bridge was proposed to provide easy access to the new university site. It is understood the materials were used for more immediate requirements further up the coast
of elegant proportions. Those houses were always referred to as being in Heroes Avenue, not Indooroopilly Road, but maybe Stevens used the wrong address.

Older homes were in situ up the length of Alpha Street – of late 1800s date, or between the wars period. At the top of the hill where Alpha Street becomes Pike Avenue lived a plumber by the name of Fred Yaxley who had his work shed on the land between the street and the railway line. His name was painted in large letters on the fibro wall of his shed facing the rail line for all the passengers to see and maybe make some use of him.

Pike Avenue went on down the hill to the triangular intersection of Pike Avenue, Ada Street and Beatrice Street. This triangle had a large tree in it, and in Ada Street were two shops – one was a grocer’s shop, and the other I know not.

Near Taringa station just around the corner in Princess Street, was a smallgoods shop as they were known then. A neat little store, it sold ice creams, soft drinks and all the goodies of the day. Signs over such shops told us of ‘Peter’s Ice Cream’ or ‘Say TRISTRAM’S Please’.

The Grandparents Marggraf lived up the hill, second house on the left past Cunningham Street and I would go to the shop for a penny ice-cream.

**Swann Road**

Last but not least, a quick look at Swann Road from the western, Moggill Road end. Not far in from Moggill Road was the Clarence Road intersection where the buses used to turn. There were many fine old colonial homes along here.

There was a small shop on Swann Road at the top end of the very steep grade up the hillside that was Princess Street but this didn’t seem to be always open. I think it was another of those smallgoods shops. A lot further along, not far from the Fiveways was a big building on the northern side that had once been called Montrose, the home of Mr and Mrs George Marchant. It became the Montrose Home for crippled children, and was later renamed Kingshome when it became a home for returned service personnel and a rehabilitation centre. On the right side of the road there was a large allotment that ran down from Swann Road to Dopson Street – about one to two acres in all. This was planted with rainforest, and the jungle so thick it was impossible to see far in, especially on the Dopson Street side.\(^{13}\)

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\(^{13}\) This was the ‘tropical’ garden of Queensland Meteorologist Clement Wragge who built his residence Capemba here in the 1880s. It later became the home of Tj Rothwell, still there in 2018
Swann Road crossed the Fiveways at the top of Gailey Road on a very dangerous intersection. There were a couple more shops here on the corner to make things worse. Then the road continued uphill towards Ironside. It was up on this hill, by Lamont Street, that JB Chandler (Later Sir John) lived. He set up Radio 4BH and a Chandler’s electrical store in town. Who remembers the call sign ‘This is Radio 4BH – a Chandlers Station’? Chandler became Lord Mayor of Brisbane in 1940, standing for the Citizens’ Municipal Organisation or CMO. He reputedly refused to take his salary.

Swann Road continued on down to Ironside, the brick two-storeyed school at the corner of Central Avenue, St Lucia, a symbol of how this area was to go ahead. The street then became Hawken Drive which continued on to connect with St Lucia Road, now cut off by University grounds, and not far from the proposed bridge across to Boundary Street, West End.

**HOME SERVICES**

Home deliveries were a major thing in those early pre-war days, but a lot fell away with the manpower shortage during the war. This was a time when few people had cars. Covering a distance was all by Shanks’s Pony, or most people call it walking.

Most enterprises offered free home delivery. For instance the milkman delivered his warm (unpasteurised) milk twice a day, early morning and late afternoon. Our milkman was Bert Tuckett from Rafting Ground Road in Brookfield, so it was a long way to come to deliver about four cans of milk (30 or 40 gallons). There were other milkmen, Redhead’s Dairy and Doyle’s as well as several others. The milk was straight from the cow and had a short shelf life. Boiling it could extend its life a bit, but with two deliveries households could cope. Deliveries were with horse and cart, and specially-adapted milk cans with taps for ease of filling the pint and quart pop-lid measuring jugs.

Few people had a refrigerator back then but many did have an ice box or chest, so this meant the ice man delivered a block every second day from the insulated box on the back of a truck. The ice was generally wrapped in newspaper to preserve it longer before being put in the ice compartment of the chest. Melted ice fell out the bottom, so it was a constant job to empty the small tub of water from under the ice chest.

In those early days at Manchester Terrace we also had our meat delivered. I guess the butcher (GE Bagster) got the order dropped in to him by one of us schoolkids, as few people had telephones because of the expense.
The next delivery was from the baker – this was Bert Hill the baker at Taringa – and once again by horse and cart. The cart was like a short panel van on large wooden wheels and a horse up front. Bread would be in two pound loaves stacked loose at the back of the cart, a small rear door giving access to the load space. An indentation around the loaves meant they could be broken in half at that point. The baker would bring a basket of loaves in and up our 19 back steps. Mum would select what bread she wanted, pay him, and the deal was done. Maybe he would only sell her half a loaf. Picking up bread on the way home from school was bad – half loaves were usually gouged out and eaten.

There was a greengrocer, who because of the weight usually had a truck or large wagon, with the boxes of fruit and vegetables stacked up towards the centre of the truck. Fruit and vegetables were fresh from the municipal markets in Roma Street, from where he would make an early start. One of our greengrocers was Mr Henry of Taringa. Most grocers also delivered which was essential because the weight of a week’s groceries was heavy for a person to carry home. After my marriage we moved to Chelmer in 1956 and our grocer was Parker and Schneider of Sherwood, who would enter an order in their docket book on say a Monday and deliver on a Tuesday. If no one was home (we were both working) they knew where the key was and would put perishables into the ice box or refrigerator; collect the money that was left for them; put the key back and depart. Now that was service.

Occasionally there was an ice cream man, a bloke with a small horse (maybe a Shetland pony) and small cart to match. It had a gaily fringed hood over it. The step and riding position was at the rear, with a couple of containers of ice cream kept frozen by dry ice in front, almost under the horse’s tail. A high-pitched tingly bell would announce he was on his way.

Every so often there was a clothes prop man who carried on his shoulder up to half a dozen of these forked sticks (about eight feet long), or a couple of dozen in a horse and cart. These props were used to hold up the centres of long clothes lines that stretched across the back yards. He would call out in a long drawl ‘Cllooooosees Props! Cllooooosees Props!’ These were probably cut from trees growing on the sides of Mt Coot-tha.

Another fellow that came round was the bottle collector or ‘bottle-o’ with his horse and cart. He would buy empty beer bottles at about seven pence a dozen for recycling. Few soft drink bottles were involved as they worked on a deposit and refund system. The call was ‘Bottle! Bottle!’ or ‘Bottle le Bottle’.
Two collectors who have to be mentioned were the ‘health workers’, the rubbish man and the ‘night soil’ man. The first was clear cut – you had a rubbish bin down by the back steps, he would come with a big bin, collect your refuse, then jump the fence to collect the neighbours’ before returning to his cart or truck with the bin perched on his shoulders. No one could say this wasn’t back-breaking work.

Lastly but most essential was the ‘night soil’ man, the bloke who took cans of human excreta weekly from under the thunder boxes of the day. The cans were on an exchange basis from all those old earth closets that dotted almost all Brisbane back yards along with chook pens and clothes lines. But this chap’s job was an absolutely filthy one, juggling overflowing cans on a corn sack draped over his shoulders. A tin lid would hide the contents from prying eyes.

The wagon was a two-horse, four wheeled affair, with two smaller wheels at the front and larger ones at the back. It was closed in with a lot of little side doors on both sides, and had a cross bench up front for the driver and his offsider. A serve of sawdust and wood shavings was delivered to the sawdust box with each new pan. Motor trucks took the place of the wagons after the war, but this system made Brisbane the laughing stock of the cities of Australia right up until the advent of sewerage in the Clem Jones era of the Brisbane City Council. For those who could afford it a septic tank was available, requiring a holding tank, maybe a filter, and a couple of trenches for absorption – or transportation to areas such as an ash bank where the sun’s effect evaporated the waste fluid.

I suppose one other person should be mentioned. This was the family doctor who was always on call. Ring him at any hour (from a public phone, price two pence) and he would drive around to the house even in the middle of the night in an emergency. Of course by this time all the doctors seemed to have cars.

WORLD WAR 2 YEARS

I had only just turned nine when Hitler’s troops marched into Poland and war was declared. This had a profound effect on my father who was of German origin, and who had German leanings, being the Secretary of the German Club in Vulture Street.

From our back room at Indooroopilly I watched the slowly-increasing activity on the roads and the railway and in the air, but it didn’t seem to alter so much at first. Some of the first sights of the war, apart from a few army trucks, were the yellow-painted Tiger Moth aircraft flying overhead, teaching pilots the rudiments if flying before they ultimately added to Royal Australian Air Force
numbers. Of course there was the more advanced trainer the Wirraway but it was behind the times in world standards as a fighter.

At the end of 1941, when Japan came into the conflict, things livened up considerably. A convoy of ships bound for the Philippines was diverted to Australia, indeed to Brisbane. These were American reinforcements to help save the Philippine Islands but were too late and turned up in Moreton Bay in late December. By early 1942 the arrival of American servicemen here went from a trickle to a flood.

The view from our back verandah all of a sudden became exciting. There were long army convoys passing through the Moggill Road–Coonan Street intersection, both inbound and outbound. Soldiers with their guns upright sat in the back of those great GMC ten-wheelers, many towing field guns behind them. Other men travelled in tracked personnel carriers or Bren gun carriers and the like. I don’t recall seeing any large army tanks on the road.

We never missed an opportunity to go and watch this spectacle by jumping the intervening fences and racing across the spare allotment behind us. When tracked vehicles came along it didn’t take much to announce their arrival with the roar of the motors and the clattering of the steel tracks on the bitumen road, and they were often covered with soldiers. We would be on the Moggill Road – Coonan Street corner to take in this great scene as perhaps fifty of these vehicles came past, blocking the road to all other traffic.

It all looked very formidable. Every now and then a Yank soldier would throw us a couple of pennies or ha’pennies which we would scurry to pick up off the ground. A penny was quite a valuable coin in those days. It was a real curse when we were in school and missed a convoy going past making its way down Moggill Road to the city somewhere, or the wharves at Hamilton or Newstead. Having to sit in class and listen to the clatter of tracked vehicles on the road nearby was distracting indeed.

On the railway things were noticeably busier. The trains, and extra ones, were now loaded to the maximum. Some were too heavy to make it up the Swann Road cutting and ground to a slipping halt, having to wait for a suburban train to come up, give it a push over the rise, then wait at the upper quadrant signal that was positioned at the entrance to the cutting. Other trains would have to be split, with half taken to Toowong, the first siding, then the locomotive coming back for the rest as soon as possible. More fun was had in wet weather. When the engine’s wheels slipped the noise
could be quite deafening. Troop trains also came through – around 15 carriages loaded to the hilt with troops both Australian and American heading for goodness knows where, or hell in the Pacific.

Other trains were run for the artillery or cavalry. There were many rail wagons carrying large guns (mounted on four wheels, or two-wheel 25 pounder types), or covered in trucks, jeeps and personnel carriers. A few passenger coaches trailed these trains for the accommodation of the troops.

Then came hospital trains. Their not so happy cargo of injured and sick military personnel were shipped back from the islands to Brisbane, and sent by train up the country somewhere to recuperate, before perhaps being sent back to the islands to fight again. These trains were painted white with large red crosses on the sides and roofs. The only break from this colour scheme was the dirty black of the smoking steam engines.

In the air things progressively got busier too. Our house at Taringa-Indooroopilly was more or less on the flight path from the north to Archerfield Aerodrome, by now a secure base. We had a grandstand view of the whole spectacle. The Tiger Moths were still there doing their mock dogfights overhead. The sky over the farms of Long Pocket seemed to be a low-flying area as quite often a Moth would glide down behind the hill at the top of Harts Road. These would be joined by the Wirraway, and the American lookalike the Harvard Trainer.

Early in the conflict we saw a smattering of other fighters, mostly American such as Kitty Hawks, Thunderbolts and lesser types flying over. As the Pacific war increased in intensity more formidable aircraft appeared overhead. Bostons, Beauforts, and Beaufighters in Australian markings flew over with monotonous regularity, as well as Hudsons and that old out-of-date Australian ‘bomber’ the Avro Anson now largely used for reconnaissance work.

As the war progressed, heavier planes appeared such as the Mitchell with its twin rudders and engine cowls protruding beyond the rear edge of the wing. Then Liberators began to show up, as well as a few B17 Flying Fortresses. All of these were easily identified by the American Star in a circle with oblong wings out at each side, and ‘US Army’ painted on them. Some of these planes flew so low over our house you could almost see some of the crew on board. Later in the war aircraft such as Mustangs, Lockheed Lightnings with their twin boom fuselages, and even the occasional Spitfire came overhead.

With all this going on, a top priority at school was the digging of slit trenches. These were cut in just below the Prep Grade rooms in the two-storey section of the school, and above the concrete
walls of the girls’ basketball court. The trenches were dug about three feet deep, two foot six inches wide, with the spoil mounded up around the edges. There was only enough room in them to accommodate half the school’s population, necessitating the splitting of the school day. Half of the students attended in the morning, the other half in the afternoon.

During the early days of the Pacific war, those dark days of early 1942, Americans were everywhere – on trains, trams, and fewer on the buses. General MacArthur was in town, living at Lennons Hotel and with his office in the AMP Building. His son Arthur attended kindergarten in Toowong. A lot of this was not publicised of course. Things were of a clandestine nature. You didn’t talk. ‘Loose lips cost lives’ or ‘Loose lips sink ships’ were the slogans posted up everywhere.

Brisbane, like other cities, went into blackout conditions: no street lights, brown paper over all windows, shop windows taped to prevent flying glass. It was all a pretty sombre scene. Trains still ran under these conditions even with reduced lights. Carriage lights were dimmed by removing one bulb in each light. The few cars that were running had covers over their headlights with just a horizontal slit to let out minimum light.

Mt Coot-tha was blocked off above the bush line (where the trees and scrub began beyond the houses) and down to the dams. A searchlight battery was stationed on Mt Coot-tha as well as in many other places in Brisbane. These scanned the sky at night, and every so often an air raid siren would begin its rising and falling wail, warning the populace of an imminent air raid. When the sirens sounded the dogs would bark and howl, particularly at night, and they were more or less the only other sound to be heard. But all these were only practice runs, or false alarms when an unidentified aircraft appeared from the north of from seaward. Quite often an aircraft could be spotted in the blinding ray of one or more of the powerful searchlights.

One alarm occurred around 1943 when the air raid sirens sounded during school hours at lunchtime. Of course no kids took any notice of it (‘just another drill’) and went on playing, until Sergeant Crank from the Police ordered “Everybody to the trenches. This is no drill!” So down to our allotted spot in the slit trenches we went, hoping to see or hear some action. We waited and waited, and waited longer. Not a sound, so the excitement of an air raid turned to boredom as we squatted there.

Then some pupils decided to liven things up. They pulled tufts of Natal grass, roots and all, out of the spoil above the trenches and threw them across to the far or next adjoining trenches, clobbering those unfortunate kids with grass, roots and dirt. To retaliate I pulled out one of these tufts and was
about to throw it when whammo! I was almost knocked stupid by a rock that some clown had decided to throw. It hit me on the side of my head just above the right ear and drew blood that dripped down the side of my face, looking a lot worse than it actually was. But no doubt about it, after that I could always say that I was wounded in the trenches in World War 2! (In the Yank Army the wound may have got me a purple heart?)

The plane that caused the alarm turned out to be a high-flying American aircraft that didn’t report in. The All Clear sounded with one long continuous wail for about half a minute. We climbed out. A teacher cleaned and dressed the wound and all was well. I can’t imagine what would have happened if a real raid had come, and if there had been a close hit to one of these open trenches.

There was one rumour that persisted which was that a Jap Zero had been seen over Brisbane one day, and this turned out to be a fact. It was captured intact, shipped to Brisbane and made airworthy at Eagle Farm, then flown to Amberley air base for assessing. Despite all the preparedness, and air raid shelters all over Brisbane (there was one at the northern end of the Taringa Station ‘down’ platform), after the Battle of Midway mid 1942 there was almost no possibility of an air raid. The Americans seemed to know where all the remaining aircraft carriers were, and Brisbane was well out of reach of any land-based aircraft – unlike Darwin and the far north. Submarines of course were a different story, but still couldn’t provide an air threat.

Down at Indooroopilly the ‘haunted house’ Tighnabruaich had been taken over by the Australian military authorities and was turned into an intelligence post. Amongst the work there was the interrogation of Japanese prisoners of war, so a small ‘clink’ (gaol) surrounded by walls and barbed wire was set up between the main house and the railway line near the Albert Bridge. By standing on a vantage point at the right time – like the footbridge at the station, or the picture show steps –it was possible to look over the perimeter of the wall and barbed wire entanglement and see the tops of Jap prisoners in their red flannel shirts.

This made us kids feel a lot closer to the war effort, as did the day on Chelmer Beach when my brother and I were fooling about there after visiting the Chelmer dump. An army ‘duck’, a six-wheeled amphibious truck-like machine came sailing up the river with two Australian Army blokes on board. It swung around and headed for the shore right where we were, continued to the beach, changed gear and drove up onto the beach in front of us. This was just great. These American amphibious machines used to help with island-hopping up in the north. Now one was right in front of us.
While we looked around it, and at the small propeller, the rudder at the rear, and the boat-like bottom of it, we started talking to the crew who were mucking about with some of the underwater parts. They must have asked where we lived, and when we said “That way” pointing towards Taringa, they said “Hop aboard we’ll give you a lift near home” as they were going the same way. Well, you can imagine how we felt – a couple of kids who were following the war fairly closely – to score a ride on one of these machines. Admittedly we had been warned about going in cars with strangers, but this was no car anyway. So away we went, around to the end of Indooroopilly Toll Bridge (no toll to pay), up past the Pictures and along Coonan Street to the intersection of Moggill Road where they stopped and let us climb down. As these blokes drove on, our egos were so up that we could hardly walk home through Tinniswood’s spare allotment and couldn’t wait to get in through the fence to our house to tell Mum, who probably told us it wasn’t a good idea to get lifts from strangers.

Slowly the restrictive times gave way as the war front moved north, but Brisbane was still packed with servicemen both Australian and American. As the war went on the blackouts became more like brownouts. The buses were still packed out, sometimes so much so that on leaving the city men would be forced not only to stand on the bottom step, but to hang out beyond the sides of the bus until a few passengers alighted and made room for more inside. A common cry from the driver was “Move down the aisle please!” The aisle was jam-packed as it was.

The trams were no better, nor the trains which seemed to have more military personnel on board. The convoys still rolled through, at a little less pace. The large camps were all around Brisbane, making it almost a garrison town that could hardly cope. Many planes were still flying into Archerfield.

Troop trains still went through, mixed with suburban and long-distance trains, but you needed a permit and a good excuse to travel a long distance in those days.

Late in 1943 Col my brother and I were down at Indooroopilly Station one arvo after school when we heard the sharp beat of a locomotive hauling a long goods train coming our way from the direction of the Indooroopilly Bridge. Looking around we could see it appear between the two stone pillars at the end of the bridge. The locomotive was unlike anything we had on the Queensland Railways. We had never seen the like. It was brand new, had a large centre headlight, high-set boiler, squat chimney and domes, and a tender at cab-roof height – all foreign to Queensland Railways.
On the bright red front buffer beam, and on the cab sides, was the number 220A. It had no cow-catcher like the tank engines, and on the sides of the tender in white letters was ‘USA’ leaving us in no doubt as to where the locomotive was supplied from (Number 221A is still running in QR Heritage Fleet). We had seen our first AC16 as it thundered through Indooroopilly Station, its sharp exhaust beat echoing back from the picture show and the pub. We were to see many more passing our grandstand view from the back of our house.

Not long after this we got a closer inspection of one that had broken down between Taringa Station and the Swann Road cutting. We saw the huge cloud of smoke and heard the thunder-like roar from home so raced down to where we supposed it to be. On arrival we saw this resplendent machine at the head of a westbound goods train, but going nowhere. Something had gone wrong in the cylinder area. Steam was going straight through up the chimney taking the fire with it. I don’t remember its number, but with a lot of other people in Cunningham Street we spent time examining the difference between this and other locomotives on the Queensland Railways. It looked nothing like them, more like an escapee from the NSW tracks. One intriguing plate on the side of the boiler spelled out the words ‘Corps of US Army Engineers’ as well as the Baldwin builder’s plate.

For pocket money during the Christmas holidays of 1943-44 I got my first job working for Doyle’s Dairy, down above the Witton Flats, delivering milk in the Taringa and Toowong areas on the morning run. Most times I would pick up the horse-drawn milk cart at Indooroopilly. This was usually driven by Ailsa, one of Doyle’s daughters whose sister Peggy was in my class at school. But there were times when I had to go out and ‘camp’ at the farm house to be on the Indooroopilly run with Mr Doyle himself. This meant an early start out, and is how I came to know the living conditions that this relatively poor family battled. They struggled with a lack of electricity, lack of water, and maybe not much grass for the cattle although the paddocks followed Witton Creek up into the hills off Chapel Hill Road.

With my pocket money I was able to go into the city and buy balsa wood model kits of a lot of the war planes of the day. I cut them out of solid blocks, shaped and sandpapered them to shape, and painted them until I could proudly display them on the kitchen table in front of Mum. Dad at this time was in internment camp at Tatura in Victoria – put there after an argument with a Taringa greengrocer over the merits or otherwise of Hitler. How easy it was to get into trouble in those days. This left Mum and us two kids in poor circumstances.
Another way I got some pocket money after the milk run finished was carrying meat for some of the women of Manchester Terrace. It meant picking the meat up from Bagsters, juggling with meat ration coupons, and carting it home, or to their homes, in a bag I took for the purpose. Out of this I received a small tip, but it was enough over a week to give me the money for another aircraft kit, or some change to go to Taringa Pictures in the arvo. All these kits seemed to be available despite war shortages, and I can remember one of my later balsa kits was a Lockheed Lightning.

There was one act during the war that probably did me a great favour in no uncertain terms. A mate of mine was given a pack of 20 Lucky Strike cigarettes by some Yank in town (so he said). He brought them out to our place and we decided to go up into the bush and smoke as many as possible. I did a great job on them, even doing the ‘drawback’ as it was called. But after about five or six of these strong cigarettes I started to get woozy, sick in the stomach, and turn green. After getting quite ill I decided I couldn’t see any sense to this caper, and never took up smoking.

On Central Station Number 1 Platform an American soldier once handed me a handful of pennies, about 10 or 12 in all. I couldn’t believe that a fellow could give away so much money. I asked him why and he said they were too heavy for his pocket. I believed him and went to the pictures that afternoon on the proceeds of his gift. Also on Number 1 Platform, in case of an air raid there were two 44 gallon drums for fighting an incendiary attack. One drum was marked ‘Sand – Keep Dry’ and the other was just marked ‘Water’. Some wag added to that drum ‘Keep Wet.’

As the war wearied on at home with the usual shortages air raid drills became fewer and fewer. Brown paper started to come off the windows and things began to get more normal. Planes still flew over as Archerfield was a major repair base. When going to Southport on the train, a glance over towards Archerfield Aerodrome from Salisbury or Coopers Plains revealed an aluminium spectacle. Planes were all over the place even down beside Kerry Road (where there were big repair hangars) and planes going there had to cross Beatty Road. It was during the war that Boundary Road was closed off to make more room for the war fleet. The Aero Club once had its premises along the missing part of Boundary Road.

Late 1944 saw me get a part-time job at R. S. Exton & Co in Queen Street, Brisbane so I rubbed shoulders with the commuting community. I had finished school after passing Scholarship, which was the point when those kids not too interested in school went out and got a job. There was a manpower shortage so jobs were easier to get. When my father Walter was released from ‘clink’ he got a job immediately at R. S. Exton & Co, rising quickly through the ranks.
ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

And so it was that I started at Extons in the picture framing department, an extension of their art section. Extons was basically a hardware house selling everything from baths to picks and shovels. Even in the war years it was surprising how much stock they had. The job was a temporary one only, and earned me enough money to buy my first (and only) push bike at £14 ($28). Despite the threat of it not having any tyres because of the war I bought the bike tyres and all.

Early in 1945 I left that job, and after spending a short break at the Surfers holiday house to celebrate Dad’s coming home from ‘Clink’, I approached Alf Stein of Taringa Motors about an apprenticeship in the car repair trade.

Decked out in dark blue overalls I made a great start at the age of 14. We seemed to grow up quickly in those days. I was shown how to serve petrol from one of those six hand-pumped bowsers out on the footpath, accepting money and petrol ration coupons for the amount of petrol purchased – the ration slowly increasing from four gallons a month for a Ford V8. I also had to inflate tyres, those on the driver’s side being well out on Moggill Road. I changed tyres, wheels, and even split rims for the Stanley Terrace buses we used to service (on Saturday afternoons, worse luck).

I got to know the innermost workings of the simple motors of the day – old big side valve types; some overhead valve types with their rocker arms; and of course Ford V8s with their unique type of V8 engine. I greased, cleaned, served, and was recipient of some pretty foul language that came from Alf’s lips (hence George Bagster’s famous comment). I wondered how passers-by could
ignore it, especially in those days when even the word ‘damn’ was classed as swearing. Alf didn’t talk softly either and he spoke with a low-German accent which made him seem much more formidable.

Eric’s sketch of the layout of Alf Stein’s workshop
But on the other hand work could be interesting and I got to do some quite responsible jobs: grinding and fitting valves, cleaning cylinder heads, tightening down engine bolts and sump parts and the like. Alf would check it after me. Among many more common types to repair there were many old Chevrolets, Fords, Vauxhalls, Austins, Dodges and Chryslers. The trick was to keep these vehicles going with substituted parts in those days of war time restrictions, but a bit of grinding here, and some turning there, and you would have it.

In August 1945, just after my 15th birthday, the war finished with the defeat of Japan after the two atomic bombs, and Germany having been dispatched back in the middle of the year. Victory celebrations were held in town, but Taringa that day looked no different from any other day: no celebrations at the garage, and work just going on as usual.

In November of that year I took time out for a much-needed holiday from Alf Stein’s abusive attitude as I was near to suffering a mental breakdown. This holiday took me to Applethorpe just north of Stanthorpe to a relative’s apple orchard. I caught the Wallangarra Mail out of Roma Street Station and felt an air of elation as the ten or twelve-car train roared through Taringa about 8.30 pm, past that rotten garage and into the west. I was hoping to wave to someone I knew as I stood on the platform at the end of my carriage as we went through Taringa, but no luck. I came back two weeks later, re-started at Taringa Motors, but no apprenticeship was offering. Alf was just using me as cheap labour, and he was under-paying me for 5½ to 6 days a week (£1 instead of 25 shillings). So just after Christmas, following a rather loud argument over some minor thing, I told him I was leaving, with the customary weeks’ notice.

Another holiday ensued down at the Surfers Paradise seaside house. These were the times when Mum gave it a good cleaning, after the Christmas rentals. I took the push bike down and rode the length of the coast, including a visit to the wreck of the SS Tyalgum stranded on Flagstaff (Duranbah) Beach near Point Danger.

As the war wound down all the war material suddenly became obsolete (but not for long – remember Korea). All the aircraft at Archerfield were either dismantled, or towed along the roads with their wings off to the wharves at Hamilton where they were loaded on barges, taken out to sea and dumped overboard, some in brand new condition. Some that were suitable for private work were on-sold, such as Catalina flying boats to Barrier Reef Airways. I flew in one from Brisbane to Gladstone at Christmas 1949.
The new job

In March 1946, after all this holidaying stuff was over, I needed money to pursue my interests – photography being one. Having always had a leaning towards woodwork as a kid, I approached the father of one of my mates, building contractor Mr BH Stevens or Bert Stevens, or just plain Bertie, with a view to an apprenticeship. Without much hesitation he accepted my challenge and in March 1946 I started in the building trade.

Stevens’s jobs at that time were all dwellings. My first site was a vacant block of land in Ward Street, Indooroopilly, on a short gravel dead-end road off Essex Street. It didn’t take long to find out what the building trade was all about as one of my first jobs was to help dig stump holes for the concrete posts. There were weatherboards on the outside, which meant scaffolding and the start of a new era of climbing and clambering over timbers. But the job was clean and I had no more verbal abuse from that other fellow.

BH Stevens didn’t work on the job but controlled the three or four gangs he had working for him – each gang being two carpenters and an apprentice. I was allotted to two old carpenters, Norm McCaskie and Bill Woods, two great guys. What a difference this was. BH would visit us a couple of times a day. He drove a 1929 dickey-seat Dodge which had been converted into a utility and which the men called the Brown Bomber. After work I went home on my push bike, clean.

Start and knock-off times were on the ball, and there seemed to be no hurry, much to the anguish of Bertie. I was apprenticed in June of that year (1946) and went on to build houses all over Taringa, Indooroopilly, Toowong, Ironside, and over in the Graceville area. I can still go round and see many of these 50-year-old homes still standing, although their ranks are thinning as they give way to unit development.

By the time I worked on Rev Sinclair’s home in Heroes Avenue I had changed gangs. I was now with Harry Mason (son of a prominent city building contractor, and someone I found to be a distant relative), and an Irishman, Syd Moore who were again a great couple of guys. I finished my apprenticeship, bought a motorcycle (500 Matchless) and was promptly made a Foreman.

I now controlled a gang, and my first job was in charge of a dwelling in Glenwood Street (57), Chelmer where I also bought a block of land. I ended up building about eight houses in Glenwood Street. Most of them are still there although there is a push to shift them and replace them with bigger more elegant homes.
As time went on I was building foreman on two of Bert Stevens’s own private ‘mansions’ – one in Ryans Road, St Lucia, the other above the boat harbour at Manly for his old age. (He had previously lived in York Street, Indooroopilly). I always thought it an honour to be given this task, with a lot of fine cabinet work and finishings in them. This was quite something from the man I went to work for as a raw recruit. I had a lifetime association with the family, continuing with his son Ray.

In 2003 I may have poured my last stump, at Rosewood Railway Museum. For a timber shed, setting the eight or so boxes, pouring the stumps, hand-cutting tons of hardwood for the frame, and nailing down miles of flooring, while roofers cut down the asbestos cement sheeting above our heads. We lined the place with fibro and Masonite; did the finishings, built the kitchen cupboards and steps.

So this was the Taringa and surrounding area that I knew as a kid and teen, roughly between 1935 and 1950 or so when I grew from age five to about twenty years. Early on I walked to most places, and then I got a scooter for my birthday. I bought a push bike at 14 which gave me greater range, even riding down to Coolangatta for long weekends. I got my car licence at 16 and if I asked I could borrow Dad’s Ford V8. Then in 1950 I bought a brand new Matchless motor cycle for £240.10.0. I had never even been on a motor bike and I had to read the instruction book to find out how to ride the thing. After that, Australia was my domain.