

Transcript of Interview

with

Thomas (Tommy) Griffiths

Recorded on

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Interviewed by: **Barbara Reid**

Of the

Capel Oral History Group

Ron Maidment Archives

Shire of Capel

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Laura Hendrick Library Officer Archives Shire of Capel.

[Interviewer name if more than one person or just the Question if one interviewer]

26th December 1910

And where were you born?

Wales in England, Llanfairfechan, I think the name is

And what was your father's full name?

Thomas Griffiths

And your mother's full name?

Helen Mary Littlewood

So, did they, they were born in Wales were they?

No, mum was born in Lancashire, Warrington.

And when did you come out to Australia?

Must be 1911 I think.

So, have you got any brothers and sisters?

One sister.

And what's her name?

Rhoda

And is she married?

Her husband's dead, but she's 3 years and 5 months older than me and she lives in Forrest Avenue in Bunbury.

So, what's her married name now?

Little.

Rhoda Little

Yes

So, when was she born?

3 years and 5 months before me.

Alright then.

See I never hardly ever seen inside a school, I'm not very good at education or nothing.

So, when was your father born?

I wouldn't have a clue.

Do you know when he died? Approximately what year?

No.

Where is he buried?

Boyanup.

At the Boyanup cemetery?

Yeah

And your mother?

At the Boyanup cemetery.

So, when you came to Australia, did you come straight to Boyanup?

No, Bassendean which was West Guilford then.

Do you know why you went to Bassendean?

Because dad's younger sister lived there.

And then where did you move from Bassendean?

To Abergeldie [farm], Thomson's Brook on the Eastman's property.

And what did you do there?

Looked after their farm for six years. Then we moved to Boyanup.

I see, what did your father do at Boyanup?

Well actually our dad come to Australia he was on loan from the English Government to the West Australian Government to work on Wooroloo Sanitorium.

As what?

A builder, he was a master builder and after that was completed, I'm pretty sure, he went to Nash Street in Perth for Millers and he helped build seven pearling luggers for Broome. Then the war broke out I think then, and then he was taken to Blackboy Hill to build officers quarters. He was actually in the army but never went away like, he was commandeered for building officer's quarters.

So, what did he do when he came to Boyanup?

Settled here, and we built houses here as far as Bridgetown and Perth.

So, he was a builder when he came to Boyanup?

Yeah, yeah, I did 24 years building with him.

So, you've been in Boyanup since 19?

25th May 1925.

And could you please tell me a little bit about some of the early Boyanup families?

Perhaps we could start, which family would you like to start with first?

Well A J Paynes on the corner as we called it. Arnold Payne. It was rather funny, but don't get me wrong, I'm not holding this against anybody, but

it was rather humorous. As we came with a wagon and 4 horses and dad was riding my pony Bonnie. Driving our 7 cows and one or two calves. And as we passed they were milking in the evening, and Snowy the son, which was a bosom cobbler of mum and dads and mine, we used to go duck shooting together. He said "Ohh, get a look at this", he said. "Here come the poms" and as we drove by I heard him say "and I give em six months". Well, it's been a long six months hasn't it. But don't think I hold that against anybody, no. It was rather humorous actually. Then, the next people we got to know was the Reillys which was terrific people too, old Ned he was a wonderful blacksmith.

And so, who was Ned's wife?

Oh gosh, Sarah was A J Payne's wife's name. No, you got me there.

So where did the, where did the Reilly's live?

In Thomas St, oh hang on no. It's that street that goes down by the railway station.

So, what did they do?

They had cows and had a little vineyard there and there was quite a family of them. There was Jack, Joe, one that married the school teacher, she was a lovely person. Ted Reilly and then there was three girls, as I can think of, and then Clem and Tom Reilly, it was quite a family of them. And Huey Reilly was very good. He was a big benchman at East Kirup Mill when it was going and he was absolutely unreal he was, Huey Reilly, he's a very good footballer too.

Is he still alive?

No, no, no.

So, anything more about the Reillys?

No, ohh I can't think of anything, just off hand.

Now what about the Trigwells?

Yeah there was Ted Trigwell and Freddie Trigwell.

Were they brothers?

I'm not quite sure on that, but they could have been.

See, there was the Trigwell Estate wasn't there?

Yes

Which was quite a bit. And that was broken up?

Yeah, well, that from where Mr. Peacock lives right through to the Boundary Rd was all Trigwell Estate in the early days, right up to the Smiths. There was Ted Smith, Frank Smith and Billy Smith all lived on the corner up there.

What road was that, is that the corner of where?

The highway to Donnybrook.

And Trigwell Rd?

Yeah.

I see.

This Trigwell Road over here. They were terrific people the Trigwells. Ah and there was Arthur Trigwell, yeah, I think he was a brother to Ted and I think Fred might have been a cousin, but I'm not that sure.

So, they all farmed, did they?

Ohh yeah, yeah.

What sort of farming?

Oh, beg your pardon?

What sort of farming?

Oh, Ted use to go in for quite a few sheep at one stage. Then they had a dairy, and they got mastitis bad and they went back on to sheep. And Ted was a great one for trapping dingoes and that. I put my foot in one of his dingo traps when I was out rooing once, yeah. It frightened the hell out of me.

So, so that was quite a, a good money spinner, was it?

Ohh, yeah, yeah.

Rabbit, sheep. Rabbit trapping?

Dingo trapping you got quite a bonus for dingoes, they used to be bad out here one time.

Were they?

Oh yeah, yeah.

See, they're becoming a nuisance again down the Franklin River at a friend's, where I go and stay, at the back of Rocky Gully. They've shot two the other day down there, marauding the sheep. See they're coming in from the South Coast. See the APB, they wouldn't like you to mention this, but they let.

You're back on tape, yeah.

So perhaps you could tell me while we're talking about wildlife, some of the wildlife that was around when you first came to Boyanup, you used to hunt?

Yes, I can. From here, from the corner of our back block out here to Bunbury, there was only three small blocks fenced off that was Lake Wongligup?. Uh oh, isn't it funny how names go to your mind. Queelup, Darradup, Kalimup.?

Where are all these?

Out the back there they were just swamped off and fenced off for potato swamps. And you wouldn't see one kangaroo for me, at the Bunbury I use to ride through with my horses see. It's not far through to Bunbury directly, and, but there was hundreds of brush and the little grey brush. And then the foxes came and they gradually dwindled out and dwindled out, and now it's alive with roos. See everything that was, see it was only three properties as I say, was fenced off and now it's all fenced off. People bought them and nearly every property that's been sold. I've got a map here of all the land that was available because me late wife's uncle was second in command in the Lands Department, and he sent me a map coloured in all the vacant blocks, and 7/6 and 9/6 an acre was the dearest blocks there was in those days.

Perhaps we could look at that map later.

Yeah, it, it, it, I think it is up at my sons because I'm getting on and they are sort of keeping things up there instead of me losing them here. It's amazing how these, these blocks out here has developed too, have modern super and clearing and that sort of thing, but it's died out.

Sorry, what did you say?

The spud crops and that, has died out.

So, there's no. Is there any brush left?

I saw one about a month ago and I was talking to a lady out here that's bought one of the blocks. That's the third or fourth time, ownership, and she said there's one in her block and I saw it there the other night because I was, I'm a keen hunter, I still go hunting a lot.

So where, where we're talking from here, your block here, would you know the lot number Boyanup? What's the exact address here?

This here? Ah 35 and 36 and 38 and 39, is the block numbers.

And what's the street name?

Lincoln Street.

When we came here, there wasn't one house to be seen. You couldn't see a light anywhere. It was all bush that bush over the road there was a reserve for the racecourse,

Was it?

Mmm and then it was abandoned when they upgraded Bunbury and, and then it was let out for subdivision.

So, this house here that we're in, was this, who was this built by?

Of that I wouldn't know. It's a very old place.

It wasn't built by your father?

Oh no, no that one up there was, dad and I. That well there that's at the back was dug in 1899, 1900 and 1901, the three years that the Boar War was on. Now the Abresome brothers had this then, and each went to the Boar War for 12 months. Well when then they started to dig they hit a big rock and they had to shift over and go down. Well, they had to be 1 down the hole, one on there and one up on top. So that's how it took three years to dig it.

They must have been pretty old family.

Oh, gee yeah.

What were their names again?

Abresome brothers.

Abresome?

Abresome

Abresome with an m?

Brothers.

Ohh so do you know much about them?

Not a thing. Not a thing. Not a thing. See, this was taken up very early. The old slab house was up on yonder bank up there.

What slab house was that? What slab house was that? Who did that belong to?

Yeah, I think the Abresome brothers put it up.

Is it there now?

No, no.

So next to the, the Gardiners. Do you know anything about the Gardiners?

Oh, yeah, yeah, very much so. They were terrific people. Their old Fred Gardiner, he uh, he uh never wrote a check out that, his daughter used to write the cheque out and he used to put a cross on it, because he never went to school, he used to put a funny sort of a cross, that was his signature.

So, where did Fred? Where did Fred Gardiner live?

Over the river. Where that big green house new green house is now. He had a lovely orchard there, a very good orchard there. Then a block down the plains. And he had a fair family, there was Claude, Ilma, Polly, Mate, and Dump.

Who?

Mate and Dump

Myrtle her name was used to call her Dump, still do.

Oh, I see.

So how did she get that nickname?

How did she get it? Because she was fairly plump, you see? And she got that at school. See I never went to school here.

So, what was his? Wife's name.

Rose.

You don't know what family she came from?

Of yes, she was a Gardiner before she was married. She was a Gardiner and married a Gardiner.

Any relation? Were they cousins?

Oh, not that I know of. Not that I know of.

Were there any other Gardiners around Boyanup?

No, no only the son was settled and here you see.

So, what, what Mate Gardiner? Arnold Gardiner?

Yeah, well, he's just died.

Who, who, how was he related to this Mr Gardiner?

His son?

It was his son?

Yeah, second son.

Now the, the Ducses.

Well they er, see they came out here many years ago and they settled over here at Bbidecud and its still called Bbidecud and they had the biggest vineyard in the state at one time, 129 acres. I think it was.

So, it was still going when you came here, the winery was still going?

Ohh yeah, I used to go there every year and work for John's the Excise Officer sealing vats and to stop anybody siphoning out. Yeah, it was quite a complicated thing that they all had the crown seals on them, all the vats and that. Yeah.

How do you mean to stop people from siphoning?

Siphoning out, you know, few bottles for them self and that, see, they used to make their own spirit there, you see, and it had to be very rigidly distilled out to how much spirit went in this vat and that vat. I used to plaster the cement vats about every second year and wax them with bee's wax to seal them off.

What was that on the outside?

Inside.

Oh, on the inside?

Yeah, it used to be funny. They'd be empty, and it always seemed to come when the weather was hot, about March, and you'd go inside and the fumes would make you that drunk, your knees used to buckle. It used to be funny. It was very humorous, actually? I'm a great one to see the funny side of things too, there's no dull moments with me.

So, there was a lot of people there working for Jim.

Ohh yes, they, there was the Cooper was uh Jack Rudler and Eddie Kilpatrick worked there. Harry Trigwell, that's another Trigwell I forgot he worked there, and Bill, no Ted Tilbury. Sing Wilson, Les Wilson that was Sing was his nickname I don't know how he got that. But and then at the grape picking time there's quite a few there. Yeah, they were great days, we used to have a lot of fun.

And, and what sort of wine was?

Ohh, very good. I'll always remember Basil Duce was a very strict type of a man and he talked very sharp. He used to sort of frighten you a bit. "Are you going to talk?" You know, just like that, and but, oh, what a wonderful man he was.

Anyhow our dad went there to do a job and he said you better come down Tom, he said, and taste a drop of the original port that was first made here. There's about 36 gallons left in it.

And I can remember it as well as yesterday. There's this big glass, he didn't believe in washing the glass as they, they stayed purple, you know, from the stain. And he poured dad out quite a noggin out of this and dad by gum lad he says, that is something he said, it's just like mother's milk, he said. Yeah, he'd only give me a sip, though.

Did they?

Yeah.

So how old were you then?

Oh about 15 or 16.

So, you, did you ever go to the winery and help cutting the vines?

Picking grapes.

Or picking grapes?

Yeah. I mean, if I wasn't busy with John's I used too, but I'd have to put new lids on and off.

So, who was Johns again? This was a Mr. Johns, was he? What was his full name?

I don't know his name. He come from Perth somewhere. He was an Excise Officer.

So, he just used to come once a year or?

Once a year, as far as I know, but he could have come several times, you know, just checking up on wine.

I'll never forget one-time Basil said "Tommy, come here". And they just took the top out of the Hogshead 66 gallon. "Get a look in there" he says, and right from about that far off the bottom there was pigs. Some was through that far, some that far, some nearly through.

And it was the Guards on the railway when he had the winery, wine saloon up at Manjimup, used to have a giblet and bore a hole in, then tap a belly full of wine out, then put a pig in and rub it over.

"What's this" he said "a wine barrel or a bloody apparat"? he says.

I'll never forget that. Yeah, you see, you see some funny things go on. Yeah but gee they are marvelous people. See Gordon Duce, he was a brother, he lived on the farm next door, he mainly went in for sheep and that.

So, they just didn't have the wine, they used to do other things as well?

Yeah, but Basil had, he was definitely all wine.

Would that have been the biggest industry in the area at the time?

Yes, it would have been. Oh, they lived up.

Now we're talking about the Emmett's now.

What was his name? you have on tape his name.

What was his name again?

Lance Emmett and he married a Scott. His wife was a Scott.

What was her first name?

Oh, gee I don't know.

So where did they live?

Right up North Boyanup. Right opposite Oh, what's the name of the? They've got a big dairy up there, yeah. Arthur Green, yeah Arthur Green opposite Arthur Greens.

Where he lives now.

Oh, dead years ago, both of them.

So, what did they?

They were dairy.

So, did they have a big farm?

No, not a very big one. They had quite a bit of orchard too with the dairy.

I'm sorry they had what?

A bit of orchard with the dairy.

Yeah, very funny thing. I'll always remember that, Lance telling me about it, he had a crook neck.

And he was plowing under some more orchards, and had huge apricot trees, and he thought he was underneath, he'd come up to his chin, hit his head and chinked his neck. Twenty-two years later, he was ploughing again and he did exactly the same and his neck went back and he'd suffered that 22 years.

I remember him telling because I did the same and going out through a door under the shed here and bumped my neck and I'll I forget who I went to oh he's dead too. He was a chiropractor in Bunbury. He was good too.

Ohh so are there any Emmett's still living in in Boyanup?

No, Lance Emmet had a daughter, she lives in Bunbury. She is a very good lady, she, I used to play for dances with her, she now plays for elderly people in these homes.

Oh, what's her name?

Beautiful, Lancille Emmett.

That's her name.

Yeah, Lancille Emmett, I call her Lancey. But oh, she's wonderful lass with community affairs.

So, did you used to play for some of the dancers in Boyanup?

Ohh Gee yeah, I started when I, I played for 54 years without a break.

What did you play?

First of all, I used to play the trumpet and then I got meningitis bad 40 odd years ago, I nearly died, and I switched off onto the sax because it was easier. I still play now at home on my own like, but when the wife died 20, just over 20 years ago, I sort of lost interest in going out because she always went with me.

So, what did you play at all the dances at Boyanup did you?

Well, not all of them, but played from Wickepin to Bridgetown, round Perth.

With a band or?

Yeah,

What was the name of the band?

I played with the Harry Blunt once.

The girl lived here, Suzanne Strand. She was a Miss Australia Quest and she won, she won it for around the southwest, and I went up in the evening to see it. It was held at the Ascot racecourse. So, it was quite a night that place.

So, who were the other people that used to play with you in the bands here in Boyanup.

Well, I couldn't name them all, cause, Gladys Robble was one, Winnie Smith another. Willy er, Winnie Wileman, Pat Paletti in Collie. Ted James, the greatest pianist I ever played with.

Ah from Capel?

Yeah ah, he was brilliant.

Was he?

Ah, he was absolutely brilliant. I would have played with some of the top pianists in the state, without a doubt that Ted James would have been the top of the lot. He was so easy to play with. He he'd say. "Which of these just keyed for you"? If you'd mention it, he'd do it. He could stand at the piano with his hands behind his back and play for a dance. He was unreal.

End of Tape 1 Side 1

This tape 1 side 2 with an interview with Tommy Griffiths on the 21st June, 1994.

We're discussing the old Boyanup residents and the different families around.

Now what did you know about the Smiths?

Quite a lot, there was George Smith, lived here, he married Maggie Smith.

Where's here, where did he live?

Where Roy Casey lives today, up here. He was a terrific man and his wife, she was one of the wittiest women I have ever known or people. You was, always had to think twice before you said something.

Now I always remember I was fixing their milking machine engine up and Ray Prowse came with three head of cows to replace some as they'd sold. And she said "Oh, Ray you will have to stop for lunch", "Oh, I haven't got time woman". "You're stopping for lunch" she said. Well it was about an hour off lunch and we were fixing up the milk machine and he was talking here. Then "Cooee. Lunch". And when he took his hat off he was bald as a badger. "Oh my' she said "Ray you have got bald" "Oh look woman" he said "You can't have hair and brains too" and she said "oh I thought it was different to that" she said "I thought an empty barn needed no thatch".

She was that quick, you had to be, well you had to be right on your wits end. She'd have you every time.

Like her son, I went up there to pick up some little pigs.

So, what's his name?

Eric, Smutty, we used to call him, that was his school nickname. I went up to fix these pigs, and he saw me coming and his mum was coming out with a case of fruit. "Give me that mum, I'm stronger than you" she said "yes I know you are, you haven't had a bath for a month" see you had to

be so careful with her, oh but what a gorgeous woman, yeah, she had a heart of gold.

So, what did um, did she um, what did she do in the community? Was she active in the community?

She was a school teacher in her young days.

Did she come to Boyanup to teach?

That I wouldn't be sure of, I know she taught up at North Boyanup, there use to be a little school up there.

Was that before she was married or after?

Before.

So, anymore on the Smiths? Who else was in the family?

Well Ted, well see Ted and Frank and Billy Billy Smith, he was a joker.

So, these were all brothers?

Yeah.

So, who was the mother and father when you first remember them? The names of the old Mr and Mrs Smith?

I got a notion the Whistlers from Boyup Brook was a relation of theirs somewhere. See one girl Ethel she married Joe Ecclestone.

This is a daughter of old Mr and Mrs Smith?

The original Mr and Mrs Smith.

You don't know their first names?

No, no, no.

So, who were the children, can you remember all the children?

Of the old Mr and Mrs Smith.

There was George, Billy Billy, Frank.

What was Billy Billy's first, proper name?

William, Billy Billy he used to repeat things, Billy Billy, don't take offense at this.

No.

Frank, I mentioned him, and there was only one girl, I think that was Ethel, or there might have been two it might have been Mrs Whistler, but to my knowledge there was only the one girl Ethel, and she had three children. Wait a minute, did she? No, she had two boys, Kevin and Ernie and her name was Ethel.

Ah yes, your father had a nick name, didn't he?

Yeah, he had a nick name. Snowy Payne the one that said we'd give him six months called him flipping Tom, because everything he said was that flipping thing. Yeah that's how he got flipping Tom.

So, have you got a nick name, that you know about?

No, I don't think I have. I doubt it.

Don't seem to go into nick names as much now do we?

No

Don't seem to.

See my son's nick name is Spatch, and I don't know how the hell I started him off on that. Its like Hugh Kilpatrick, Digger was his nickname and he still goes by the name of Digger, Hugh Digger Kilpatrick, funny isn't it.

We were a bit remiss there we didn't get your wife's full name?

Elsie Hall, from Capel.

Ah yes, she was a Hall from Capel.

Yes, she lived on the junction of the brook on the river, I can't think of the name of the road.

And how did you meet her?

Funny thing, how I met her was we were building new the stockyards, right alongside the pub at Capel. Percy Payne, that was Armer Payne's eldest son, we were building them there. This girl used to go by with her mate and I used to start talking to them you see and dad used to say "come on let's get on with your work" very strict dad was, very strict. He said "you seem to be doing a lot of talking to that girl". "Oh yeah", I said just like that. Anyhow we were going home one night and she had a crook heel, she was limping and dad said "you better pull up and pick up this girl and drop her off", "do you know where she lives"? I said "no I don't". He said "well you better pick her up". So, we picked her up took her round home. He didn't think he was playing right into my hands, he give me hell over that all me life and after. Although they were great mates Elsie and dad.

So, you got married at Capel, did you? Where did you get married?

In Bunbury.

And what children have you got? And do you know when they were born?

Two, yeah they were both. One was.

Alan was born at the Stirling hospital in Bunbury and Nola was born at St Johns I think.

And Alan has he got one L or two L's in his name? Alan your son.

Alan Thomas.

So how old is he?

53 I think.

And your daughter?

There is 12 years almost to the day one was born on the 4th July and the other the 14th 12 years between them.

So, what's your daughters full name?

Nola May, that was who you met here.

Yes, yes, so your son, he's married, is he?

Yeah.

Who did he marry?

June White from Boyanup.

Ah yes, and is your daughter married?

She was, her husband's dead.

Oh, I see. So, who did she marry then?

Henson.

From Boyanup?

No, he was from Bunbury.

Has she got any children?

One, one little boy.

So now the Ecclestone's.

Yeah

What do you know about the Ecclestone's?

Quite a lot, we used to go duck shooting, fishing and all that with them. Joe Ecclestone use to stutter a fair bit, but he was a very, very, humorous man, he could always see the funny side of things. A beaut joker.

Then there was Mick Ecclestone that lived next door.

Next door to who?

The original Jim Ecclestone, beardy Ecclestone we used to call him, cause he had a beautiful beard.

So that's Jim Ecclestone?

Yeah

So, he was one of the oldest?

He lived where ur.

Excuse me for interrupting where the ur lawn place is.

Oh, the Instant Lawn.

Instant lawn factory, lived right there that's where the house was.

This is Jim Ecclestone?

Yeah.

Is he the oldest Ecclestone that you remember?

Yes.

Do you remember his wife's name?

Well I can't honestly remember him having a wife, his daughter was looking after him when I first knew him.

Oh yes, so, who was his daughter?

Oh god I can't think of her name? No.

There is still some Ecclestone's around isn't there, in Boyanup?

What was that?

There is still some Eccleston's around Boyanup isn't there?

Ecclestone's, no, no, Ernie is retired at Augusta, Kevin lives at, by the Elgin hall there, one of the Scott boys, yeah Peggy's his wife's name.

So, these are the children of Jim Ecclestone your talking about, are they?

No. I can't remember, he died when we first come here. I can't remember much about him, but I remember the daughter, I think she had a son and he was Mick Ecclestone, Michael Ecclestone. That's about as much as I can tell you about the Jim Ecclestone's.

And now the Hurst's?

Oh well now, old Bill Hurst.

Yes, was that William? Was that his?

Yeah, ah he was a marvellous man, he had the butchers shop here for years.

So, whereabouts was the butcher's shop?

Along side the hotel where it is now.

Oh, it's in the same spot as what it is now?

Yeah exactly the same spot.

The same little building?

Beg your pardon?

Is it the same little building, as is there now?

Yeah, yes.

And did they have any other land, where did they live?

Oh yes, they had land out on the plains, where Gordon has finished up living, dairying out there. And they had land on the other side of the river, which they've still got and they've got land along side me up here. And they did own this over the other side here but they sold that in ("George"!) up to about 9-acre blocks, they've all been sold.

Oh yes.

So, who were the Hurst's, could you tell me who they were in the early days? Who were the original Mr & Mrs Hurst that you know of?

Bill and Bella, see his first wife died and he married, I think she went there house keeping Bella, she was a nice old lady. Then there was the Abe Hurst who lived next door to them.

Who was that?

Abraham Hurst.

Oh Yes.

And Dick Hurst, he lived a little further on and Harry Hurst, he used to have the quarry here years ago, for the railway, for the gravel.

And so, are they all brothers and sisters?

Yeah, they were brothers, yeah. I got an idea there was only one girl.

I don't think to my knowledge there was any children of the Bill Hurst by the second wife Bella. I think they were by the.

So, who was the first wife?

His wife died at childbirth of one of the children.

So, what was his first wife's name?

Don't know, I don't know, I never remembered her.

Then there was the Raymond Payne's, a brother to Arnold Payne, he was an orchardist at Gwindinup. His son Alan, he was a policeman, and the other son, no Alan was the farmer, and what was Bev Payne's fathers name, ah, it's gone.

Are you talking about Bev Payne that married Norm Walker?

Yeah, she's a terrific person and so is Norm, there very prominent now he's retired in golf in Donnybrook, he wins quite a lot of prizes.

So how old would they be now?

He had a bad illness and it set him back a bit but I really wouldn't be able to tell you. Bev's sister Rhona...

Are they in there 60's, 70's, or 80's?

Oh gosh no, they'd be close on their 60's I would say or maybe 60.

Only youngens then?

Yeah, only youngens, alongside me anyhow.

What about the Kilpatrick's? We're there Kilpatrick's here when you came here?

Yeah, the one lived up here, Eddie.

Up here?

Oh yeah, he lives in Scott Road I think it's called. The same road as Bob McGhie lives in.

Is this Boyanup or?

Yeah Boyanup, yeah just over here.

And Jim Kilpatrick lived over on the river over here, that's Hugh Kilpatrick's dad. He was in, very high up in the ambulance in WWI in the

medical side. He used to cure you for snake bites and all manner, he did. He was quite a wizard, quite a wizard.

This Jim Kilpatrick, did you ever know him?

The original Jim Kilpatrick?

Yeah.

A bosom friend of his, he married a girl Wilson, Ella Wilson.

So, could you tell us a little bit more about the way he used to treat snake bites?

Beg pardon?

Can you tell me a little bit more about the way he used to treat snake bites?

No, I don't really know, but I know there was two people to my knowledge that was bit by a dugite, and whatever he did I don't know but he fixed them. Yeah, and if you had a bad cut on your hand, he was more or less our local doctor, he would sew you up and you didn't know you were touched. Gee he was, he was very clever.

So how long did he do this for?

Many years to my knowledge, he had a beautiful orchard over here on the river. Beautiful orchard.

Whereabouts was that?

Directly, you know where the little reserve is over here the A class reserve.

On what road?

North Boyanup Road, he owned both sides of the road, very nice place.

So what sort of an orchard did he have?

Mixed, a bit of everything.

So, his children?

He only had two, Mary and Hugh.

And Hugh Kilpatrick?

Yeah, I don't know, Mary married someone up in Perth and went to live in Perth, she was a very nice girl too, very nice.

So, Hugh, is that the Hugh Kilpatrick that donated the money for the Boyanup Hall?

That's him.

Perhaps you could tell me a bit more about him?

Well he was absolutely a wizard on snakes, he used to, if you'd seen a snake he'd just pull it out by the tail, swing it round and crack it, and he used to unnerve you, you know, I used to stand well back. He was a very keen hunter and a good shot too, yeah very good.

Now he didn't, did he marry?

No.

And where did he live?

With his mother.

Over the river?

Yeah

And so, what was the story about the hall, was he was pretty community minded was he?

He used to. Yes, he was, he used to do funny sort of cycling events, such as riding all the way around Collie and that to try and beat his own

records, to collect money for charity and that sort of thing. The wife was mixed up with him with this sort of thing.

Your wife?

Yes, and she used to, they'd have afternoon tea when he'd get back and all that sort of thing. And he set off once and walked straight across here to the sea and brought a pocket full of shell grit back with him to prove that he'd been to the beach. Well he wouldn't get it anywhere else. Yeah, he was a terrific joker. The best marron catcher I ever seen, he was the best marron catcher ever I've seen.

Where did he used to catch the marron?

In the river here, I used to go with him a lot.

Is, there many marrons there now?

Aw yeah, yeah, I was never much of marron bloke myself, I'm a fishing fanatic but Digger he loved his marroning.

Is that what they called him, Digger?

Yeah, I'd never ever called him Hugh, no Dig, Dig or Digger.

So where did that come from?

I don't know, don't know. He used to put a lot of time in up home, when we lived up there, see he died a few years ago now. And he used to put in a lot of time going shooting with me and that.

What did you go shooting?

Ducks and roos and all manner of things.

So, you knew him pretty well did you?

Oh, extra well, he used to have tea at home and all manner like that. He was a great joker Digger.

The Cain Clifton's?

Clifton's?

Yes, the Cain Clifton's who were they? Were they a different family of Clifton's?

Carl Clifton.

Oh, it might be Carl.

Carl Clifton.

Carl Clifton?

Yeah

Well who was he, who was he?

Pardon

Who was he?

Well he was the orig, the descendant of the original Clifton's that settled here in the 1800's sometime yeah. And they're related to the ur down at Busselton. There an old, a very old family the Clifton's.

So how old? Is he still alive Mr Clifton?

Oh lord no, he's been dead for many years, he married Clara, it's a funny thing, he never ever cracked hello to me as he was courting this girl, you see.

He never what?

Cracked on to me as he was courting you see, cause we used to do a lot of horse riding together, mustering up the lakes.

Oh, this Carl Clifton?

Yeah, yeah.

So how old would he be in comparison to you?

He would have been a whisker older than me now if he was still alive, he'd be older than me. I think his mother's the same age as me, I mean his wife, she's still alive, she lives up at Australind.

What's her name?

Clara.

Clara Clifton?

mmm.

Do you know Carl Clifton's father, do you know who he was?

Oh, the Layman's I was trying to think of in Busselton, they're relation to them somehow, I don't really know.

But do you know who Carl Clifton's father was?

No, no.

But this Carl Clifton, he lived in Boyanup, did he?

Yeah, up on North Boyanup Road, where Henry lives today, the son.

Where Henry Clifton lives?

Yeah

And what? Did they farm?

Yeah.

What did they farm?

Dairying. Now Henry is gone, he goes up north contract mustering a lot up round the northern parts.

This is the son?

Yeah, Henry.

So, what can you tell me more about Carl Clifton? You knew him quite well did you?

Oh yes, he was a fabulous man, great horse man and he used to breed horses, quite a lot, well Henry does now. He had a quite, there was quite a few in his family, he had some beautiful sisters of Henry's, the one I used to play, Kay, Kay she was a hairdresser in Bunbury and she married a hairdresser I think. She worked her way up quite, she had her own business and everything. She was a good pianist too.

Was she?

Very good.

Kay Clifton, she was a Kay Clifton?

Yeah, Kay in those days.

And the other elder sister she married one of the Rodwells.

So, what did Carl Clifton do most of the time?

Orchard and dairying.

So, did he go away to war?

Not that I'm aware of, no, not that I'm aware of.

So, how long ago would he have died?

Oh, a good many years ago now.

Where was he buried, do you know where he's buried?

Not here.

Not at Boyanup?

No, no. I think in Bunbury, I think.

So, his wife's still alive living at Australind?

Yeah, she lives at Australind.

I see, do you ever see her? Have you seen her recently?

Yeah, I met her about 2 years ago in front of Stirling's in Bunbury and it was a great old meet.

How I come to, see I went up on the train to a band contest in March.

What, this year?

Oh, not many years ago when they were courting you see and I said to Carl I said, "what the hell are you going to Yarloop for?" and he never cracked face or stalled at all. And this beautiful lass was there in a car to meet him you see and I said now I know why your going up there, and I used to give him hell about that. Oh, he was a beaut bloke and so was she, a lovely lady.

So, what children did they have? They've got a Henry, have they?

About five or six.

Can you remember their names?

Wraith.

Who?

Wraith.

Wraith. How do you spell that?

Don't know. Wraith and Henry. Oh gee, I don't know, there's quite a few of them, I think one died. Wraith's dead I know. I was talking to the young one the other day. I can't remember their names.

That's okay.

There's about 4 girls and 2 boys I think.

Do you know about George Clifton?

No.

But he did have a brother in Capel, I can't think, he lived in Capel.

Were they a different, are they different? Are they related?

Brother, full brothers.

Brother to Carl?

Yeah.

I see.

I can't think of his name, but he lived.

Who are you trying to think of his name?

Beg pardon? That could be George.

You only knew Carl had one brother?

Yeah, yes.

So, it could have been George?

Yes.

You know anything about this George Clifton?

No, not a thing.

So, do you know any Chinese family farming in Boyanup?

Yes. Katie Bocklesby.

Do you know how to spell that? Brocklesby?

San Quai, now let me get this straight. The old, old gentleman, Chinese, he had a long beard, you know right down here, they lived straight across over here in the mud hut, mud house. In the old days they used to have the slats and then they filled it with mud and whitewashed it, dirt floors.

So, whereabouts would this be, you don't know what lot number or what street they're on?

No, I don't know what lot number. The Collins have got the block now it was on Bryce Road.

And was it a big block?

No, it wasn't much, they. I don't really know what they did really for a living, but she would have to be one of the most gorgeous ladies I've ever seen. The most beautiful looking person.

Was she full blood Chinese?

See there was old man Brocklesby then Herbie San Quai was a half brother to Katie Brocklesby and she was one of the greatest pianists I've ever heard.

I was coming in from hunting there once, over the back, and I could hear this beautiful music, and the old man was pottering around in his garden. And I couldn't help, cause music mad I am, it will never leave me. And he said "boy" he said "come in" he had a sort of a squeaky voice "boy" he said "come in and listen you seem interested" and he brought Katie out and I nearly gasped she was that beautiful to look at and dressed to perfection.

This is tape 2 of and interview with Tom Griffith at his home at Boyanup on the 21st June, 1994.

We were talking about the Chinese family that lived down the road here from you.

Yeah.

Now we'll just get all the names straight first, who was the old gentleman's name, the father? The old Chinese man with the long beard?

I don't know his name, but Herbie was a son, but he was San Quai. I think the old man was San Quai too. But Katie was a half, he must have been married twice you see cause she was a half sister to Herbie.

So, was the wife a Chinese lady?

I never seen her she was dead.

So, you didn't see either of the wives?

No, no.

And what did they exist on, did they have an orchard did they?

No, no. What they lived on was a mystery to everybody, they lived very well. And used to go in, Herbie used to go in every now and again with his big suitcase on the nine o'clock on a Saturday morning the passenger train into Bunbury. Then it used to come out about nine o'clock at night and he'd have it full of stores. But Katie, they had a beautiful horse and cart, horse and sulky and she used to go away in that quite a bit.

But talking about this pianist, I heard this beautiful music, aw and it was good.

This is Katie?

And the old man was pottering around in this beautiful garden and he said "don't stand there boy, come closer and listen" so I had to go up and she come out and I had to go and have a cup of tea with her. And she had

the most beautiful lace doilies and all that, and lace tablecloth. And the floor was polished like glass with Black Boy gum, it was anthill, powdered with anthills and water then smoothed off like cement which it was, and polished with this Blackboy, you'd swear it was a slap of wood. Like mahogany it was, it was that dark.

Anyhow, she got on to the piano again and it was just flowing out of her fingers you know, absolutely magic. I happened to look down in the corner of the piano and there was this little round hole about that big and this big Dugite come out.

Oh, my goodness!

My eyes were sticking right out here, and she said "don't worry boy, he's my pet" she said.

Oh!

And as she played, and as she played a waltz tune and if she played something quick.

The Dugite, used to dance?

It was out of the hole about that big, he was a whopper too, about that big.

How far out of the hole was he, how many inches?

About that far, about a foot.

Yes.

And as soon as she stopped playing he disappeared.

Did she ever feed him?

I would say she would have done. He was a pet. And she used to, I was there aw several times after, and she'd have a walking stick heading him

off like. She'd head off to his hole and down he'd go. But she took no notice of him and neither did the old chap or Herbie.

So, did either of the children marry? Herbie or Katie marry?

They left here as, well just like a shower going over and I never heard or seen of them after.

About what, how long ago did they leave?

Oh, gee years and years ago, it would be in the late 20's or very early 30's.

So, before WWI?

Oh yes, yes.

So, did you ever hear any stories of why they came here?

No, no, no.

Do you know of anyone that knew them well?

No, I think I would have been their greatest friends here, bar Herbie used to go over and help Jack Scott over here. I always remember look I laughed I nearly cried. He was over there and he was talking about a bad back. "Ah Jack" he says "have I got a bad back" he says.

Whose saying this?

Herbie San Quai, he said "are you going to Bunbury on Saturday morning Jack?" and Jack said "yes, why?" he said "get me a bottle of Sloan's liniment." He gets this bottle of Sloan's liniment and I was over playing with Jack Scott's children then.

There's one, she probably would remember it, Georgina Bourne, over here at Stratham, I think she still lives over there, she runs the Christmas do down here, the Christmas party for elderly people.

Anyhow I was over there, and he sits on a box and Jack was rubbing his back with it. "Oh Jack" he said "put some more on," he said "put some more on" well Jack poured a good lot in his hand and put it on, cause it ran down the crease of his back right, he leapt in the air about six feet run round the yard, where all the kids there were roaring with laughing and he sat in. Do you remember the old-fashioned dolly tubs with the handle at both ends, he sat in that in the water to cool it off. I'll never forget that, yeah that was my experience with Sloan's liniment, she must have been powerful.

So, you used to visit the Chinese family?

Yep, Herbie used to go over and help Jack clear.

Clear the land?

Yeah, grubbing and that sort of thing.

So, the house they lived in, that was fairly ordinary on the outside was it, but very nice inside?

It was just ordinary mud and painted over with whitewash, it was quite nice outside and a thatch roof it had, a rush roof and it never leaked, no, beautifully done.

So, who would have done that? Who would have put the thatch roof on?

The old man the old what's his name San Quai.

So, did they have a little picket fence around the house or?

No, no, no, no they had a beautiful garden round it though.

What with flowers?

But what their income was I'll never know, but they always seemed to have money.

So, what did they grow in the garden?

Vegetables for themselves, self-supporting.

They didn't sell vegetables?

No

To anybody else?

No, no, no.

See they weren't here long before they went and I didn't get to know anything about their income or anything.

So, how many years do you think they would have been in Boyanup?

They were here when we came here, I wouldn't know.

You wouldn't know whether they were here for 10 or 20 years?

No, I wouldn't know.

Don't know?

No.

Were there any other Chinese families around any Chinese market gardeners?

No, only over at Muddy lake.

There's a name here James Brittain, did you know a James Brittain?

I knew quite a few Brittain's in Bunbury, but I don't remember Brittain's in Boyanup. But, see, even now a lady called here collecting for Children's Hospital the other day and she only lives down the road here and I didn't even know she lived, been here for seven years, didn't even know.

See, these, now see, one time a day people would be in a place for their lifetime or they might have one shift. Now their going and coming all the time. It's quite different.

It is.

Perhaps you could tell me about the Simmons? The Simmons family.

Who?

The Simmonds family.

Oh, the Simmons. Oh, they were a very old, they were the originals here. The old granny Simmonds, see her husband got speared right where the factory is now.

Where the butter factory is in Boyanup?

Yeah, yeah

And what was his name?

Can't remember.

So, this was grandma Simmons husband?

Yeah, yeah.

What was the story you heard about the spearing? What did you hear?

I think they had a bit of a tiff or something and he might of wanted something the aboriginal and then. Cause they used to get a bit nasty in the early days. But I'm not running them down because I know some terrific aboriginals. Especially up north when you get way back on the Fitzroy River and that, you wouldn't get nicer people.

So, were there any aboriginals around in Boyanup in the early days or it was 1950's?

No when we came here there was none.

So, the Simmons family? Who, do you remember grandma Simmons?

Yes.

She was still alive when you came?

Oh yes, she lived opposite the hotel in that old place there.

Still there isn't it that house?

Oh yeah, yeah.

I think that's the oldest houses in Boyanup.

And Maude was one of her daughters she married Arthur Bryce over here.

Who was her daughter?

Maude was one, and she had three beautiful daughters, Ethel the eldest one I used to play for all the dances with in the early days, gee she was a good pianist.

So, what do you remember of grandma Moses? What did she look like?

Very similar to this photo of my grandmother.

We're back on tape, can you tell me what Mrs Simmons looked like, grandma Simmons?

What she looked like?

Was she tall?

No. A very short, squat lady, not fat but not tall definitely not.

So, was she doing anything around the district when you came to Boyanup?

No, she was retired in the old house and there was Tom Simmons the son, Jack Simmons, Jim Simmons and what was the other one. Jack

Simmons was the only one that were and Tom Simmons was the only ones that were married, the others were bachelors.

And what did they do?

Farming.

Where did they farm?

Oh, round Boyanup here, they had blocks here, since been sold and all that. See where the factory is today was where the house was.

What where the original, what house?

The original Simmons house.

Oh, I see so that other house?

That's how the street got called Simmons Street.

So, that other house opposite the hotel is not the first house then?

No, no.

Frank Peacock, do you know a Frank Peacock?

Awfully well.

On the Trigwell Estate?

Yeah.

Perhaps you could tell me a bit more about Frank Trigwell? Who was his father? Do you know?

Never remember, I only remember Frank and his sister, now hang on, hang on, Frank. They lived where the young Peacock lives now, but May and Frank live in town now, but Franks in hospital, he's lost all his memory and everything. They were here before we came here.

So, he farmed where? Where did he farm?

In Boyanup.

Whereabouts in Boyanup?

Boyanup West Road.

So, was he farming on part of what was the Trigwell Estate?

Yep.

He was?

Mmm.

And so, who was his wife's name?

May from Bridgetown, can't think of her surname, but May.

Did you know him fairly well?

Beg pardon.

Did you know him fairly well?

Awfully well, yeah very well, great mates.

Did you used to go off shooting together or?

No, he was never fond, he got fond of fishing, he used to go boat fishing a bit, then he gave that away, he sort of lost his interest in that sort of thing. He was very keen on any political things, politics and that, very keen on it.

What, did he participate?

No, he, his son, he's a young Liberal. He could talk on politics a lot which I can't but.

So, who was Frank's children?

Ian, two, two boys, Ian and .. he lives in Bunbury the other one. Can't think of his name.

There's another little query here, do you know anything about the clover machine, the Mahlberg clover machine?

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, the Mahlberg's they were great cobbers of my mum and dads. He was the clover king.

So, where, these people called Mahlberg's they lived in Boyanup?

Oh, yeah, yeah.

And whereabouts were the Mahlberg's?

Do you know that beautiful big house where that policeman built? It's in the corner of Cemetery Road and I call it Sesame Street but it isn't because there's a lot of little children in the street, you gotta be careful driving down there, running across the road. I can't think of the name of it, it was Thomas, no, no I can't remember.

What do you remember about the Mahlberg's?

Oh, he was a great one for clover seed, he revolutionised subterranean clover in the southwest.

What was his first name?

Andy.

Andy? Is that for Andrew?

Yeah Andrew.

And what was his wife?

I can't think of her name. They had no sons, all daughters. There was one in Holland.

What, she's gone to live in Holland?

Then there was Sylvie Kitchen, she was Sylvie Mahlberg, then there was another one. Then the twins, Hazel and Beryl and Millie and Gloria. Yeah, not bad from memory.

So, what did they do for a living?

Dairying and clover mainly.

So, how did he, what's the story, how did he get involved in this clover machine?

Well funny thing, right here in this house here, they were having tea in the next room there, Mr and Mrs Mahlberg and mum and dad and my sister and I. And dad said "Andy why don't you get one of those Clayton and Shuttleworth Hollows, they're made in England" he says. Then they got talking and talking and next thing he got on to an agent and dad said "I know how to alter them to do small seed". Anyhow he got it out here and dad and I altered it and we built I reckon 3 or 4 off the same pattern of it. Mead's had one and Reid's had one.

Mead's?

Reid's.

Yes, the first one you mentioned was Mead's?

Mead yes, yes.

How do you spell that?

M E A D

And then the Reid's had one as well did they?

Yeah, yeah, dad and I built one for them.

That would be David Reid would it?

No Mim Mead. It was the son, Frank Mead.

I'm sorry no we're talking about the Reid's.

Talking about who?

Now we're talking about the Reid's now.

Reids?

No not Dave Reid he married one of the Smith girls, oh he's on the council the son.

Mack Reid.

Yeah Mack Reid

It was really built for Mack Reid's dad, he was a lovely chap that, oh gee he was a gorgeous man.

That was David wasn't it, wasn't his name David?

No, I don't think, it may have been, it may have been you could be right.

So, you knew him?

Oh, I knew him very well, he used to come here quite a lot, especially when we were building it.

He was a bit of a builder too, wasn't he?

Oh yeah, very good to, oh yes, yes.

Do you ever know of him, this is old Mr Reid of Elgin, do you know of him ever building any boats?

Oh, excellent boat builder, excellent. He got two Red Gums from here, he used to go and pick his own Red Gums that had no gum in them, and they used to cut them into 3/8 boards. And he made these beautiful boats, you never seen anything like them, they were the most beautiful boats to row, they were equivalent to the Swarbricks down at Walpole, they were

great boat builders. But old man Reid he was unreal, he was unreal as a boat builder.

Yes, do you want to elaborate a bit more on this Mahlberg clover machine? What exactly did it do?

It took the hull off the actual seed, where before they never had a machine fine enough that would take the hull off, it used to polish the seed but it really wasn't. See you can't interfere with nature, it's a burr with 3 seeds, 2 big ones and one small one. The smaller one is nature's way if you had a bad year and it dies off, the second one comes up and if that dries up the little bloke but he's always weak, it's never a good plant but it is a way of surviving. Well that hull was put on there, for the seed to feed on when it germinated. Well taking the polish off it you had to put culture on it after, really not a good thing.

This machine?

Yeah, it did, it revolutionised the clover seed, then after that they used to pick up the burr with sheep skins on rollers. Oh, the Reid's would know all about that, your Reid's would know all about that. No good me telling you.

I don't know anything about it.

Oh.

So, getting back to this Mahlberg machine, it didn't go for very long before it was superseded by something better?

No, no it was never superseded, no, not in this area. But the seed disappeared from here to Mt Barker, Boyup Brook, Kojonup. These were great, oh hell what was the name of them, used to sell seed here at the sale, can't think of it. They got more modern machines then, but who invented them I don't know. But the original one that the Mahlberg's had was a Clayton Shuttleworth from memory, came out by boat.

And they adjusted it?

Yeah dad and me adjusted it. Dad knew what to do to adjust it.

So why was it called the Mahlberg machine then?

I don't know, don't know.

So, you didn't know anything about that, perhaps I got that wrong perhaps it was.

No, where did you get this Mahlberg machine? In the shed they used to bring all the stuff to the shed, the old clover shed, it had Mahlbergs written all across the iron roof and everything, see that's how it got the Mahlberg machine but it was a Clayton Shuttleworth.

So, is there any other families in Boyanup, the old Boyanup families that we haven't mentioned?

Neill's, they're a very old family here.

So, who do you know of the Neill's?

They're still farming very successfully. Billy Neill the dad, he'd be 12 months older than me.

So, how do you spell the Neill's

Oh, I don't know, see I'm not a speller. No, no. See Maxie and Colin is running the farm now.

And whereabouts?

See Billy Neill married Chrissy Leach. There's another old family in Boyanup, the Collie Leaches we haven't touch on, have you got their name down there?

No.

Haven't ya?

No.

He was a brilliant man with dogs.

Who's this? What's his name?

Old man Collie Leach.

Collie Leach?

Leach yes.

Was that his right full name? Collie?

Yeah, I don't know how you spell it, but the daughters all live here.

Who are they?

Val she married Brockie, Chrissy married Billy Neill and there's one in South Australia, one in Bunbury I was talking to her the other day and one married Billy Grieves. Then the sister lived with Billy Grieves, I always used to say "which is your wife Billy" you know, I used to tease him, cause they lived together you see.

That's the Leaches were talking about, aren't we?

Yeah.

Whereabouts did they farm?

On, what's, that no through road you'll notice it.

Oh, that's Boundary Road?

Yeah that's it, down there. Yeah, yeah.

Boundary Road, Boyanup?

Yeah, they lived down the end of that Road.

Dennis Leach still lives there doesn't he?

Yeah, well see that's no relation they weren't.

Oh, this is another Leach?

Oh no Jack Leach, was Dennis' Leaches father.

So, this is another family of Leach's altogether?

Yeah, yeah old Collie Leach yes.

Do you think it would have been spelt differently too?

I think it was. See the Leach's, Jack Leach's originated from Thompson's Brook.

Well going back to the Collie Leach then, the land I'm thinking of down Boundary Road is Jack Leach's property, so do you think we got the properties mixed up then?

Yeah, we have.

So, where did Collie Leach live?

I can't think, its Reilly Road I think, Reilly Road, but it's got a notice there no through road. It only goes to Reilly's and Collie Leach's. Well Chrissie owns it now, she bought it when it was sold up, Chrissy Leach, Chrissy Neill rather.

So, she was Chrissy Leach and she's now Chrissy Neill?

Yeah, yeah.

I see.

She's a beaut person, very nice.

So, the other Leach's, Jack Leach.

Yeah, Jack's dead.

Yes.

But I think Jack's wife she was Essie Simmonds.

She's been interviewed.

She's been interviewed, has she? She's a beaut person.

So, do you know, are they early Boyanup people? Jack Leach?

They came here after we did.

Oh, ok I see.

Mr Griffith do you know of any POW's that were here during the Second World War, was there any prisoner of war working on any of the farms in the Boyanup district?

Honestly, I can't think of any, no. There was, what was those farm girls? See one known as Clapp. What did you call them? They used to work?

Oh! Land girls.

Land ladies or

Land girls I don't know.

Yeah one married a, I just mentioned the name.

Clapp?

Clapp, yeah, down in Elgin. Eddie Clapp's wife, yes.

So, you don't know of any POW's?

No, no I don't.

This is Tape 2 side 2 an interview with Tommy Griffiths on the 21st June 1994.

You wanted to talk about the school teachers?

Yes, Mr Calvit was the first teacher here he took over from Jarman, Crawford Young was the Storekeeper. Miss Hurst was the Postmistress when we first came here. Jack Copley was the Station Master. Freddie Coombes was the Publican and then there was Gordon Kent he was a gorgeous man, he was the Ganger here and he had six navies with him. One was Woolcrott, Jim White, Digger Moore, Joe McGee there was another one.

Where did these people work?

On the gang here on the railway. See here there was restrooms and overhead bridge and everything on the railway here. It was quite a busy railway here. It was a shame the railways died away really. It used to be beaut going down to meet the passenger train coming in.

So, this was very busy when you came in, what was the year 1923 when you came here to Boyanup?

Beg a pardon?

When you came here to Boyanup in 1923?

No 25.

25?

Yeah, in 1923, when dad came to look at this place with a chap by the name of Jack Goss from the Agricultural Department, they were out the back here in the afternoon. And I'll always remember when dad left Thompson's Brook to come and look at the place, he borrowed my pony Bonnie. And I'll always remember him saying to my mum, "don't worry about any clothes and bedding or anything, I'll stop at the pub" he says. So, they were out the back here and there's a cloud of smoke goes up, that's in 1923 and that was the pub being burnt down. So, he slept under a Red Gum tree at the back of the shop, yeah, yeah, shivered to death he reckoned.

So, it was a pretty small place?

Yeah, yeah.

Did you have more than one grocery shop in Boyanup then?

No, only one.

Only one. Where was it then?

Crawford Young.

But where was it?

Where it is today, where it is today. Dad and I altered all the middle of it to open it up to make it bigger, it was only a little tiny room. Oh, they were great people. There's been quite a few changes, we've got some very nice people here now, very nice.

And, so the school?

See dad and I built the first garage here too.

But you didn't go to school when you were here?

No, no.

Bit too old?

No, well I should have done cause I was thirteen and a half, we never mentioned anything and no one else did. See where we were before we were too far from the school, that's why I never went to school. My sister she went to school in Perth, she stayed with my Aunty, she was good, pretty good.

Well in those days you went out and worked as soon as you could?

Oh yes, yeah. And everything I earned till I got married went back to buy the place. Now I only received ten bob a week till I was 22. That's my wage at 22 was ten bob a week. See the Great Depression, let me tell you

this, was my education. You had to live, you definitely had to live off the land then. You couldn't sell anything, no one wanted to buy anything because no one had any money. The beauty of it is everybody was in the same boat, no one had any money.

We used to hire beautiful draught horses for 7/6 a week to dig the Myalup drain and those drains in Busselton, they used to pull scoops and that. One horse repeatedly come home, so dad said let it stop home, it came home three times, yeah, beautiful horse.

We could talk about Eugene Scott at Stratham or Elgin?

Elgin. If I remember rightly, he lived where Doug lives today. Unless Doug's shifted, see his sons coming on now. He used to do a lot of sawing with the mill, I think he got killed at timber didn't he.

I don't know.

Yeah, he did. I think he did.

So, Eugene Scott, who was his wife?

You got me there, yeah you got me, Eugene, yeah you got me there.

So, any of the other old families around the district, you remember?

See, another very old family around here was, oh God Roberts, Roberts.

Who were they?

They lived down here right opposite George Willies, you know George Willy Scott?

On North Boyanup North West Road?

What was her name? Oh Bernie Roberts. Bernie Roberts. Bernie Roberts, one of Bernie Roberts' daughter married Maidment, Ronnie Maidment.

Ronnie, I go and visit him every now and then now, he's a beaut joker Ronnie. I will always remember I went to visit when Bernie and Mrs Roberts was alive, I went to visit them and under the bed was all newspaper. And I happened to be looking and she said "What are you looking at Tommy" and I said "What makes you put that newspaper under the bed?" "Ah" she said "you can hear the snakes on it."

Oh, the rustle of the paper?

Yeah, yeah. They've got, have you ever been in that house? You have. Those old photos and that, aren't they beautiful? Of the Boar War and Bugler Dunn and all them. You've never seen them, oil paintings they are, absolutely magnificent. Whether they're still there or not I don't know, I think they would be. She had in the corner by the back door. A Mattock handle.

A what handle?

A Mattock handle, a grub hoe handle, and it had worn round and where it had stood on the floor it had worn a hole. And I said to her "what have you kept that there for Mrs Roberts?" "Ah' she said "that's me protection on intruders" I said "how come it's got that sort of hole in the floor?" "Well, I've shifted it that many times to sweep" she said "it had worn and it had worn the edge of the Mattock handle away." I wouldn't know how old it would be, I think its still there to this day. There's some old history there.

See the fate of sparkle, I think he bred the first horse to win the Perth Cup.

Did he, Mr Roberts?

And the horses name was what?

Sparkle, I think that's the name I could be wrong. I could of got Sparkle and Spark mixed up with Mr Bradshaw's horse at Thompson's Brook, but Sparkle I thinks the name of the horse.

See, then there's Rowley Roberts, he's only just recently died. He's bred some magnificent horses he has, from what's the name of it? Springfield isn't it? Greenfields, Greenfields Stud.

Yes, he um

See then again there was Mrs Felix Roberts, she was a great pianist as I used to play with.

Did you?

Oh, she was very good.

Yes, so where did they live?

She used to play for a lot of, they lived on the Stirling. She used to play for a lot of the church dos in Capel, she was a very good pianist.

So, what was her name?

Can't think of it, Felix was her husband. Yeah.

So, there was a lot of dances in those days?

Oh yes, see one stage there for about 2 or 3 years I used to play at Elgin hall one Saturday night and Capel the next. They had alternatives. All through the war years. Played for a terrific amount of benefit nights for the war effort and that. Over at Brunswick, I played there for ages, as long as they could supply me with the fuel to get there I'd play for nothing, for a benefit night. That was your love of the music.

Cause it was difficult probably to get fuel then?

Oh yeah, you ration tickets you see and they used to squeeze me a two-gallon ration ticket. I couldn't get there otherwise. They were good days,

they were good days. Old Mrs Grey from Brunswick, she's got a Certificate of Merit for raising the most money in any lady in Western Australia for War effort.

Oh yes!

Yes, at Boyanup, did they have the local Red Cross and CWA doing a lot of organising a lot of dances?

Not as much as the other ways. Elgin was a great place for that, so was Capel, very much so. Great pianists I played with in Capel, was Myrtle Doyle or she was Myrtle Goule.

She's still alive?

Beg a pardon?

Is she still alive?

Yes, her husband died. God she was a good pianist.

A better one than her even was Haw Haw Davies wife.

Davies?

Yeah.

From Capel?

Yeah.

Not Olive Davies?

What's that?

Was it Olive Davies?

Oh, Olive Wenn she was, Olive Wenn.

Oh, she played the piano?

Oh, Christ she was good. Also, up the river, he died just lately, me great mate?

What one of the Yates?

Yatesy, Alan Yates, his sister. A little one. Doris Yates and Doris Tucker was another good pianist, I played with both them. Very good. But that Oli Wenn she was brilliant, a natural you know, brilliant pianist. But Ted James he was the best.

He was the best of the lot?

Oh, without doubt.

Did you know the Vickery's?

Yes, very well. One of them, one Vickery girl married Earle Scott, and the other one married, oh who did she marry? Then there was the old man Vickery and the old lady I knew them very well.

And what were their names?

Oh, I couldn't, Dick was one I think, Dick was one of the sons. I can't remember the daughter's names. I used to know, but I've forgotten now.

So, there was old Mr Vickery, the one that come out from England, where did they live at Elgin?

Right beyond the hall on the west side of the hall, all that land there belonged to them.

Is the house still there where they used to live?

Yeah, yeah.

It is, is it?

I don't know who owns it now? But it's still there.

So, what did they do?

Dairying.

They did quite a lot in the district, didn't they?

Yeah, see, Earle Scott he did all dairying too. Then there was Jim Scott he married the girl Hutton, Walter Hutton's daughter.

Walter Hutton from Capel, he had a nick name, what was that?

Cocky Hutton.

Do you know why he was called Cocky Hutton?

No, I don't, no. I'll always remember we were putting in a milking machine there, dad and I years ago, and there was a commercial traveller, (is that on is it) a commercial traveller came with a leather case you see, he was doing something for milkers and they had an enormous big tamed boomer. It used to mind its own business, it used to sleep under an apricot tree, it used to mind its own business as long as you minded yours. Now he hopped up to this joker you know and gave him a swipe with the case and the roo took to him, tore his suit off. He had to destroy the roo and it cost him a new suit old Hutton and that. But it was his own fault see, he shouldn't have you know, hit the roo, it was only, very friendly. You'd go up and you know stroke him and you weren't to fiddle with him too much or he'd start to get a bit aggressive. But he didn't know that.

But a very funny one there was Greg Gardiner, Claude Gardiner, dad, Cocky Hutton, we picked him up, going down to Jimmy Higgins' shooting, duck shooting and if you remember Jimmy Higgins was very deaf and he use to have one of them funnels down his shirt and you had to talk into the thing. "Oh, Christ Cock", he said "here comes Jimmy now", we hadn't asked him if we could go there you see. He said leave it to me I'll talk to him "Hey Jimmy" he says "how's the wife?" and he's fumbling down there," lost a cow" he said.

What did he say?

“Lost a cow” he had. But I said, he was leaning out the old Pontiac window like that, and I said “How is the wife Jimmy?” “Got white spots on its belly” he says. Well, you ought to have heard them roaring with laughing cause he couldn’t hear properly unless he had his funnel. The wife had white spots on her belly, Christ it was funny. You know all those humorous things I’ll never forget them. They were good days those.

So, you and your father you probably, you did a lot of house building around the Capel District did you?

Yeah, not round Capel, we altered the Hotel once and built sale yards there for Elder, Smiths and Dalgety’s in them days it was. They were right along side the hotel, now why they built them so close I’ll never know, must have been cause Warnecke’s had the pub then, do you remember them?

No.

Dick and can’t remember who.

Oh, this is Capel your talking about?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, you’d slip over and have a drink then back to the sale, yeah.

I’ll always remember, when we were building the sale yards.

At Capel?

At Capel, there was Percy Smith, Bob Waddy.

Waddy?

Bob Waddingham.

Waddingham.

Percy Smith, Bob Waddy and Les Peak, Jinx Peak, that's another nick name Arthur you see. Anyhow Percy decided he was about half tanked you see, he was drinking pots of stout at the time. Decided we'd go duck shooting, so I had to go home and get dads gun and mine, the others had theirs. And how they were gonna sneak onto these ducks at Wonnerup, see you weren't supposed to be shooting at Wonnerup it was just after it was closed. And there was that many ducks there, there were thousands of them. See, he said to me, Percy said to me "get your fathers snips Tom and cut a bay out of the chook pen" he said "and we'll cover it full of leaves, and we'll all get behind that, and move out onto these ducks." Good thinking, so I cut a bay out the thing, I'll always remember it. Rolled it up, put it in the boot of his old Dodge car and away we went. Got peppermint leaves and a bit of bracken further put in it. And I'm walking behind with all the guns, guns in my arms like this you see, and I said "Percy, they're gonna go" you know our ducks go getting uneasy, "No we'll get a little bit closer." "They'll go, they'll go." Anyhow, they roared up and all took off, and everyone knocked me over trying to grab their guns, some had the wrong guns and they never got a duck. Next day we go to work and Warnecke's going off his brain. Some thieving bugger had pinched his netting out of his yard and all the foxes got his chooks that night. See the chooks had all come out. Aw he never knew till his dying day what happened, it was me that cut it out but under instructions.

So, this Mr Warnecke that used to have the Capel Hotel?

Yeah, Dick Warnecke.

So, what year would this be? Approximately.

Oh God, it would be in the late 20's, yeah, yeah.

Were they there for very long?

Yes, they were there for quite a while, I don't know who took over after them. But see Upson's had the shop at Capel then and another one of

Cocky Hutton's daughters uh sons married a daughter from the shop. And one married a school teacher. Funny how a lot of those the old districts like here, see Snowy Payne married a school teacher from here.

This is Boyanup?

Yes Boyanup. Reilly, Ted Reilly married a school teacher.

I think they were snapped up pretty quickly, weren't they?

Yeah, they were, scooped up very quickly, yeah. You never got a look in sort of.

So, there was a great shortage of women was there?

Oh, yes, yeah and there used to be quite rivalry if an outsider started to court a local. I'll always remember, there was Snowy Payne, Joe Reilly. Snowy Payne, Joe Reilly, George Scott, myself, I wasn't quite involved in it, but I was actually in it. This joker started to court the Postmistress. "Gotta get rid of that bugger" said Snowy Payne, he was keen on her too you see, so was Joe Reilly in them days a bit. "Gotta get rid of that bugger" he said. And he used to come with a horse and cart, horse and sulky, beautiful it was a black one, so they whitewashed it. See he came out, we were hiding, it was all bush in front of the post office and we were all hiding. He eyes this horse up and down, then he walks home and leaves his horse there. Another time, he didn't stop he came back and he finished up marrying her, you couldn't stop him. Anyhow, another time they put the horse, took the sulky inside the post office yard with a picket fence, put the shafts through the picket fence and put the horse back on, and he gets in and drives off, took a bay of the picket fence out with him. But that didn't stop him. Yeah. Snowy said, Snowy Payne said "Looks like nothings gonna stop that bugger" he says. That's what you used to do in them days, no, see there was no wilful destruction, it was all good fun. But I'll never forget him looking at this white horse, yeah.

Graham Hurst, he lives in Capel now, he reckons before I die he's gotta get a tape recorder and get all the stories, the funny stories of my life time, because he said I've got such a phenomenal memory, I can repeat it all. Which I have, I've got a terrific memory.