

Mt Gambier, March 1945

REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

Harry Firth, Hastwell

born

1 January 1923

died

20 December 1996

IN THE BEGINNING

I ENTERED THIS WORLD ON 1 JANUARY 1923 - an easy date to remember, one one two three. Like so many of my generation I was born at home, only the wealthy had their babies in hospital. Probably a midwife was present but I doubt if a doctor was there.

Our address was 12 Statenborough Street, Knightsbridge. The solid old bluestone house still stands but there is now no such suburb as Knightsbridge in Adelaide. It became Leabrook when the Government decided to reduce the proliferation of suburban names. Another to go was Upper Kensington. Coopers Brewery is immediately opposite Number 12 and in those days its suburb was Upper Kensington, but is now Leabrook also. One of my earliest recollections is the delightful aroma of hot barley and hops mash used in the initial stages of beer making. I remember the long line of horse-drawn flat-top trolleys waiting for their turn to collect the steaming mash. These farmers used it as stock feed. Coopers did all their deliveries by horse-drawn wagons, always two horses and always one grey and one bay. The story goes that one afternoon the head stableman reported to Mr. Cooper that all but one delivery vehicle was out and the grey for it was sick, so could he use two bays. "You certainly cannot", said Mr. Cooper, "that hotel will simply have to wait until tomorrow for its delivery"!!!

PATERNAL FOREBEARS

I CAN JUST REMEMBER MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER, sitting bolt upright in a straight back chair. I was a little frightened of her, she looked so severe. It was not until years later that I realized she had to sit so straight because of the tight whalebone corsets worn by all her generation. She was typical of the Victorian-era in her long black frock with high lace collar. Her maiden name was Eliza Brooke. She married my grandpa Ebenezer at her parents' home on 9.4.1871. Her occupation was dressmaker in Adelaide and he was a storekeeper at Mallala.

I remember my father's father better, for he lived until I was around nine - he was in his eighties when he died in 1932. His name was Ebenezer, a petite figure 5ft 2ins high. He was born at Black Friars Road, London, England to James and Mary Ann (nee Adshead) on 25 May 1845. According to the Biographical Index of S.A. 1836 - 1885, other children in the family were Jonathon (1814-1891), John (1847-1932), Ed (1850-1857), Mary Ann (1852-1853), Mary Ann (1854-1854) and William Henry (1855-1924). Note that Ebenezer lived until he was 87, his brothers William Henry, Jonathon and John died at 69, 77 and 85 respectively whilst Ed lived only 7 years, one of the Mary Anns survived but a year and the second Mary Ann only a few months.



James Hastwell & Mary Ann (nee Adshead) with Ebenezer- middle, back
pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

In 1853 James and Mary migrated with their children to South Australia settling initially in Rose Park. Their religion was the Lord's New Church but I have no knowledge of such a church ever being established here. My father, James Stanley, was confirmed Church of England although I don't recall him ever attending. Mother was a Methodist and a regular attendant.

According to the Dictionary of English and Welsh Names at the Bedford (U.K.) Library, the original spelling of Hastwell lacked the T and those of that name were "Local of 'Haswell' a parish in county Durham". Possibly some other locality bears the same name too.

The name actually meant 'the spring beside the hazels'.

The Dictionary lists the following forbears:

Stephen de Hassewell -

County Oxford during the reign of Henry III
(1216-1272) and Edward I (1272 - 1307)

Helia de Haswelle

County Cambridge (1273)

Margaret Hasswell

married William Masterman (1795) during the reign of
George III (1760-1820)

John Hastwell (note the change to the present spelling)

married Dinah Goodes, London (1804).

From records at Somerset House, London, we know :

James Hastwell (my great grandfather)

married Mary Ann Adshead (28.2.1843)
Occupation - Glafscutter (note spelling)
Mary's father was Jonathon, a tailor.

Ebenezer Hastwell (my grandfather)

Son of James and Mary
Born Christchurch, County of Surrey 28.6.1845

Note - this record varies from that in a Biographical Index of S.A. which states that Ebenezer was born at Black Friars Road, London on 25.5.1845.

A search was also carried out at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Scotland which confirms the name originated in County Durham as Haswell.

Some of the family subsequently settled in Scotland, for around 1200 the name appeared in Rayburgshire and Dumfrieshire. The Mitchell Library also records –

Thomas Haswell - Lanarkshire (1408)

Robert Haswell - Peebleshire (1436)

James Haswell - Abbot of Newbattle prior to the Reformation.

The name, it is said, still exists in Newbattle which is S.E. of Edinburgh, a mile south of Dalkeith. There is still an Abbey there.

I know nothing of Grandfather Ebenezer's boyhood (he was only 8 when he arrived from U.K.) but I do know he became a baker and a storekeeper at Mallala, Nairne and then Burnside for many years. I was to come to know the Burnside bakery very well as a boy, but more about that later. Located on the corner of High St. and Lockwood Road, from Joseph Lockwood in 1874. The bakery was at the back with the general store which faced the street and the family lived upstairs.

Grandfather was also the postmaster (possibly the first postmaster for the "village of Burnside") using another shop on the same premises for the purpose. In "The Paddocks Beneath" by Elizabeth Warburton, a history of Burnside from the beginning, produced in 1981 to mark the first 125 years, there is the following notation (Page 22) -

"Joseph Lockwood (1824-96) paid £25 (= \$50) for corner lot 40 in 1852 but did not build his shop until 1859-60. He added a bakery and remained in business until 1874 when he moved to a farm on Yorke Peninsula. Ebenezer Hastwell and sons succeeded him and others followed. The building was enlarged with another shop and three rooms upstairs".

BURN SIDE
**Post and Telephone Offices,
General Stores
and Bakery**

I WISH to take this advantage of thanking my numerous patrons for their past favours.
Also to inform the Public generally that
I sell **Groceries, Crockery, Ironmongery Etc** at **Adelaide** and **Norwood**
Prices. If not convenient to call, write for Price list. **Teas** a speciality from **1s.** per lb.;
1½d. allowed by taking **4 lbs. Bread and Small Goods** of the very best quality.
Try them. Tea Meetings and Picnics supplied on the Shortest Notice.

Yours respectfully,

E. HASTWELL.

An 1893 advertisement
is also quoted in
"The Paddocks Beneath"



Mary Elizabeth Miller

(nee Frith) pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

MATERNAL FORBEARS

SO MUCH FOR MY PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS. I do not remember my mother's mother for she died in 1926 when I was only three years old. My mother's father is but a vague memory. He died in 1930 when I was seven. He was born Jens Larsen Møller in Kolding, Denmark in 1846. At the age of 22 (in 1868) he worked his way as a seaman to Australia on a sailing vessel, the 'Vidfarno', jumped ship at Port Adelaide, Anglicised his name to James Lawrence Miller and became a school teacher. In 1879 he married a widow who became my grandma, at Myrtle Grove, a tiny spot on the map near Currency Creek, S.A., not far from Goolwa.

She was born Mary Elizabeth Frith in 1852 and married Henry Horsnett Jones in 1873 at Clarendon. Their religion was given as Bible Christian. Ruins of the Bible Christian Chapel can still be seen at Myrtle Grove. Nearby is a well preserved old stone farmhouse and barn built by the Shipway family. A stone at the top of the barn bears the date 1858 - it was used as a dwelling I understand until the house was built.

Grandma Mary Elizabeth married Grandpa James Lawrence at the residence of John Shipway on 18.4.1879. Shipway, whose age fell between that of Mary Elizabeth and her mother, was her stepfather. It was always said that he wanted to marry widow Mary Elizabeth but she preferred my grandfather J. L. Miller, so Shipway married Mary Elizabeth's widowed mother instead.

H.H. Jones was born 1849. He died at Currency Creek, 2 years and 8 months after their marriage, leaving his widow with two children, William Frith Jones (1874-1960 (?)) and Frederick Henry Jones (1875-1961).

Grandmother Mary Elizabeth and grandfather James Lawrence had eight children, Anthony Ethelberth (1880-1880), Harold Anthonie Lawrence (1881-1911), Raymond Orlando Maurice (1883-1943), Metta Amanda Ivy (1885-1950), Clarence Vincent Cedrick (1887-1962), Zenitha Gwendolin Ruby Emma (1889-1925), Clarice Vivia Linda Doris (1890-1978) and Anita Rowena Nadira (1894-1983). Some, fanciful names amongst that lot!

Note Grandmother's maiden name of Frith has continued on as a family name. Her first son (Jones) had Frith as his middle name, my middle name is also Frith and my sons Mark and Peter



Mary Elizabeth Miller (nee Frith)
pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

have each a son bearing the same middle name. A pity it did not occur to me at the time to bestow the name on at least one of my own sons. Actually it is a very old English name and can be traced back to the time of Elizabeth I, at least (1558-1603). Big Bertha Frith, it is claimed, was the first woman to be seen smoking in public in the Court of Queen Elizabeth I. It was said at the time that "she was known to be friendly to sailors"! No doubt a friend of Sir Walter Raleigh who history records introduced tobacco to England!

The story also goes that Big Bertha Frith was a Fagin (as in Dickens' Oliver Twist) and had a gang of waifs working for her as pick pockets, further that she was finally hung at Tilbourne for her sins, but of course it may all be a story.

Before I leave my grandparents, there is a family story that illustrates how their generation thought and acted differently from today's generation. Grandpa Miller was a school teacher, as stated earlier. In 1879 he was transferred to Robe from, I understand, a place called Yangya which was (is?) 5 miles north east of Gladstone. This was the same year in which he married Grandma Mary Elizabeth, a widow with two children. The motor car had not been invented so how to get 2 adults, 2 very small children (aged 1 and 2 years or less), furniture etc. all that way? Grandpa went by ship with the furniture and other household items, but Grandma apparently could not face the sea journey - maybe she was already pregnant, as their first child Anthony was born 1880 (and died the same year). Their solution was for Grandma to go alone by horse and trap, taking the two tiny tots with her. What a journey it must have been. I wonder how long it took? There were no proper roads of course. Even when I was a child the road through the Coorong was just an unmade track. No doubt she would have encountered aborigines living pretty much in their wild state too.

She was of course no stranger to horses. In fact she became recognised in the South East for her riding ability. She became a friend of Adam Lindsay Gordon, the only Australian poet to be buried at Westminster Abbey, and sometimes rode with him.

MY FAMILY



Ivy Miller at Mt Gambier Hospital
pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

MY MOTHER WAS THE METTA AMANDA IVY in the list of Miller progeny mentioned earlier. She was always called Ivy although her sisters (my aunts) Nita and Viv usually used the nickname she was given in her youth - Wobbles or Wobs. Exactly what wobbled and gave rise to the name, I have never enquired. It just seemed to be accepted by everyone some how! Mother was born at Robe S.A. 28.7.1885 and died in Adelaide (of cancer) 4.8.1950.

My father, James Stanley (Jim) was born at Mallala S.A. 11.7.1873 and died in Adelaide 11.1.1941. They were married at the Holder Memorial Methodist Church, Mile End on 1.7.1914. Father, like mother, came from a large family and all but two had long lives (from 68 - 89 years). Hubert Henry (1871-1958), James Stanley (1873-1941), Winifred (1875-1907), Arthur (1878-1920), Walter (1878-1957), Frederick (1879-1968) and Robert Charles (1881-1973).

I am the youngest of 3 children, my sister Nell was born on 30.4.1915 and Claire on 28.6.1918. When I was born in 1923 my mother was 29 and my father 41 years of age. I was 18 when he died so of course he always seemed an elderly man to me. We had a happy childhood with loving and much loved parents.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION



Nita, Viv & Ruby Miller at Darebin St, Mile End

Probably before 1922 *pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection*

TIMES WERE TOUGH for the Great Depression started soon after I was born and got much worse during the 1930s before they improved. Thousands were out of work and living on Government hand-outs and charity. My family was to experience this too before it was over but more about that later.

Today people, especially the younger generation, take it as their right to receive Unemployment Benefits if they can't find work (many do not appear to make much effort to find it and will only accept a job they feel suits them, it seems to me). It is quite a different outlook from that which prevailed during the Depression when

people would take any job they were lucky enough to find for there was a decided stigma attached to receiving the dole.

It was not given in the form of hard cash that could be spent on whatever the recipient fancied as it is today. Then the Government handed out coupons which could only be exchanged for food at grocers, butchers, greengrocers etc. It required all the housewives ingenuity to make the coupons last for the fortnight which each issue covered. At school, children of those on public relief, as it was called, received free books, usually second hand ones. Their names were called out in class and they were told to wait until last. All very degrading and demoralising really, at least I found it so at high school.

Many were homeless, having had their homes repossessed as they were unable to meet even the interest on their mortgages. Hundreds were forced to live wherever they could, doubling up with relatives, and in sheds in friends' backyards etc. There was a 'tent city' stretching along the banks of the Torrens. Men, carrying their swags, walked hundreds of miles throughout the country, moving from town to town, farm to farm, seeking a job, any job, labouring, fencing, anything to earn a feed.



Ivy, Nell Jim & Claire
Hastwell, Dec. 1929.
pic: Hastwell Family Private
Collection

Swaggies were a common sight when I was a boy. When we lived at Tantanoola (see later) swagmen would call at my father's bake house and cut wood for the oven in exchange for bread. 'Gentlemen of the Road', as they were sometimes called, developed a code whereby others would know from marks made on gates etc. whether to expect a sympathetic ear and a feed or whether it would be better to move on to the next property. It is said the fraternity had a rank system similar to the army - one stripe displayed on a blanket roll meant one year on the road, two stripes for two years etc. Thus they built up a seniority and gained respect from their peers.

A lot of unemployed men became itinerant travellers in both city and country. Hawkers, they were called, who went door to door with a basket over their arm selling cottons and threads, needles, thimbles, wooden bowls and other items they had made from mulga, also cakes, toffees, aprons, items of clothing etc. made by their wives - anything to scrape up a living.

In the country hawkers travelled from town to town in covered horse-drawn vans, like a gypsy's van. In those days we did in fact have gypsies roaming the country. When the word came through that they were on their way from the previous town, it was common for shops to close and for people to lock their houses and sheds for fear of burglary. Wonder what became of them?

The hawkers were more affluent than the basket carriers who stayed mainly in the suburbs, for hawkers had sufficient assets to buy stock such as pots and pans, linen, blankets, clothing, boots and shoes, kerosene lamps, sweets, rope - you wanted it, they had it or would bring it for your next trip. A visit from a hawker was something to look forward to for apart from merchandise, he also brought the latest news and gossip from near and far. There were few motor cars in those days, people did not move around much, not many had telephones, even less had radios, or wire-leses as they were called (our first radio station 5DN opened in 1924 when I was one), television had not been invented and so information on what was happening elsewhere was not readily obtainable.



The Hastwell Family pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

Apart from hawkers and swagmen (tramps as America named them), other itinerants were calling door to door selling fresh fish, vegetables and even patent medicines. Rawlings men were well received for that company had a good reputation for its many 'cures', most of which disappeared years ago.

The "rabbitees" drove their horses and carts slowly up and down suburban streets calling out in a

singsong voice "Rabbit-oo. Fresh Rabbits For Sale". People hearing the cry would rush out, stop the cart and select their bunny from the many hanging up on the cart. They cost about one shilling and sixpence each (15 cents) and were almost always sold in pairs.

CHILDHOOD

NOW TO MOVE ON TO MY OWN LIFE. When I was about four, my Mother became very ill and Nell and I were packed off to our Auntie Nita (Mother's sister) and Uncle Ray Sanders. Claire went to live with Auntie Bertha and Uncle Fred Jones (Mother's half brother). We must have lived there for many weeks but I remember it as a happy period. My cousin Don, 18 months my junior, and I got into quite a bit of mischief. One day we found a tin of tar at the back of the shed and proceeded to paint each other with it. I expect Auntie was furious at first but she soon saw the funny side and boiled up the copper in order to get enough hot water to scrub us down - there were no such things as electric or gas hot water services then! She called us the 'tar babies' right up until her death only a few years ago! Uncle Ray had a BSA motorcycle and sidecar and I recall the excitement of going down to Victor Harbour in it for a holiday.

As soon as the 1928 school year began (I turned five on January 1), I was taken to Marryatville school. I loathed it and in fact hated all schools until the day I left to go to work ten years later. There were no kindergartens or pre-schooling when I was young so I guess it was rather a traumatic experience for a small child to leave the safe confines of a loving home to be suddenly thrust into a school system so much harsher than it is today. For the first week or so at Marryatville, I ran home recess time and would be taken back again only to run home again at lunchtime. One thing I am thankful for is that after testing me in various ways, the headmaster agreed to allow me to write with my left hand, my natural bent. It was not generally realized then that a left-hander receives his motivation from the right side of the brain (the opposite applies to a natural right-hander). The headmaster must have been a long way ahead of his time for it was normal practice then for teachers to insist that every child learn to write with the right hand only.

MOVE TO THE COUNTRY



Tantanoola Railway Station *pic(altered image):Geoff Donoghue*

THE NEXT PHASE OF MY LIFE began when I was six and the family moved to Tantanoola in South Australia's South East (between Millicent and Mt. Gambier). It was 1929/30, when the Great Depression was near its worst. Father had been employed by the State Government Public Stores Department (now called State Supply). He was probably a store-man or a clerk. The State Government of the day was flat broke and declared a 10 percent

salary cut for all Government employees. Can you imagine unions allowing that to happen today? With a wife and 3 children to support, Father apparently considered it better to resign and return to the old family trade of baker. Hence the move to Tantanoola where a business was available. I might add that at that time it would have been unthinkable for a married woman to leave a young family and go out to work, not that there would have been any jobs available (Mother was a schoolteacher before she married).

Even today Tantanoola is a quaint little town, but in the 1930's it was more so. No electricity, no running water, no sewerage. The horse-drawn night cart called weekly upon the dunnies (outhouses) at the bottom of every backyard and emptied the pan. Population of the town was at the most 80 souls with perhaps another 50 from surrounding farms - it may even have been less than 130 men, women and children in the Tantanoola district altogether then, although there were some large families.

The railway line ran down the middle bisecting the town with houses, shops, the Institute, the pub and lots of empty blocks either side, with a road between them and the fenced railway paddock. Then there was one more street behind each of the 'main' streets with an even thinner scattering of houses, the school, three tiny churches ... and that was about all there was to Tantanoola other than the showground on the outskirts.



The name is from an aboriginal word meaning 'a place of many waters' - and water there was in plenty, for it is in a high rainfall area and the present drainage system was yet to come.

Our house was on a corner, the Anglican Church behind it and the school behind that in the next (and last) street. It was a draughty timber structure with an Amgoorie tea advertisement painted on its corrugated iron side outer wall. The location is now an empty block. The front was a shop, mainly Mother's domain, which sold bread, yeast buns, cakes, lollies and a few other items. The bakehouse was behind but not connected to the house.

Tantanoola is a cold place in winter and I loved being in the bakehouse then, snugly warm - but it was pretty hot in summer near the huge wood-fired oven. It had no temperature gauge. It was fascinating to watch Father open the door, throw a screwed up sheet of newspaper on to its brick floor and judge the temperature by how long the paper took to burst into flames.

We had no bathroom and used to wash in the kitchen with water poured from the porcelain jug into the bowl. When the jug became empty, it had to be filled from the rainwater tank outside. Saturday night was something we all looked forward to, for it was family bath night - in a tin tub in the bakehouse, buckets of water having earlier been placed in the bread oven to provide lots of hot water. We were not alone in having no bathroom - in fact there were only 3 houses in the whole town which could lay claim to such a modern invention. The story goes that one farmer, coming into the town to live in semi-retirement, bought a house with a bath and remarked that it would be ideal for "shootin' me spuds in it!" (i.e. growing potatoes).

The shops referred to earlier numbered exactly six, ours and Osborn's General Store on our side of the rail track, plus a butcher in the side street, whilst Scutt & Cook's General Store, the black-



pic: State Library of South Australia B13741

smith and the bootmaker were on the other side of the track. Of course there was also the pub - the Tantanoola Tiger Hotel, still there today looking much as it did when I was a boy. Inside is the famous Tantanoola Tiger in a glass display case, which I notice has recently (September 1990) been in the hands of the Adelaide Museum for repair as it was apparently showing the effects of age. The story behind the so called Tiger is that, several years before we arrived, farmers found sheep being attacked and partially eaten. In that rural community dogs were well disciplined working ones, so the blame could not be laid there. One day a farmer spotted what he thought was a tiger slinking into the bush. Subsequently so did others, a posse was organised but the animal kept alluding them. Finally their vigilance was rewarded and the 'tiger' was shot. It turned out to be a European wolf which had escaped from a travelling circus.

The Institute was the hub of much community life, concerts being frequently held. I still have vivid memories of Mrs. Altswagger belting out the tunes of the day on the piano with much vigorous swinging of arms and body and everyone joining in the choruses. Once or twice a year the travelling picture show man, Mr. Lester arrived from Lord knows where and every man, woman and child from miles around turned up at the Institute those nights. Of course there was no electricity, so the power came from Lester's T Model Ford.

The engine invariably overheated and the film came to a grinding halt, leaving the audience in the black, black darkness half way through. Sometimes it happened more than once. Much noise and confusion ensued before lanterns were lit. If the engine breakdown was likely to take some time to fix, chairs were pushed back and dancing or some other form of entertainment took place. The films were often silent ones for "talkies" as they were then called had not long been invented. Laurel and Hardy were hilarious in movies where they mouthed their quips which you couldn't hear but read instead as sub-titles as we do today with foreign films. Rio Rita was a memorable

film, black and white of course. There was no colour then, but what a wonder it was just to see actors on the screen and actually hear them talking and singing!. Dick Powell and Myrna Loy in the Thin Man series was quite scary we thought!

I had my first encounter with a sheep soon after we arrived. I was exploring the railway paddock with its many trees just wanting to be climbed. Suddenly the biggest sheep ever (or so I thought at the time) came charging towards me. I bolted for home with it after me - much to the amusement of my sister Claire who knew something I didn't know. It was a pet lamb of the Peter's family and just wanted to be friendly!

There were only 2 cars in the town (one or two farmers also had one), so horses, whether ridden or pulling traps and carts of various types, were the common mode of transport. My father was one of the car owners and the other was Tom Corcoran, Chairman of the local district council. Our car was a Chevrolet complete with side running boards, canvas hood and removable celluloid side curtains. The story goes that the council was debating the safety or otherwise of a bridge in the area. The motion to replace it was defeated when Tom Corcoran declared that "If Jim Hastwell drives his car across that bridge at 40 miles per hour it must be safe"!!

The Corcorans were a large family and their house had a particularly large kitchen. It was a common expression at the time to say "as large as Corcoran's kitchen" to indicate something was big. One of the Corcoran boys, Des, was later to become Premier of South Australia.

Father, like all self respecting motorists of the 1930's, wore a dustcoat and a peaked cap (many also wore gloves) when taking the family for a drive. We kids laughed our heads off the day he found an egg laid on the front seat of our car by one of the neighbour's fowls. Dad put it in his dustcoat pocket and promptly sat on it! I often went with father in the car after school when he delivered bread to outlying farms. Most deliveries were by horse and cart and I also frequently accompanied Jimmy Peters, the cart hand who worked for Dad.

Just how novel the motor car was in those days is perhaps best illustrated with the story about a visit we made to Millicent one day. There, in the main street, was the town's first service station as they are called now. I'll never know if it was my reading ability (I was only 6 or 7) or poor sign writing, but I interpreted the sign to read 'car age'. I remember looking at it in awe and thinking what a good name it was - yes, we were entering the car age. It was quite some time before I found out the word was actually 'garage'. The innocence of youth!

Mother was no stranger to 'Tanta' for she had lived there for some years as a young child when her father had been the schoolmaster. Consequently she knew most of the folk. One of the school house windows still bore grandma's initials, scratched there by grandpa with a diamond ring. If the window hasn't been broken and replaced, the marks would still be there some 80 years later.



Tantanoola School

pic (altered image): SA Educ. Dept

It was a tiny school with but one teacher, Mr. Harrison. He was occasionally assisted by his wife (unpaid no doubt). There were only 4 in my class, all boys. Years later my children gained much amusement when I told them how I was clever enough to come third one year - the lad who came fourth was subsequently seconded to a mental institution. (Whether the story was true or not I can no longer remember!) Every child in the school had to take a turn recording the weather for a nominated day in the school's weather book. As I never could distinguish between the finer points of one cloud or another, I lived in fear and dread of my turn coming. When it did, I was able to record with a sense of pride and a sigh of relief, "a sunny cloudless day".

With just one teacher for classes 1 - 7 in one room, it was often necessary to send our class

(and others) outside so Mr. Harrison could concentrate more on grade 6 and 7. We four took it in turn to be in charge of whatever work we had been allotted. One day, when it was my turn to be 'teacher', we were involved in learning some words we had not encountered before - words ending in 'que'. None of us had a clue how to pronounce them, so having to give the lead I figured it had to be said as 'cue'. Thus antique was pronounced 'anti-cue' (not 'anteek'). Even today I still see it and other 'que' words in that vein!

Many older people could not read or write and most invariably dropped their H's and G's. Mother once mentioned to a Mrs. Lane that she had visited a Mrs. Nitschke and was puzzled by Mrs. Lane's question, " 'Ow is Ernie?" for she knew that wasn't Mr. Nitschke's name. Slowly Mrs. Lane translated with much emphasis on the H's - "How is her knee?"

Mr. and Mrs. Lane, our next door neighbours, owned a cow and supplied us with milk which we collected daily. Mrs. Lane was very proud of its quality and would blow on to our milk in our billycans to show its richness with cream rising to gather at the surface. Not exactly hygienic!

School holidays were often spent at Telfer's farm, within easy riding distance of the town. There were several Telfer families who were particular friends of Mothers from her own 'Tanta' childhood. Mr. Telfer was a widower with 2 sons and 2 daughters - boy, did those girls know how to cook huge meals!

There was also an endless supply of delicious cakes and biscuits for morning and afternoon tea (lunch they always called it, presumably because of the amount available). Those 'lunches' used to be brought to us in the field, for I went out with the men working the sheep and cows, harvesting or whatever. It was a good life on the farm for a young ex-city kid.

Once in the milking shed a snake slithered by and started down a hole. The older boy grasped it by the tail and being unable to pull it out, tied it with binditwine with the other end fixed to the wall. By the time milking finished the snake had come back into the shed being the only option open to it. It was promptly despatched. We often saw snakes in the hay stacks after mice which also gathered there. Sometimes one of the men would grab one by the tail and crack it like a stock whip, thus breaking its back. Lindsay, my age, and I loved riding the young calves. We were often tossed off but just laughed, for the falls didn't hurt much. One day an angry mother cow charged us when we were riding her calf - did we ever climb the fence rails in a hurry!

Herb, another Telfer, was a recluse who lived in a one room hut on the shores of Lake Bonney, a beautiful lake then but much polluted today. He made his living rabbit trapping. I was often his guest for up to a week during school breaks and loved it even though he was very quiet. We were a long way from any neighbours and there were no kids my age to play with. Herb was so shy that on the rare occasion he rode into town, he would hang around near our horse paddock and come in to see Mother at the shop only when he knew there were no other customers. She would then do his shopping for groceries, meat etc. at the other stores while he waited in our house. When he invited me he would come in by horse and trap instead of riding in. On one occasion my parents drove me out in the car but Herb was nowhere to be seen, so they simply left me knowing he would be hiding nearby and come out as soon as they had gone. He was a gentle man and I never felt lonely or frightened. Trapping rabbits for their pelts was great fun, they were plentiful but skinning them was hard work. We ate a lot of rabbit of course, roasted and stewed, and I never grew tired of it. I had not seen other than grey rabbits until then, but black and ginger ones were not uncommon there.

We were at Tantanoola when the Caves were discovered by one of the several Lane families. This particular offshoot lived at an area out of the town known as Hanging Rocks. Clarrie and a couple of his brothers were rabbiting with ferrets and a ferret failed to return. The boys decided to dig out the rabbit hole which got bigger and bigger until suddenly they burst through into a huge cave complete with stalagmites and stalactites. Thus the Tantanoola Caves became a

well known tourist attraction in the South East. It caused quite a buzz as you may imagine. Schoolboys spent endless hours checking for more caves. It's limestone country and there are in fact lots of holes, but none with stalactites apparently, for we never found any and neither has anyone since.

One Christmas eve, father, Claire and I were returning from Glencoe, a small nearby village. We were looking for mistletoe to decorate our Christmas tree and going quite slowly. Suddenly we had a blowout, father lost control, the car swung into a cliff and ended up on its side. Claire suffered a broken arm, father a crushed chest and we all got numerous cuts and bruises from the broken windscreen. I still have the scars.



Harry & Claire patched up following the car accident, Tantanoola, 1932

pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

MURRAY BRIDGE

IN DUE COURSE father sold the Tantanoola bakery and acquired another at Murray Bridge. By that time the Chevrolet had been traded in on a more powerful Dodge, better looking but still with running boards and soft hood. When it rained, side curtains were clipped on. They were made of celluloid. Plastic and shatter proof glass were still to be invented.

I have few worthwhile memories of the Bridge, as locals call it. I missed the easy going rural outlook of 'Tanta' and the freedom found only in a small-knit community where everyone knows everyone else. I missed the horses and even such things as strawberry fetes and Mr. Lester's picture shows. However we did have a house with electricity, running water and a bathroom.

I loathed Thursdays for that was the day we had drawing and I knew from the outset my feeble efforts would be rejected. I would have to remain after school to do that still life subject or whatever all over again and often again, never getting any better and probably worse as frustration grew. Even at 10 years old it seemed ridiculous to me that the teacher did not seem to realise we were both wasting our time. I simply could not and never would be able to draw. I can't sing either but that was recognised and I was excluded from singing lessons! It still puzzles me that the same recognition was not given to my drawing.

I recall the excitement when the famous "Smithy" (Kingsford Smith) landed his equally famous aeroplane (never 'plane' then!), Southern Cross, in a paddock outside the town. There was no airfield at Murray Bridge. He was broke like practically everyone else so the purpose of his arrival was to give flights to those few who could afford it.



Jack Mulligan & Jim Hastwell
Murray Bridge 1932

pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

In those days there was a tribe of aborigines, full bloods, living in humpies along the banks of the Murray River between Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend. As kids we were always wary of them especially if drunk, which happened regularly on Saturdays even though it was illegal for them to buy or be served with alcohol. When the hotels closed at 6 p.m. to the barmen's calls of "Time gentlemen please", the police arrived in their paddy wagon. The 'abos', as they were invariably called, were gathered up, taken off to jail and on Mondays brought up before the 'beak' (magistrate). Fights involving both men and women were common outside the pubs.

BACK TO THE CITY

WE ONLY LIVED AT Murray Bridge for about 18 months. The bakery business, I gather, proved unprofitable, for the depression was around its lowest point. To give some idea of how it was, even at the risk of writing too much about the depression, let me quote from Premier Sir Thomas Playford when explaining it to historian Hugh Stratton many years later:-

"One trade unionist in every three was out of work. The bottom dropped out of everything in S.A. In 1932 wool sold for £10 (\$20) a bale, wheat for as little as ninepence (10 cents) a bushel. The Government could only afford to give the unemployed and the 'down and out' five shillings and eight pence (59 cents) worth of rations each week— paid in kind not money!"



Jim Miller, Claire, Ivy & Harry, Statenborough St 1940

pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

So we returned to our city home in Statenborough St, Knightsbridge (now Leabrook). The car had to be sold of course and father was never to own another. He could not get permanent work but took anything that came along. Some were pretty terrible jobs such as the Gepps Cross Abattoirs. He rode his bike there, leaving home around 5.30 a.m. in the dark to report for work at 7.30 a.m. It's a long way on a bicycle from Leabrook to Gepps Cross and return five days a week. Father would have been in his fifties then. He also did gardening as the opportunity arose although few could afford to pay someone to tend their gardens. Unable to meet his council rates, for several years he pruned roses etc. in various Burnside council parks and gardens to the value of the rates. (At one stage before I was born, father had been a florist and nurseryman in Netter's Arcade between Rundle and Grenfell Streets. The whole arcade was purchased by Harris Scarfe and all the little arcade shops were forced to close). Father was a very good cook and at shearing time he would sign on as camp cook on sheep stations up north and we wouldn't see him for months at a time. When there was just no work to be had, we had to accept 'public relief' as it was called and receive rations.

Although we were poor, there were thousands worse off. We had our own home in a very nice suburb and above all we were a happy family although there were odd squabbles of course. I always knew when father had lost an argument with mother. He would look at me over the top of

his glasses and say in a stern serious voice, "Boy, never marry a schoolteacher"! (Mother's occupation before marriage). Mother simply smiled always and held her peace knowing she had won the day. She was also wise enough to know that father's male pride had been maintained for, after all, he had had the last word!

The high school I attended ceased being used as such many years ago when a new school was built at The Parade, Magill. My high was at Lossie Street, Beulah Park near Magill Road, about three miles from home. I walked the six miles return journey a day but none of us thought much about such distances then. It would not have occurred to our parents to drive us there and collect us again at the end of the day. Few had cars anyway and of course it was quite safe for children to be unaccompanied practically anywhere, unlike today. Many of the more fortunate kids had bikes. Occasionally a school chum, who lived in the next street to me, would 'donkey' me one way on his bike.

Of the two streams available, commercial and general, I chose the latter. My subjects were English, Latin, French, Maths I (algebra), Maths II (geometry) and Arithmetic.

It was general practice at this time to separate boys and girls into different classes. However, because of numbers, I was always placed in a mixed class. We boys were told we were chosen because we were considered to be "well mannered gentlemen"!! Miss Ballantyne was our class teacher, young, attractive and popular. Monsieur Dupré. complete with accent, taught us his native language, French. He was the brother-in-law of Premier (Sir) Tom Playford. "Froggie" (what else?!) once sent me to Mr Heading, physics master, with the message that I had discovered the law of perpetual motion! (I've never been able to keep still for long). Latin master Pfitzner, who had a sense of humour too, called me "Harrius Hastwellius". Only recently I ran into an old fellow student whom I hadn't seen since leaving school nearly 60 years ago. He greeted me with "Hello Harrius Hastwellius"!! I didn't ask him what other Latin he could remember!

We had Mr. Kuchel for maths, a brilliant man and author of the maths textbooks being used by every high school in those days. He was a kindly soul but unfortunately had no idea as to how to control his classes, so there was always noisy bedlam. There were two teachers we all loathed. Lang (Arithmetic) made a habit of leaving the classroom, and upon his return, naming all the kids who had mucked around during his absence. I was almost always on his list, but how did he know I had been clowning around? Then one day I spotted him out in the yard, sneaking up on the window, notebook in hand. I promptly nicknamed him "Leadboots" Lang. I heard later that the name stuck to him for the rest of his teaching days.

The other unpopular one was the headmaster - I've forgotten his name. He taught chemistry and hence, as that was not on my agenda, I had little to do with him fortunately. In my school days, the cane was administered fairly frequently although I got 'four of the best' only once. Lang said I had cheated but I knew I hadn't so the punishment was unjustified and deeply resented. I have always suspected it was his way of getting back at me for nicknaming him "Leadboots". The 'head' was quite sadistic. He told chemistry classes that answers to this weekly written tests were either one hundred percent right or one hundred percent wrong, there were no marks in between. Last thing Friday, papers were returned to his students and those that got it wrong knew they had to line up outside his office first thing Monday morning and get the cane. Fancy having that hanging over their heads all the weekend!

It must be obvious from the foregoing pages that so many things we took for granted have long since been superseded. I have, for interest sake, endeavoured to highlight some of these things. Take writing for instance - the ball-point had not been invented when I was at school. We used a pen with nib that required constant dipping into an inkwell set in the desk. They were, I suppose, only an improved version of the quill pen used by our forebears - those that

could write that is! By the time I was at high, fountain pens were available but we were not permitted to use them, it being considered they ruined our writing (as if mine was capable of further ruination!). The fountain pen, of course, housed a rubber tube which was filled with ink by means of a lever and hence did not require frequent dipping in an inkwell.

I have always disliked gymnasium exercises (we called it P.E. = physical education). So I volunteered to be the "ink monitor" and for the 3 years I was at high, I made the ink for the whole school - once a week when everyone else was doing P.E.

GUY FAWKES DAY

THIS WAS A BIG ANNUAL EVENT to which we looked forward with much anticipation. A few days in advance, kids would blacken their faces, put on old torn clothes, make a straw Guy Fawkes (like a scarecrow) and tow it around in a home-made go-kart (box on wheels) from house to house collecting money for crackers. The verse went like this -

A penny for the Guy

If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do

If you haven't got a halfpenny, God bless you.

By the actual day we would have built a huge bonfire. After neighbours and friends would continue their efforts for an even bigger bonfire and a bigger combined supply of fireworks. We could hardly wait for dark when the fun would begin! There would be adults in charge to see we came to no harm as we applied matches to crackers of all sizes, spinning Catherine wheels, penny bombs (we would place a tin over them when lit and see who could send his tin highest into the air), throwdowns, jumping jacks, sky rockets, sparklers etc. etc. Kids are deprived of such simple fun today. The relentless lawmakers banned the frivolity because a few were careless enough to get burnt.

THE BAKERY AT BURNSIDE

WHEN I TURNED TWELVE, I started working part time for my Uncle Hubert who had taken over the family bakery at Burnside from his father (my grandfather). Hube, as he was generally called, was the eldest son in my father's family. In those days (1930's), practically all bread was home delivered daily with Saturday being the biggest day. It would have been unthinkable to bake on "Sunday, the Lord's day, and hence Saturday was a double delivery. Even in the 1960's, fifty percent of bread was home-delivered, by 1990 this had dropped to 1.4 percent and today (1994) I would be surprised if there were any bakers left calling on homes.

Every Friday night, or rather early Saturday morning, I would walk the two miles to the bakery leaving home about 2 a.m. Sometimes, on a dark, windy night, it was a bit scary but I always walked on the road to avoid dogs that otherwise would rush up to their front fences, frightening the wits out of this twelve year old. If it were wet, I usually left home in the daylight and would then give Uncle a hand with punching down the dough or some other bread and/or bun making activity. Later I would fall asleep on top of the bags of flour.

About 5 a.m. I would make my way by lantern light to the stables and prepare the horse and carts. One brute of a horse would always put his head in the air making it almost impossible for me to get a bit in his mouth. Finally inspiration struck! I put chaff and bran into his trough and as soon as he started to eat, a halter was slipped over his head and tied down to the stall. Gotcha!

Delivery men would arrive soon after and we would load the still hot and deliciously smelling bread plus rolls, yeast buns and twists into the carts. Then off we would go to deliver to our

customers. The horse often knew what houses to stop at better than I did! It was usually around 2 p.m. by the time the round was completed and then back to the bakehouse, unharness, brush and currycomb, water and feed the horse and finally walk the two miles home again for a sleep before tea. A long day for a twelve year old but I kept it up right through my three years at high school. I was paid two shillings and sixpence, more commonly called half a crown. Expressed in today's currency it equalled twenty five cents but its purchasing power now would be something like six dollars. Nevertheless I doubt if many kids today would do what I was happy to do for six dollars!



Once the horse bolted as I was going past the then huge Penfold's Grange Vineyards which is where Skye is today. The cartwheel became entangled in the fence and ripped out what seemed to me at the time to be miles of it! I took my courage in my hands, once I had the horse under control again, and drove up the long, long drive to the Penfold home and reported to Mr. Penfold. To my great relief, he wasn't at all cross, said he had had horses bolt with him and knew it wasn't my fault. He took me inside and gave me a raspberry balm with

lemonade to calm my jaded nerves. The following Saturday I noted the damage had been repaired.

We Didn't Ask Where It Came From!

During the grape season, my father would, late at night, walk the couple of miles from home to Penfold's and return with our huge bread-basket full of grapes. Others did it too of course, it was depression time and Mr. Penfold, to his credit, turned a blind eye. What is now Erindale was then called Pile's Paddock, much of which was under fruit trees, mainly peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums. At the appropriate time, some of that produce found its way on to our table at Statenborough Street too!

GROWING UP

I WAS OUTFITTED with my very first pair of long trousers when I was 13 years old. I was a teenager but didn't know it as the term had not yet been coined. The decision to buy long trousers was a matter of great family discussion as Mother had to be convinced that I was both tall and old enough to wear them. You see, there were no such things as jeans or 'casual outfits'. Boys wore short pants and men wore long trousers - it was as clear cut as all that! Of course there was that awkward in between stage which I figured I had reached but Mother wasn't so sure. Finally, with Dad on my side, I won the day and, with Mother to supervise, John Martins outfitted me with a pair of long grey flannelettes. They were to be worn on special occasions only and certainly not to school! I did not get my first suit until I started work 2 years later.

A big outing which justified wearing the long trousers was going to the Marryatville Ozone Picture Palace about once a month on a Saturday night with my friend Ron Schrapel from the next street (Godfrey Terrace). He was similarly outfitted too. I would blow that week's half crown I had worked so hard for at the bakery and delivering bread for 12 hours. We felt so superior sitting in the luxury of the dress circle (no front stall with the common herd for us!). That cost one shilling and ninepence leaving me a further ninepence for a sixpenny 'Dandy' ice-cream and threepence worth of lollies.

Purchases were made from one of the young boys who came right up to the patrons so you had no need to leave your seat. They were always neatly dressed in white coats and with pillbox hats held at a rakish angle by a strap under the chin. The boys were a feature of every theatre. A tray was carried in front with a leather neck halter, displaying quite a variety of chocolates and toffees (Minties, Columbines, Fantales and Maxmints to name a few) also several styles of ice-cream such as Eskimo Pies and Dandies. The theatre boys disappeared in the 1940's, never to return, when manpower became short because of the war.

STATELY HOMES



Beaumont House built in 1849 by Augustus Short, the first Anglican Bishop of Adelaide. *pic: History Trust of SA*

IN MY YOUTH, virtually all of the many stately homes on large estates in the Burnside district were privately owned: Cooks, housemaids, gardeners etc. were employed full-time to maintain them and allow the owners to live in luxury unknown to the rest of us. Unfortunately so many of these charming homes have been pulled down to make way for housing estates. Others have become reception houses and so on. "Beaumont House", on Beaumont Common, is now National Trust. "Attunga" on Kensington Road was, in 1944, bequeathed by its owner Von Richen to the Burnside Council, conditional upon the house and garden being preserved, for a hospital and nursing home (Burnside War Memorial Hospital). "Undelcarra", now

National Trust but still a private home I think, was where the Simpson's lived. It was surrounded by much more land then. I used to deliver bread there and it seemed a long drive up past the lodge house and round the back where the cook, a big jovial lady, always insisted I join her and the several maids for tea and hot scones, cakes or biscuits in the kitchen. "Fernilea Lodge", now a reception house, was owned by one of the Coopers. He fascinated us kids with his wooden leg. He had two motor cars (no one had two cars!), his very own petrol bowser and (would you believe?) a chauffeur who was dressed in the uniform peculiar to chauffeurs.

"Finnissbrook"

My favourite big home was "Finnissbrook", built 1840. It's still in private hands but with far less land. Originally the estate covered 57 acres spreading from Waterfall Gully Road to Burnside (now Glynburn) Road and spreading south to Beaumont Road but by 1925 much of it had been subdivided leaving only 7 acres around the house. That is how I first know "Finnissbrook", but later more land went to housing so the grounds are much reduced although the house is still not easily seen from the road. Post war, I was to buy part of the last subdivision to build my first home. I paid £145 (= \$290) for a 60 foot x 150 foot block on the corner of Finniss Terrace and McAllan Avenue (see later reference). Today, there is no vacant land in the immediate area but what is available not too far off is commanding around \$150,000. I could have bought numerous blocks at the time I acquired mine for \$290 or less but like everyone else, I had little money so that was unthinkable.

In the 1930's I often visited "Finnissbrook" with my father for it was then owned by his friend Jack Frewster, a very interesting character. Jack was known far and wide as 'King of the Ivory Keys'. He used to take concert parties interstate and to a number of the Pacific Islands. It was said he could practically "make his piano take". Jack also played at the Marryatville Picture Theatre during the silent movie days.



Jean, Harry, Robyn & Mark
Finniss Tce, Burnside Aug 1951
pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

He would create the mood of the movie through his music and you could 'hear those horses galloping across the prairie or 'sense' the dastardly deed of the villain so much better than from the silent black and white film on its own (usually called 'flicks' because of their flickering).

I remember Jack telling tales of previous "Finnissbrook" owners such as a Mr Netter, owner of Netter's Arcade which disappeared when Harris Scarfe acquired it and absorbed the arcade into their Rundle to Grenfell Street shop. He must have been a wealthy man for the Arcade with all its little shops would have been prime real estate right in the very heart of the city. Netter visited Japan and other countries regularly and shipped back wrought iron pagodas, arches, fountains and other garden ornaments which became quite a feature at "Finnissbrook". He, or maybe his predecessor W. J. Coote, retired draper, created a long drive to the house from Burnside (now Glynburn) Road. It wound through an avenue of loquat trees some of which were still there when I bought my block in Finniss Terrace.



First Home , Finniss Tce, Burnside

pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

Old man Coote was known for his insistence on strict punctuality. Every Sunday he drove his family down to the Wesleyan Chapel (Wesley Church) on the Norwood Parade in a four-in-hand - a large four wheel carriage with a fringed canopy top drawn by four horses. Service started promptly at 11.00am but woe betide the poor parson who allowed his sermon to become too long. Finished or not, at a few minutes before noon, Mr. Coote would withdraw his hunter (an ornate gold watch on a chain fastened across his waistcoat) audibly click the case open and at precisely 12 o'clock he would rise from the family pew and march out to his waiting carriage with his entourage behind him in an orderly line.

MY FIRST FULL TIME JOB

LAST TERM AT SCHOOL, an inspector asked if we knew what occupation we would like to follow. To my surprise I was the only student to raise a hand, but then I had known for a long time that I wanted a newspaper career. Taking up the inspector's suggestion, I began calling on The Advertiser and The News - with some fear and trepidation I admit. Fortunately I found the executives generally were very kind to me even though there would shortly be dozens and dozens of youths looking for work. I think they appreciated my initiative in getting in early and trying to help myself.

Following talks with the secretary and the accountant at the 'Tiser, I decided I definitely did not want to pursue an accounting career. I also dismissed all thoughts of the printing side, not being mechanically minded and disliking getting my hands dirty! That left editorial and advertising. Not by the time the school year was over, the two papers editorial chiefs-of staff and advertising managers knew who Harry Hastwell was all right! However, there just were no vacancies.

The new year came and with it a polio epidemic, then called infantile paralysis, for until that time it had affected children principally. Now adults were dying from it. It was so severe an epidemic that all schools throughout the state remained closed through to 4th March. Mother was making noises about my returning to school in the absence of a job. Of course I applied for every vaguely suitable position that was advertised but my heart wasn't in it, for I was still very keen to get into the newspaper industry.

Then, on March 1st, Arthur Searcy, The News advertising manager, contacted me - could I start on Monday, March 4th, the very day school was recommencing! The year was 1938. So I took

my first tentative step into the advertising work as a copy boy earning twelve shillings and sixpence a week i.e. \$1.25 which today (1994) would have the spending power of around \$26.75. However, every fourth week I had to buy a tram pass to get to and from work. That cost 12 shillings, leaving me with sixpence (5 cents) for that week's work!

THE THIRTIES AND MY EARLY TEENAGE YEARS

IT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST to pause here and reflect upon some of the differences in lifestyle in my teenage years and today, the 1990's.

Families were much closer knit then for a variety of reasons. Although Australia was fast emerging from the depression, by 1938 when I began working, there was little spare money about still. Only one family in five had a car, so outings were limited to tram and train travel for most, hence people stayed home more. Activities for children were virtually limited to school and local areas with walking or cycling distance of home. Sports were part of school curriculum, usually held Friday afternoons at school, not weekends.

Meals were very much part of family life with all members sitting down together. News of each child's and parent's activities for that day were exchanged over the evening meal which was called tea - not dinner, that was the midday meal! Much attention was paid to table manners. Church played a big part in most people's lives. Sunday was a day of rest. Many still consider it evil to work or play in a noisy fashion, some went so far as to ban cooking or even watering the garden that day. It was "the Lord's Day".

Whilst television was a long way off, the wireless brought a new focus to family relaxation and evenings were spent together listening to it, or the wind-up gramophone, or perhaps reading. Children studied, often with parental input. Many regularly played cards as a family group, evenings were spent together listening to it, or the wind-up gramophone, or perhaps reading. Children studied, often with parental input. Many regularly played cards as a family group, snap and Coon-Can were popular children's games whilst adults played bridge, euchre and cribbage. On special nights relative, friends or neighbours would be invited over to "make up a hand" of bridge, usually to be followed by a quite elaborate supper. Mind you, some devout Protestants still strongly disapproved, as they did of dancing - "Work of the Devil".

All of these factors combined to bring a greater unity and closeness to family living. Regrettably this became lost during the war as members enlisted or went on to shift work. It has never returned to the same extent. There are so many diversions today which did not exist in the 1930's and earlier on. These have tended to make family unity and closeness largely a thing of the past. It certainly exists but not to the same extent.

Outside home, Friday and Saturday nights were the big nights of the week. Many had a regular reservation at their local picture theatre. Dancing was very much in vogue with the Two Step, Lambeth Walk, Charleston and the Big apple being dance of the day. There were a number of big dance halls, the Palais, Embassy and Trocodero where Big Bands were the order of the day. Vaudeville at the Tivoli Theatre (The 'Tiv') was also the go with comedians Roy Rene ('Mo Mocackie' as he was called), George Wallace and others making names for themselves. At the September Royal Adelaide Show there were intriguing side-shows featuring various oddities such as the Pinheaded Chinaman, midgets, giants, Headless Woman, the Fat Lady, Tattooed Lady, Siamese Twins, boxing troupes and ladies being sawed in halves! No doubt some oddities were fakes but so well done. The crowds gazed in awe.

Most families attended church on Sundays, Church of England, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists. There was no Uniting Church and little

in the way of breakaway groups like there are today. The Salvation Army (Salvos) played their brass and drum bands; sang and preached on street corners and collected money for their work with the poor throughout the city, suburbs and major country towns where they had Citadels (church). Jehovah's Witnesses were despised, distrusted and even feared.

I attended Kensington Park Methodist Sunday School and later church, mainly for comradeship found there. And was never christened or officially received into the Church. A mixed group of us teenagers, always referred to as The Mob, played tennis Saturday afternoons right through summer, took long walks together most Sunday afternoons weather permitting, had "chop picnics" (forerunner to barbecues - a word then unknown to us). Public holidays saw us catch the tram to the city, then another tram to Glenelg or tram to Largs Bay of Hallett Cove etc.

We would spend all day there, returning home in the evening, making sure we did not miss the last tram leaving the city at 11.00pm. Quite often we would gather around the piano in one of our homes for a good old singsong on a Sunday afternoon and stop for tea. It was the days of lots of home cooking, sausage rolls, sandwiches, an endless variety of cakes and biscuits, jellies, fruit salad and fresh thick cream that actually came direct from a cow, not pasteurised or homogenised in a factory. There was never any alcohol, we would not have even thought of it.

It was during this period that lifelong friendships were cemented between Fred Clayton, Ray Ward, Colin Bainger, Roger Freeman and myself. After the war when we had settled back to civilian life (circa 1948) we began meeting each Monday for lunch for what became facetiously the Pie, Chips and Gravy Club (all we could afford at the time). That most pleasant of arrangements continued every Monday night through until we all retired. Nowadays we only meet once a month but the contact has remained unbroken for nearly fifty years. Fred died in 1993. (Roger, Ray and Harry died within a year or 2 of each other. At 2002, Colin is the only one remaining. The wives continue to meet annually at Christmas.)

THE ADELAIDE NEWS 1938/39

AT FIRST, MY WORK AT THE NEWS involved riding a bicycle all over the city square mile collecting advertising copy, delivering proofs, returning blocks, stereos, mats etc. There were three of us running these errands and we were flat out keeping up with deadlines. We also had defined deliveries of newspapers hot off the press each afternoon - free voucher copies for advertisers. It was at this early stage of my career that I learnt one can sometimes make a little cash on the side without even trying!! Best spot of all was in front of Myers in Rundle Street. With the bike parked in the gutter with its basket at the front containing copies of the News yet to be delivered (plus a few spares!), I would take Myer's copies upstairs to their advertising department. When I returned I invariably found the supply of papers diminished but with fourpence (about 3 cents) left for every paper missing! People were very honest then and not once was a paper taken without being paid for, nor did anyone even steal the money.

Another job I liked doing was meeting the 8.30 a.m. express train from Melbourne to collect press bags sent across daily from the Melbourne and Sydney offices. The locked bags contained inter-house memos, press schedule, contracts etc from advertising agencies and direct clients, printing material, copy etc. We were allowed to go directly on to the platform without purchasing a platform ticket, calling out 'Press' (ever so importantly!) to the ticket collector. For excitement we often hopped aboard the guards-van whilst the train was still in motion. The collected bags were thrown aboard a motorised trolley and then travelled in style to the parcel office to sign for them. The News was almost immediately opposite the station on North Terrace so it was but a short walk back to the office with what were often heavy bags.

Copyboy was a newspaper term applied only to lads in the editorial and advertising departments because these departments are the sources of copy from which a newspaper is compiled. Editorial included pictorial and the 'morgue', an in-house term for the all important reference library housing all sorts of information for rapid reference, back copies and even obituaries of well known identities written long before their deaths and updated when that eventuated.

NEWSPAPER PRODUCTION - THE OLD AND THE NEW



MUCH HAS CHANGED since my newspaper days. With the advent of computers and offset printing there is little similarity between newspaper production today and in my time. Then copy, whether editorial or advertising, went to the 'comp' (composing) room where it was typeset on linotype machines. Photos/artwork were transferred to zinc plates called blocks (halftone or line). It all came together in a metal galley and proofs pulled for checking. Each page was duly assembled and locked into a heavy metal chase and sent to the stereo room whereupon a matrix (mat) was made. This involved the chase, holding an assembled page, being covered by a sheet of papier maché, then a blanket (fibrous pad) over that. Pressure in a huge hot press followed resulting in a matrix of the whole page. I should mention that the metal type was in reverse so that when the image was transferred to the mat, it came out correct reading on the mat. We became expert at reading reverse type after a time.

Next stage was for the stereotyper to produce a semi-circular metal cast from the mat, the metal being a mix of lead, tin and antimony melted at a very high temperature. These page stereotypes were of course again in reverse being a mirror imprint of the correct reading matrix. The machine room in the basement then received the page stereotypes and locked, each into its correct printing position, on the circular drums of the press which produced 60,000 copies of the News per hour.

Today it is all hi-tech. The News no longer exists but at the Advertiser, as with any other modern paper, pages are composed of paste-ups of copy prepared in the city office, not in a foundry as described earlier. The 'Tiser transmits a facsimile of each page to its Mile End plant by a fibre optic cable. Printing plates are produced on two automatic plate-making lines, each capable of processing 240 plates an hour. The three offset printing presses are each capable of running at 80,000 copies an hour - 112 broadsheet pages with full colour available in most sections.

RUNDLE STREET TRADERS

RUNDLE MALL OF TODAY, the 1990's, is so vastly different from pre-war and early post-war Rundle Street. It had more emporiums than any other street in the world and was said to have the longest continuous strip of neon advertising signs also.

John Martins and **Harris Scarfes** are still on the same respective sites. **Charles Birks** became **David Jones**, despite a statement at the time that the name would not change. **Myers** (never Myer as it became known later upon management insistence) was an attractive old building, replaced in 1992/93 with a modern glass monstrosity. When I started work in 1938, Myers had just acquired the business next door, **Marshalls**. The Marshall building was completely empty and gutted and part of Myers store. Myers advertising department was the only occupants of the Marshall building and was on the top floor. As said earlier, I went there every day. It was an experience winding my way through the dim, ghostly, empty building and riding the unattended ancient lifts that rattled and shook alarmingly.

RUNDLE STREET TRADERS

Plumb in the middle between Myers and the old Marshall building was a single storey jewellery shop owned by the **Stevensons** who were my father's cousins. They refused to sell to Myers and so Myers just rebuilt over them. Stevenson's little shop looked a bit odd sitting there with its big clock proudly protruding over the footpath. They did eventually sell to Myers but a number of years passed before that.



Foy and Gibsons

pic: Australian Electric Traction Assoc.

Foy and Gibsons stood on the north eastern corner of Rundle and Pulteney Streets with **Cravens** on the opposite side. **Cox Brothers** was on the corner of Rundle and Twin Streets. Post-war Foy and Gibsons and Cox Brothers amalgamated and traded for a few years as **Cox Foys** but finally lost in the retail sales race and disappeared as had Cravens before that. **Miller Andersons**, in Hindley Street not far from King William Street, was another emporium which fell by the wayside being unable or unwilling to change to modern merchandising practices.

Moving away from the Rundle Street area for the moment, **Charles Moores**, famous for its beautiful marble staircase, was on Victoria Square but was destroyed by fire in March 1948 and did not resume trading (*Note: The store continued to operate after being rebuilt until a gradual decline in the 1970s resulted in being sold*). However, the building was beautifully restored, retaining the same facade and the staircase. Today it is part of the Law Courts complex. Nearby in Gouger Street was **Peoplestores** which, even in the '40's was rather old fashioned but favoured by country folk visiting the 'big smoke'. It too went the way of the others after the war.

Rundle Arcade and its offshoot Gay's Arcade was the only one off Rundle Street whereas today there are several featuring fashion and boutique shops. That type of business was still years away. Most people relied on the big stores for their clothing. The male business and professional community invariably had their suits tailor-made for them and Adelaide had many tailors, only a few of which ventured into other clothing. It would have been the 1970's before the swing to ready-made suits occurred and most tailors disappeared. **Claude Eatt** in Gawler Place was my tailor.

There were, however, some small shops in Rundle Street specialising in clothing. In menswear, **Leaver Brothers** was a bit upmarket and **Thwaites** was, and still has, a presence. **Judells** and **Holstein's** both catered for women's apparel. Everybody, but everybody, male and female, wore hats so that was big business. In shoe shops, I remember **Eziwalkin**, **Blacks** and **C. J. Young**.



Cravens Department Store, cnr of Rundle & Pulteney St. Cravens ceased trading in the early 1970s and the building was demolished to make way for the Centrepont Shopping Centre.

pic: State Library of South Australia B6200

Rundle Street also boasted two dentists. **Joseph Blitz** did nothing but extractions, at one shilling (10 cents) a tooth. - you couldn't call them rooms for they were all in the one room with just a partition between each. You could hear everything that went on in the next booth! The other dentist specialised in false teeth. His sign, on an arm jutting into Rundle Street like Stevenson's clock, was a huge set of dentures and the words "From £5". At that price (\$10) the teeth shown were almost black! The whiter the teeth, the more expensive they became!

Note: Harry served in the Dental Corps as a dental mechanic, making false teeth, with dentists, Bob Blackburn & Fred Trotter.

MY FIRST PROMOTION

THERE WERE THREE COPY BOYS in the Ad Department and up to ten in Editorial. I stuck it out, glad to have a job but others seemed to come and go after only a few months or even weeks. Some of course got better jobs. In due course it was apparently thought that I had served my apprenticeship on the bottom rung of the ladder and I was given an office job on the front counter. Much of my time seemed to be spent directing callers to whatever person or department they wanted.

I MEET SOME INTERESTING PEOPLE

THERE WAS THE AMERICAN **Charles Atlas** who claimed to be the world's strongest man. He advertised his body building correspondence courses and gave a series of lectures whenever he visited Adelaide - and of course sought editorial support. One stint I remember seeing him do for a newspaper photo was raising his outstretched arm from table to shoulder height with a small child standing on his palm - and holding the position for quite some time.

Another was **Rama Swarmi**, an Indian, who shared my office with me for some weeks. The News had engaged him to analyse handwriting. Hundreds of letters poured in daily from readers who had to buy the paper to ascertain Rama Swarmi's analysis of their handwriting of course. "A poor beginner, but a solid, confident finisher" he said of my writing. A rather interesting comment considering the head reader once remarked that mine was the worst writing of all copy he had to check in his job in the reading room and yet he never ever had a query. Rama was a gentle fellow and I enjoyed his company.



Daisy Bates

pic: State Library of South
Australia B16752

I met many other interesting people during this period but without a doubt the one I found most fascination was **Mrs Daisy Bates**. Much has been written about her, including several books but her real story will never be really known. She was a small, petite, erect woman, who always wore a long black skirt held tightly at her tiny waist, a high necked blouse veiled hat and high-heeled button-up boots - the style of the late 1800's to early 1900's and this was 1938/39.

Daisy always claimed her family was once wealthy Anglo-Irish Protestants and her parents died when she was a child. She became a ward of Sir George Outram and travelled through Europe with him and his family for several years. Some said she came from a poor Irish Catholic family, her mother died when she was young and her father was an alcoholic who ran off to America with another woman. It does appear that Daisy's maiden name was O'Dwyer and she was sent out to Queensland from her native Ireland to recover from "consumption" as tuberculosis was then called.

Amateur historian Alan Queale claims to have discovered that Daisy married the legendary Boer War soldier Harry 'Breaker' Morant in 1884 at Charters Towers. He was 19, she was 23. They parted within the month, Morant being sued for pig stealing. Apparently there was never a divorce but she married cattleman Bates soon after and gave birth to a son, Arnold, in Bathurst in August 1885.

It does not seem she spent much time with Bates after that. In 1894 she returned to England but did not see her son Arnold who was in the care of Mr Bates' relatives. She returned to Australia five years later. Daisy then became a welfare worker among the aboriginal people, first near Broom and then at Ooldea on the Transcontinental Railway line. The year was 1899 making her 38 years old. Thus when I first met Daisy Bates in 1938/39 she was a frail old lady nearing 80 but obviously a healthy one for she continued to work and live alone with "her natives" as she called them, constantly writing to government authorities ever seeking to be made Protector of Aborigines.

She lived with them way out there on the Nullabor almost until her death in 1951 at a Prospect nursing home in her 90th year.

When Mrs Bates visited The News it was to give the editor a story and of course to push her cause of becoming Protector of Aborigines. (Daisy had worked as a journalist in England). I was on the ground floor so she always stopped for a rest at my counter, have a chat and a drink of water before mounting the stairs to the editor's first floor office.

THE NEWS 1939-1941

It was not long before eligible colleagues started to enlist in the services. Many never returned, having paid the supreme sacrifice. I of course was too young at the beginning of the war. The enlistments, as it happened, opened up an opportunity for immediate further promotion for me. Soon after I turned 17, I was given responsibility for the Theatre Pages which necessitated liaising with theatre managers, ensuring copy was to land on time and proofs supplied, checked and corrected as necessary. I also did the page layouts, which can be tricky getting a collection of different sized ads to fit. The big side benefit was that most theatres made free tickets available in the best seats anytime I wanted them.



Seating 2300 people, the Adelaide Hoyts 'Regent' Theatre opened in June 1928 and for the next 39 years was known as "Australia's most luxurious theatre".

pic: State Library of South Australia B 8347

THEATRES OF THE PERIOD

With no television to keep people home, Adelaide and suburbs had many 'flick houses' as they were often called. **The Regent**, which today is a complex of several small theatrettes, was then one huge and opulent 2-tiered theatre with a large foyer. It was built in 1927 and went the full width of today's Regent Arcade. It had a great marble staircase, huge 4,500 piece Waterford crystal chandeliers, marble statues, miles of velvet drapes, lush carpeting and gilded baroque and Moroccan plaster friezes. Seats were quality leather and were equipped with foot warmers. Some seats, called "love seats", held a couple with no central armrests and could be reserved. Being more formal days, patrons nearly always pre-booked their theatre outing, usually several days in advance.

The Regent, managed by Ted Winter, had a dwarf as a sort of glorified messenger dressed in a blue uniform including a pillbox hat with chinstrap – very smart! He was one of the well-known West family who lived right in the city. They were 'all dwarfs'. I saw one of the boys in town quite recently, now in his sixties I would think. The big feature of the Regent was its Wurlitzer organ, which rose from the pits to stage level with Knight Barnett at the keyboard. Wonderful music. All theatres employed usherettes, dressed in attractive uniforms, to show patrons to their seats. It was considered a glamorous occupation, especially if you scored a position with the Regent.



Theatre Royal

pic State Library of South Australia B 2910

The **Rex Theatre**, managed by Jack Nobbs was also in Rundle Street, just east of the Regent, a much smaller and more intimate theatre and one of my favourites. Many a night, half way through the show, Jack would find my seat, give a quick flash of his torch and pass me his advertising copy for the next day. The Rex disappeared some years ago. Other Rundle Street theatres no longer in existence were the York and the Mayfair. This was the Golden Years of Hollywood and MGM built its own cinema outlet in Adelaide (1939) for \$120,000. The **Metro**, where Bruce's butcher shop with its several horses and carts and sawdust on the floor had stood. The Metro occupies the same Hindley Street site today but is now a movie complex whereas it was one glamorous, roomy theatre that I knew so well. **West's**, opposite the Metro, opened in 1908 as Adelaide's first permanent picture house. History records that in 1913, "Quo Vadis" was screened at West's and 70,000 people saw the film. This was only a shade less than the population of Adelaide and suburbs at the time! Greater Union, realizing that MGM's Metro with its modern air-conditioning which West's lacked and with 'Gone with the Wind' in the making, decided to rebuild West's. It re-opened on December 1st 1939 only 2 months after the Metro. 'Gone with the Wind' was screened at both theatres simultaneously.

Also, in Hindley Street were two other theatres that no longer exist. **Theatre Royal**, which was replaced by a car park some years ago, was a gracious old building managed by my father's friend Jack Fewster (see earlier reference re "Finnisbrook".) Opposite stood the **Civic**, managed by Bill Currie who later went to Hollywood and became a film director. I reckon Bill qualified as the laziest man I ever met! I had a proposition to put to all theatre managers and when he learnt I had yet to talk to Jack Fewster, he suggested it would be a good idea if we went together. I started to walk across the street, but Bill pulled me back. We drove there in his car! It was parked right in front of the Civic immediately opposite the Theatre Royal, so all we did was a U-turn! This story also indicates how few cars there were in those days with ample space for parking on both sides of the road.

Then there was the Tivoli (now Her Majesty's) in Grote Street for live vaudeville as mentioned earlier. Finally, the **Majestic**, in King William Street between Grenfell and Pirie Streets, was leased by a real go-getting entrepreneur, Harry Wren. Sometimes he showed movies and other times he staged live theatre with comedians, jugglers and musicians, lots of colour, lights and noise. He set tongues wagging with scantily clad chorus girls. Harry pulled a swifty on me once and succeeded in being the first in Adelaide, if not Australia, to illustrate an ad with a nude. Not a very revealing nude by today's standards, but a nude nevertheless. He achieved it by deliberately running late with his copy saying it was coming from Sydney by plane. He rushed in at the very last minute, perfectly timed, waved a complete block in my direction and rushed it straight up to Tom Poole, the printer. Tom slapped it into position in the chase and dispatched the now completed page to the printing room. The print run was virtually over by the time I noticed his illegal ad and it was too late to do anything about it. We anticipated a visit from the police but that didn't happen.

In the suburbs there were numerous movie houses that disappeared with the advent of television, many of which now serve different purposes. There were no drive-ins at this time. Most suburban theatres were **Ozone**, owned by the Waterman Bros. or **Star**, owned by Dan Clifford. I can remember the opening of several of the suburban theatres. It was quite a big event I attended as an invited guest when the **Piccadilly** opened at North Adelaide, also the **Roxy** on Anzac Highway.

Finally, Adelaide enjoyed visits from travelling circuses, boxing troupes and variety concert parties. Pirie Street between Hindmarsh Square and East Terrace was largely open paddocks and a favourite site for the marquees of these side shows. I usually scored a double season ticket marked "Press", which meant I could see the performances as frequently as desired



WAR!

ON FRIDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 1939 I was about to leave The News at 6.30pm to attend night school as usual when a message went through the building that anyone still in the building, no matter what his job was, had to report immediately to the Editor's office. I was the only one left in the advertising department as it happened. Hitler, despite promises to the contrary given to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, had invaded Poland, and England, if she kept her promises to the rest of Europe, would now declare war on Germany, Australia was almost certain to follow.

The Editor was a popular and capable man with but one arm, known always as J.D. Brown, or simply J.D. I was assigned the task of sitting with him, making phone calls as asked by him and then handing the phone to him once I had the person he wanted to speak

to. It was the first time in my life that I had spoken to America and England. Over the next few hours J.D. spoke several times with our correspondents there. His aim was to produce a paper every hour with updates and this we collectively did until midnight with trucks standing by to rush the editions to key sales locations.

England declared war on Germany on the Sunday (September 3rd). At 9.00pm that night our Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced per radio that Australia was also at war.

I JOIN THE ARMY

ON NOVEMBER 6TH 1941 I reported to the Army Camp at Warradale, complete with two packed lunches! For reasons that will ever remain a mystery, the Army was unable to feed new recruits on their first day, so I and others enlisting that day, obeyed written instructions and brought our own food for midday and evening messes. One chap, Max ('Bud') Abbott, turned up with only one –he had eaten the other waiting for the Army truck to pick us up at the Torrens Parade Ground!

I had earlier on been given a thorough medical and was graded A2 because of my odd heart beat, which is still with me. It was decided therefore not to place me in a combatant unit.

The one I joined at Warradale was the 6th Cavalry Field Ambulance, where our days were occupied with lectures on human anatomy, appropriate treatment (as known at that time) for what might ail it, medications, massage techniques etc. There was a weekly parade of all troops in all units in the camp, but other than that, we did little in the way of soldiering. In fact, as it transpired, "soldiering" was to form virtually no part of my 4¼ years in the Army.

The 6th Cavalry Field Ambulance experience lasted less than 5 weeks at which time three of us volunteered to go to Alice Springs. We reported to the Alice Base Hospital on December 12th, 1941. Initially I worked as an orderly (nurse) in the hospital, taking temperatures, pulses and blood pressures, making beds, emptying bedpans, dispensing medicines under direction of the charge sister, bringing patients their meals etc. Occasionally I was required to go to the prison compound known as 'The Boob', to see a patient. There was a 4 metre high barbed-wire fence with a second barbed-wire 'cattle fence' 2 metres out with coils of barbed-wire between.



Harry Frith Hastwell

pic: Hastwell Family Private Collection

The only shelter was a tent-fly inside the compound. 'Hard cases' were mostly given 28 days sentence without a court martial. Dressed in shorts, socks and boots only, they slept on the dirt floor with one blanket, which was issued at sundown and taken back at reveille (0600 hours). There were no amenities, no reading matter, absolutely nothing to occupy their time or minds. Zoo animals receive better treatment. Some were nice, friendly fellows, other were considered highly dangerous and an armed guard would stay ever-watchful alongside me as I administered the drug, treated a cut, re-banded, etc.

Before long I was seconded to the Alice Springs R.A.P. (Regimental Aid Post, i.e. First Aid Post). Here I was assistant to a Dr Moody from whom I learnt a great deal in a very short time, as we dealt with anything from broken bones to cuts, bruises, burns, colds, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, you name it. I even assisted in the theatre on one occasion where the patient was found to have a blocked bowel necessitating removal of the blocked segment and re-stitching to make good again.

UP THE TRACK

I WAS SLOWLY LEARNING that the Army had no intention of letting me rot in one spot. I was to be constantly on the move, frequently on my own with no real attachment to any particular unit. During my time in the Army, as it transpired, the longest I stayed in one camp was less than three months.

So the instructive period at the R.A.P. was short-lived for the Army in all its wisdom decided that at the tender age of just nineteen and with "all" the medical knowledge I had gained in my first 8 weeks total service, I was ready to take up the highly responsible roll of convoy medic.

This was a time, prior to the Japanese bombing Darwin, of massive troop movements to build up forces around Darwin. They came firstly by trains to Alice Springs, then by trucks to Larrimah (there being no rail between these points) and then finally by trains again to Darwin. The subject of completing the rail right through is still being debated 50 years later! My area was the Alice to Larrimah (near Birdum) segment. There could be a thousand troops in any one convoy and I was on my own, no doctor or anyone else with medical knowledge. Frequently two or even three convoys a day were despatched comprising 80 to 100 or more trucks in each. The first leaving Alice at 0600 hours after a 0515 hours breakfast.

The journey took 3 days with overnight billeting at Barrow Creek, Banka Banka and then Larrimah. There was an R.A.P. with a doctor at Barrow Creek, but not one at Banka, so I used to fervently hope nothing cropped up in the Barrow to Banka areas that I couldn't handle. Dysentery from drinking the local bore waters was the biggest single problem. Often there would be, say, two hundred lined up for medicine at lunch and tea breaks. Often I had no time to eat. But more of the medical problem encountered later on.

HISTORY OF THE TRACK

MANY PEOPLE, even those alive at the time, believe The Track was built by the Americans. It is simply not true, so I have done some research which I hope is of interest. The Yanks did, however, contribute labour to the Mount Isa to Tennant Creek road – to the point where it joins The Track. Mainly Negro labour was used.

As to The Track, the facts are that in September 1940, the Highways Departments of Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, plus input from the Army, Department of Interior and



Post Master General (now Telecom) agreed to build a lightly metalled road and upgrade it once the wet season had passed. Thus D.O.M.F. (Darwin Overland Maintenance Force) was born under the command of an Australian, Lieutenant Colonel Noel M. Loutit D.S.D., E.D. Later, when Alice Springs was placed under marital law as a war-time measure, Colonel Loutit had sole control over the civilian as well as the military population without benefit (or hindrance!) of a District Council. Initially there were three hundred construction employed by D.O.M.F. workers but in due course D.O.M.F. settled down to an establishment of twenty eight officers and eight hundred and nineteen other ranks. It was, at the outset, a complete outfit from road-workers, transport, supply, signals, bakers, medics, drivers and even its own ministers of religion. However, by October 1941, it had become unwieldy and units of separate entities were formed. D.O.M.F. was withdrawn and C.A.M.T.C. (Central Australian Motor Transport Column) assumed the transport role.

Ration Cards *pic: Peter Hastwell* Similarly each unit, such as medical, signals etc., landed its own responsibilities whilst remaining completely unattached to the Army.

Private contractors constructed the concrete causeways over the many creeks, mostly dry, but subject to flash flooding. The worst section was the 320 miles (515 Kilometres) from Tennant Creek to Birdum. One time my convoy stopped for a break near one of these which in this instance consisted of underground pipes cemented over to road level. There had been no local rain but some miles upstream there had been and there was a strong water flow through the pipes. As it gushed out we caught fish, washed down from higher up!

With road-workers losing the battle to maintain a useable road, forty Victorian civilian road-workers with trucks and equipment arrived at Tennant Creek in March 1942 – the road from thereon being the worst section. By August there were three hundred such civilian volunteers plus others from the C.C.C. (Civil Construction Corps).

When finally bituminisation began, it was found that local gravels were of poor quality and water was short. So with the use of three portable heavy duty mixers obtained from the United States, premixing of bitumen began in the Alice (July 1942). This was loaded, transported and unloaded by Australian convoy personnel to the site. In due course 15,380 tons of bitumen was to be handled. The road constructed was to a maximum of 16 feet in width.

By September 1942, the 234 miles of road between the junction of the East/West (Mount Isa) road and Larrimah required urgent reconstruction. Agreement was reached that the Victorian Country Road Board would undertake re-sheeting 95 miles, South Australian Highways 29 miles, Department of Interior 33 miles and Army Royal Engineers 77 miles. This joint cooperation resulted in road reconstruction being completed by the end of 1942 and bituminous treatment could then continue. In the meantime the lower section (Alice to Tennant Creek) was kept trafficable by small maintenance gangs under control of the Department of Interior. Much of it was no more than a 'fire track' bulldozed to a width of 20 feet.

The Track was not drained and was under water for mile after mile when it rained. When I arrived in December the following year it was in a very rough state, barely kept in operation by the bulldozers with some metal laid down in the very worst areas. Bear in mind it was carrying 150 – 200 trucks a day each way – full with troops and/or supplies going up, but mainly empty on the return journey. The convoys continued day after day, but with less vehicles as the time passed, right through to late 1945.

In dry weather the bulldust was atrocious with visibility often measure in feet. In some parts the road corrugation shook the trucks so severely that it was essential to stop every hour and check

the loads. In the wet, bogging was frequent, making it necessary for the truck ahead to tow the one behind it. If this wasn't possible a bypass would be hastily constructed around the bogged vehicle to prevent the whole convoy coming to a halt. I remember one trip when bogging was so common that it took the vehicle I was in 6 hours to travel the 120 miles from Alice to Ti Tree Wells, that is an average of 20 miles per hour! In Early 1943, the Country Road Board took over preparation of the last 20 miles and bituminisation from Alice to Tennant commenced. Sealing was finally completed in December 1943 after 20 months of solid, hard work by hundreds of men – all Australians.

So there roughly is the story of the Track. The only American involvement was at a high level conference attended by a Colonel Robertson representing United States forces and two General Motor's technical experts, one resident in Australia and the other from the United States.

ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Until the mid-1940's, Adelaide had but three ad. agencies. Owen Gellert ran a small one-man/one girl operation. His clients were all retail – Miller Anderson's emporium and several furniture stores. It always surprised me that he didn't get nameplates mixed, for the ads often looked much the same even though the stores were in opposition! Owen was a well-spoken 'gentleman' and a thoroughly nice person. He also edited the Garden Pages of the Mail (called Sunday Mail now) and invariably wore a flower, usually a carnation, in his lapel.

The other bigger agencies were Clem Taylor and Alan Martin. They had a gentleman's agreement that they would not approach each other's clients, which I believe was strictly adhered to. Clem was born Karl Sneider, but changed his name during the 1914-18 War when the anti-German feeling was very strong. Many people did this at the time. Place names were also changed. Blumfeld (Bloomfield) became Birdwood for example, but that's a whole story in itself. Clem was always immaculately dressed.

Alan Martin was a much more relaxed individual and was universally liked. He shifted offices several times as his business grew but as a keen member of the racing fraternity, location was always determined by one factor – proximity to the Tatts Club! He always employed two office boys but as such lads come and go, Alan got over the small problem of remembering their names by calling one South and the other North! You see, one had to cover the north side of the city on his pushbike and the other the south, delivering proofs or whatever to clients. Little terrors they invariably were, but they worshipped Alan as he would not stand for a word of criticism about them from anyone even the time they set the office alight whilst toasting sandwiches on a radiator – or pelted passing cars with overripe nectarines.



'The Beginning of Rain'
Painting by Ainslie Roberts

In due course, another agency opened its doors, Webb Roberts McLelland. I never knew who Mr. Webb was; he certainly didn't work at the agency. I suspect he put the money up to establish the business. Ainsley Roberts was the commercial artist in the trio. His friend was Cecil Mountford, an anthropologist who acquired a great knowledge of things aboriginal, travelling amongst and befriending several different northern tribes. He took a particular interest in their mythology and, subsequently, so did Ainsley. In due course, Ainsley was to become famous for his paintings telling the stories of this mythology. He once offered me one of his paintings for around 200 pounds

(\$400) but I was struggling to buy our first home, raise a family etc. and didn't have the money, so had to forego the opportunity. Today an Ainsley Robert's original fetches several thousand dollars. Ainsley died in 1994, not long after many of his works were stolen from his studio. His son was later arrested for the theft. It is believed he burnt them to claim the insurance.

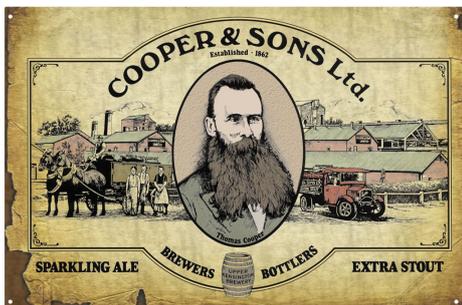
As for Maurice McLelland, he was a dapper little man with expensive, well-cut suits, matching ties and pocket handkerchiefs, beautiful shoes and several stylish hats including a couple of bowlers. He was the only man I ever knew to wear spats.

(Look it up in the dictionary, if you don't know what they are!)

Post war, those agencies, Alan Martin, Clem Taylor, Webb Roberts McLelland became the (unintentional!) training ground for a number of ambitious young men who later formed their own individual agencies and so established the very competitive scene which still exist today, although none of those original operators remain.

SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS

The Adelaide I got to know once I started working (1938) was different from today in so many ways. War brought a manpower shortage for normal civilians production. Building materials were almost unobtainable so the city skyline remained largely unchanged for years. Petrol, clothing and many other items, including beer and cigarettes were rationed. Cars were fitted with gas-producers that burnt wood creating vapours which translated into driving power and so saved on petrol. War ended August 1945 but it took nearly 4 years or more for things to return to normal. Then pace of business and living generally altered quite rapidly. This in turn created employment opportunities far removed from the Depression years. It also greatly changed our way of life. And many sights, sounds and smells.



Some that come readily to mind –

- The clip clop of horse hooves. The sound of iron rimmed cartwheels on bitumen. Acrid aroma of sweating horses. Steaming piles of manure in the streets.
- Trains letting off steam, shunting and blowing of whistles. Noise of wheels slipping on cold steel rails.
- The salty sea smell of crates of fish and crayfish arriving at the Adelaide railway station from the South East.
- Hops brewing at West End brewery in Hindley Street and Coopers at Leabrook. The malty smells coming from Springfield brewery at Mitcham.
- The sound of mallee being cut by belt driven saws at the wood yards. The clean smell of it.
- Delicious aroma of coffee and chicory essence produced at the Lion food factory (now used by Festival Fringe)
- Magnificent draught horses, bedecked in their finery of leather and brass, pulling brewery wagons.
- The lighter horses and carts of milkmen, bakers, icemen, butchers and fruiterers.
- Council horses with solid drays behind, collecting street and household rubbish – even in the City.
- Hot tar applied to roads and flattened by great steamrollers.
- Freshly mown grass.



Adelaide Fruit & Produce Exchange

pic: Peter Hastwell

- Noise, bustle and aroma of the East End wholesale markets early morning.
- The same at Central Market with stall holders calling their specials.
- Fish smells and the tang of the sea from fish shops.
- Cows agisted in park lands.
- Tantalising freshly ground coffee aromas from coffee shops, in particular Cappys and Stones. (also noted for its ham rolls.)
- Tantalizing aroma of tomato soup in production at Rosella's Kent Town factory.
- The clamour of numerous tramcars (no buses), especially in front of the Imperial Hotel, Grenfell Street, the city terminal.
- Fairy Floss at the Royal Show and girls in lavender dresses on the Faulding stand spraying passers –by with Eau de Cologne.
- The dank smell of hotel cellars as kegs were lowered down the slips.
- Police on patrol on Harley Davidson motorcycles with sidecars.
- New mown hay in fields and in towering horse-drawn hay carts.
- Rotting seaweed along the beaches.
- Freshly baked yeasts, cakes and biscuits, delicious smells from Balfour's Franklin Street factory.
- The wonderful smell of wood stoves cooking meals – especially the Sunday roast which most families had as a matter of course.
- Chatter and laughter coming from city milk bars where we youngsters of the era gathered for a yarn and to meet the opposite sex, Sigalas, Roxy, Black and White. The wonderful taste of real malt in malted milks. Now that refrigeration was available, milk bars had arrived.
- The postman's whistle at every house, as he delivered mail by bicycle twice a day during the week and once on Saturday.
- The clean, clean carbolic smell of Lifebuoy Soap.

How many of these sights, sounds and smells remain today?

END NOTE

Unfortunately Harry was unable to finish his Reflections, as he sadly passed away before he could complete them. What he has written will be a wonderful reminder to his family and friends of the brilliant person that he was, and of the history that was created during his lifetime, and that which passed before him.



Pic: Hastwell Private Collection

HARRY FRITH HASTWELL

***Born 1
January 1923***

***Died
20 December 1996***