

## Oral History

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### WAITES FAMILY

By Jack Waites

My Parents - Robert Henry Waites and Lillian Anne Ada Hill were married in 1932. I was born in 1938 in Kew, my father was a school teacher, and I had two older brothers Rob and Brian. My father died in 1940 while he was teaching at Ericka, I was two when we came back to Melbourne and lived in Northcote, in the street that ran beside the town hall.

In 1940 the Japanese attacked and, soon after, Pearl Harbour was bombed. Australian families were advised to move women and children to safer places away from the city and populated areas. Mum came up to Crest Street, Briar Hill, to the Waites family holiday house, with no power, gas or running water, we lived there for about three or four years. The Whiteman family lived at the end of the street.

We lived in Briar Hill until about 1944, then moved into the residence behind the Post Office/General Store in Main Street, Greensborough, owned by Mr. Bulluss. Mum got a job working at the post office store, she worked in the grocer shop during the day and at night she manned the switchboard, she was on duty in 1964 when Don Corder won the Brownlow Medal, the Greensborough Exchange ran "red hot".

We lived behind the post office until 1948, when mum had a house built by Jack Cairns at 71 Hailes Street, this became the family home. In those days houses didn't have hot water services, electric stoves, we had no way of heating the water for a bath. We had to heat the water in the copper and carry it in to the bath, we graduated to a chip heater, then a bath heater, and finally, when Brian became a plumber, he put a hot water service in.

We lived there for about ten years when mum was married again to "Scotty" Mr Scott; this was when mum moved out of the house in Hailes Street. Brian and I stayed on in Hailes Street, then, when Brian married Hazel, they bought the house from mum. They had two boys and one girl. They have six grandchildren. Poor old "Brue" turned his toes up at the age of fifty-six.

I lived with mum at Alphington for a while, until I was married. When Glenice and I married we built our house at 7 William Street, Greensborough, almost fifty years ago, and are still living there today. We have three boys and now have eleven grandchildren. My son Greg still lives in Greensborough, my other sons, Peter married a neurosurgeon, and lives in Hobart, Tony married a girl from Sweden, they live in Scottsdale, Tasmania.

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After twelve years at university his job was not paying enough, so he started a nursery growing trees and plants.

Rob my eldest brother left home at the age of seventeen and joined the Navy, where he qualified as a pilot, he was in the Navy for about five years, and he then joined Qantas and was with them for at least thirty years. When he retired he moved to Salamander Bay at Port Stephens. He has three children, two boys and one girl, and he now has six grandchildren.

Mum being a widow and me being the youngest of three boys, I got into a bit of mischief, I used to pick up the cigarette butts and smoke them. One thing that stands out in my mind, I must have been about seven, I jumped into the picnic van that was taking the football club to Whittlesea to play, after the game they went to the pub, mum had no idea where I was, when I got home I got a tanning for that. I knocked around a bit with the Dawes family they had the pub, and Booty (because he had a club foot) Thomas, his old man had the boot shop over the road, the shop that became Tom Lane's chemist.

I started school at Briar Hill primary, when we moved to the post office store I went to Greensborough Primary School, from there I went to Northcote High, there were eight or nine of us at the time, Les McFarlane, John Morgan, Don Williams, Les Symons, Clive (Spider) Evans, Harry Arrowsmith. John Ely and Ian Williams came in the following year.

When I was at high school I became involved with the scouts, then at the age of fifteen, I became involved with a group of other young people - Colin Watson, Graham Geer, Diane Taylor, Jill Allen, Jackie Nolan; we used to go square dancing together. Later I was involved with the football club, I ran the boundary for a few years. My involvement with the footy club lasted for around forty years, some of which were the best times of my life. I met some good people there both men and women, and still see some of them today. I will never forget the socials we used to have at the footy club, they were really great fun. "Ah they were good times."

I started work for the Trustees Company as a junior clerk when I was fifteen, I stayed there for twelve months, then I came out to Greensborough to work for Stubleys Hardware as a clerk, the store was next to the ANZ bank in Main Street. After working there for about four years, I had a taste of my own business, a service station on the corner of Henry and Grimshaw Streets for three years, after that, I worked for John Danks & Son and then McIlwraith's.

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Then I joined the lighthouse service. I started off at Wilsons Prom., and had two and a half years there, then went on to Gabo Island, Port Hicks, King Island and Cape Otway; I left there in 1967, and came back to Greensborough and this house to live.

I joined the Gas Co., along with half the family, my brother Brian, our two sons, my father in law, Jack Cairns and his son also worked there. I was there for twenty-four years, then took a package and retired, after that, I bought a business, selling charcoal to Indian Restaurants for two or three years, then we started up the Child Care Centre next door and ran that for three years, Glenice loved it, I hated it, the staff there seemed to think they were doing you a favour, we have virtually retired now.

I now am investing in property with a partner, as a matter of fact my partner and I bought another property in Tasmania last week. I have been very active over there. I would like to live in Tasmania, but Glenice is not interested, she wants to stay here, so I am stuck here until one of us turns up their toes.

My next door neighbour, number 9 Williams Street, was Reg Godwill, he was one of five kids. The Godwill family originally owned four acres of land on this corner, two on this side of Williams Street and two on the other side. Old Mr Godwill subdivided the two acres on this side of the road and gave one to each of his kids. The land on Grimshaw Street was given to Claude Godwill, numbers 3, 5 and 7 were given to Walter Godwill, number 9 to Reg Godwill, and number eleven to Muriel Godwill, she married a guy called Jim Mc Donald, then there were other brothers, Len lived in Henry Street and Ted had the grocer shop in Briar Hill. One of Ted's daughters married a sign writer, Kevin Maiten, another daughter was Lynette, she lives in Montmorency, Ted had two sons as well.

The Godwill family is an old family in the area; Reg told me his great grandfather used to man a toll gate at the corner of Macorna and Grimshaw Streets, collecting tolls from people going to the gold fields, where St Andrews is today. I think there are still some Godwill families around the area today. The Godwill's were like Faye's (mob) the Partington's, old identities in Greensborough. Reg was a wonderful neighbour to have, from time to time, he talked to me about some of his war experiences, and he was a very interesting bloke.

Jack Waites

Interviewed by June Hall nee Evans

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