

Norma Begley Interview Transcript

Amy: Amy Tsilemanis here on April 5th, 2023 in Apollo Bay and doing this interview for the Apollo Bay and District Historical Society. So would you like to tell me your name and where and when you were born?

Norma: My name is Norma Begley. My name before I was married was Norma Becroft, and I was born in Melbourne at the Queen Victoria Hospital in 1950.

Amy: Not so long ago.

Norma: No. Just a mere drop in the ocean of time.

Amy: And how did you come to be in Apollo Bay?

Norma: I think I came here at about two years of age because my parents chose to live in the country and so they bought me here to have a country upbringing. So that was what I understood, the reason for the move. Yeah. And there was some family here already. My mother had seven siblings. She was the eighth and they mostly lived here along with my grandparents.

Amy: And did you live in town? What was it like growing up here?

Norma: Yes we did. Yeah. When you're a child, you just regard your living environment as normal and natural and what everybody else has experienced, but it was fabulous. We had, on reflection, we had amazing freedom. A lot of trust in the people around us and we had days when we were on holidays or when it was weekends, when we just roamed around the town and did our own thing. So we rode our bikes, we walked, we went down to the beach, played in the sand dunes, climbed trees, it was fun. Terrific. And your friends were very close, so you didn't really have to go far to find your friends.

Amy: Did you have any favourite places to play?

Norma: Yes, the Sand Dunes just across on Point Bunbury. We lived here on Point Bunbury, so I spent a lot of time in those sand dunes with my friends who lived in this street. They were mostly all boys, so we played games such as war and Cowboys and Indians and Heidi and Chasey and did a bit of swimming and making sand sculptures and things like that. We didn't call them sand sculptures in those days because they were just making things in the sand. But yeah, we had a lot of fun.

Amy: What would you say your relationship to the water is?

Norma: Well, I've got a loving relationship with the water. I love the sea. I spent a lot of time, playing in the river down there, the Barham River. And we could observe the river in its many moods and changes and the sand dunes were terrific for climbing on and rolling down. So, yeah, I love the sea and still do.

Amy: And so you are living here where you basically grew up. What's that like?

Norma: It's very familiar, very warm, very comfortable, and very enjoyable.

Amy: Did you ever consider living anywhere else?

Norma: Well, I did live somewhere else, a couple of other places during my time, but I came back here to live. So my children say to me, gee, mum, you haven't moved very far. But yeah, there was sort of circumstances which made up my husband and I come back to this town and so I have lived elsewhere, but I must say I would prefer to be living here than elsewhere.

Amy: And what sort of entertainments and outings did you have as a kid?

Norma: We had a brownie group and a girl guide group in the town, so I guess I was a brownie and a girl guide. We rode our bikes a lot and in the summertime there was a group of church oriented people who came here to, um, give children, you know, a bit of religious background and so I used to go along to their activities in the summertime. What else did I do? I played tennis as a younger person, just basically hanging around with your friends was good fun. Yeah.

Amy: Did you go to the mechanics hall at all?

Norma: I did. [00:05:00] I did. Uh, in the old days there were a lot of balls held in the mechanics hall and sometimes, I remember one particular time for my birthday treat, my mother said, well, you can go along to the ball with some of your friends if you like. So we did that as the birthday treat.

Amy: The cookie maker is home. Yes. Hi Ian. I'm Amy. I'm just delving into your wife's life here for oral history. And enjoying your biscuits. What have you been up to?

Ian: Just coffee. There's a group that I'll meet most days.

Amy: Okay. The balls at the mechanics hall.

Norma: One of the ways that people socialized in say, the 19 fifties, sixties, seventies, people would come in from the outlying farms and it was a ball, was I guess a reason to get dressed up, have a dance, and have some fun and some music. And later on when I was a little bit older, there used to be one in particular called the Fisherman's Ball, and it was sort of a yearly event and it featured a lot of seafood as the main fare at the ball. And so they were really very popular and people enjoyed them a lot and they were held in the mechanics hall with bands on the stage and people dancing around. Yeah, that a lot of fun.

Amy: So would there be local musicians that would come play?

Norma: Yes I think so. I can't remember specifically now, but there was a couple of people, who, one of whom played the piano and another one played the drums. The man was, Ken Watkins and his, I think his wife, she became his wife, which she was Grace Fargo. And so they were a bit of a team, a duo, and they played for a lot of the dances. She was a drummer, which was unusual in those days. And he was the pianist. And so they played for a lot of events around here.

Amy: I'll have to look into the female drummer. That's very cool. And what kind of things did you like to eat?

Norma: Oh, well, there was all sorts of beautiful things. Like, there were lots of sandwiches and slices and sponge cake and sausage rolls and party pies and those sorts of things. And if you went to the fisherman's ball, well, there were all sorts of seafood, crayfish being the most popular, I'd say, you know, prawns, all sorts of seafood of the food that was caught here.

Amy: So let's go to your schooling life. Can you tell me a bit about that?

Norma: Well yes. I went to school at Apollo Bay for my entire life. I started school in Apollo Bay and I think my prep teacher was probably Miss Penn and her name was really Laura Pengilley. And she seemed to me in those days, which would be 1955, she seemed old and she had a very strict means of conducting a classroom. And she believed in a little bit of, uh, capital punishment. So there were times when I was punished by Miss Penn. One of the terrible things that I did once was I talked when I shouldn't have and I got the end of the feather duster for that. I shouldn't be criticizing Miss Penn because she probably did teach me to read.

But, these were the differences between today's teachers and her ways. I remember that we only had one reader for our prep year, and we learned it off by heart, by rote. It was called John and Betty. Probably the museum has copies out there.

Amy: Can you remember some of it?

Norma: Well, it used to start off like this. This is John, this is Betty. John can jump, Betty can jump, John can run, Betty can run. And that's the sort of repetition and so forth. I [00:10:00] don't know if it was my first year, but in one of the readers we had one reader for each year level prep one and two, and it sort of got progressively more difficult. But there was a person in the reader whose name was Ian, and it was capital I A N, of course. And I thought the capital, I was an L, so I pronounced the Ian as Lan. And I remember Miss Penn. Really admonishing me because she said It is not Lan, it is Ian. And I was thinking, how could it be Ian? It's an L. And I stuck with it, but she actually, I think she smacked me because of that. And it's funny now because I've married a person called Ian, so it's quite funny for me to reflect on that.

Amy: Do you call him Lan?

Norma: Sometimes. Only if I'm really angry with him. Lan. Lan...

Amy: Okay. Do you remember anything else about Miss Penn?

Norma: Well Miss Penn, she did teach us the alphabet and I don't specifically remember learning the alphabet, but she taught us to read and to spell, and I don't remember her lessons specifically but she lived across the road from us as a neighbour and she drove a little VW car and it was sort of like a pale, greenish color. And sometimes I actually went to school with her in her car, which was a very big deal to go to school with your teacher. And sometimes she'd bring us home. She lived by herself in a house across, just up a little bit further from the Foleys, which is now another, her house was demolished years ago. But she, I think she was a teacher all her life until she was very old. And I think she introduced to the sort of very beginnings of numeracy and taught us to add and to do sums. And I suppose I really should be grateful for her as a teacher, even though she had very strict ways about her.

Amy: Do you remember anyone you went to school with?

Norma: Oh yes, definitely lots. Well your work colleague now Glenda Wheelan, who used to be Glenda Nosedá. She's a little bit younger than me, but

oh yeah, all the people in my year, I remember them. And there's another one who I went to school with and she was probably in, I'd say Glenda's year, Pam Keating. She was used to be Pam McDougal. There's quite a few people around who I still remember from when I was at school. Val's daughter Jenny, who was in my year. She now lives in Geelong. Who else was there? I'm just trying to think. I think most of the others have left town. So yeah, as time went by and I stayed at Apollo Bay as the years went by and we got up into, we used to call it in those days leaving, which was year 11 and matriculation, which is year 12. The numbers of students in the classes really decreased and we did in those years, I think it was 10, 11, and 12 we did correspondence. So we were taught by teachers from the correspondence school in Melbourne. Our lessons were sent to us in the post. We completed the lessons during the week, and each lesson, [00:15:00] work was called a set and we used to send those sets off at the office, at school, at the end of the week. And they'd send them back to us the next week when they'd been marked and the comments were written on your work so that you could learn about what the teacher actually thought about them.

So you didn't really speak to your teacher, you only conversed with them through the written comments that they sent back. So that was interesting. And it was particularly interesting for me, although I thought it was normal at the stage because I did English literature in year 12, matriculation. And I thought at the time when I came across Chaucer that I had discovered a weird language because it was something I'd never heard of before and there was no teacher to ask about it. But we did get good, good and detailed notes. So that was interesting and also lots of the Shakespeare, the language was a bit foreign. And I think on the reflection it would've been good to have teachers who were there to explain your queries when you wanted to have them there at the time, who were immediately there and to have a bit more you know, sort of, conversation with your, peer group. So I actually got through English literature in year 12 as a correspondent student. I think now it was a good feat.

Amy: Definitely. I'm thinking of the pandemic and lockdowns as well. Obviously they had a bit more connection through the internet and things, but interesting parallel there as well. So what happened after you left school?

Norma: Well, I went to Geelong and I went to, it was called in those days, Geelong Teachers College, and I became a teacher. I stayed there at Geelong for three years and did my teacher training and I lived in residence. On Western Beach in an old house owned by the Ministry of Education, which was a great amount of fun. I lived there for two years as a student and in the third year I became what you call a resident officer. So I was sort of in charge of the rest of

the girls while they were there. Then I moved on and began my teaching career in Melbourne. So that's what I did. And I soon realized, it became obvious when I was qualified that a fourth year of training was needed. So I did my fourth year of study again, sort of through distance education and I did that in my first year out as a teacher, so I was also doing my fourth year as well as teaching full-time in my first year, which was quite a big task. When I think back on it now, sort of the things that you did in those days, just seemed like they were the natural thing to do so you did it.

Amy: Did you always want to be a teacher?

Norma: Yes. And the way I decided to become a teacher was pretty simple really. When you finished school in those days, there really seemed to be only two courses available, I mean two paths available to people who wanted to have a professional career. And they were for girls, either teaching or nursing. So I didn't much like the idea of dealing with blood or people's tense situations. So I chose teaching and that was my reason. Yeah. So for girls in those days, it wasn't very common to have a, a career in say architecture or, [00:20:00] you know, other sorts of fields, which girls are into now. You know, there's so many more options available to girls these days. And so that was, there were only the two fields of further education for per a person to become a nurse or a teacher. So I chose a teacher and I'm glad I did.

Amy: What did you enjoy about it?

Norma: Well I do enjoy children. I like their enthusiasm. I like to teach them, impart knowledge. It's great to watch them acquire their skills and they're just curious and enthusiastic little people. So I enjoyed that aspect of them, and in my later years when I came to Apollo Bay as a teacher, I really enjoyed being a colleague of so many other people. Really your colleagues were like your family, which you saw every day and that was a lot of fun too.

Amy: Can you talk a bit about that, teaching in Apollo Bay?

Norma: I think I did about 26 years in Apollo Bay, so I guess I can speak about it quite authoritatively. Um, yeah, I came to Apollo Bay, maybe about 1974 or five. And in those days teachers really didn't work so collaboratively, and it was sort of more of an isolated entity within the school. You were meant to administer the curriculum yourself. You didn't really talk too much with your colleagues about it but as the years went on, the teaching became a lot more of a shared experience among the staff and that really was a pleasure and it was also very sensible. Because people had a lot of different skills that you didn't have

and they could offer their skill in a certain area of the curriculum that you couldn't and vice versa. So that was great. As time went by, I became a mother myself. I had two children. So when the children were of an age, when sorry, I shall qualify that you were only given leave for 18 months. After 18 months leave, it was called in those days a very old fashioned word confinement leave. So you are only given 18 months worth of leave. And after that 18 months, you had to make a decision as to whether you would return to teaching and pursue your career, or you would resign. So because we were as a couple where in our financial position we needed money, we decided that I would go back to school. And so I went back to school 18 months after my son was born. And my auntie, we employed her to look after him. So then, after about another two years, I had another child. And the same situation was still prevailing. So I then went back again. But what happens with you as a teacher and as a parent, eventually you come to a point where you face up to the fact that you might have to teach your own children. So most people tried to avoid that by having the children in a class which was taught by another person but one year I did have to teach my son and, uh, that was interesting. I wouldn't recommend it because he basically just regarded me as mum and what would [00:25:00 I know? So yeah, that was an interesting situation. Yeah, so I spent some years going through the school. Then I proceeded up to a little bit higher to grade threes and fours, also grade sixes. Probably felt that I was more suited to teaching the infant area. I felt some of the grade six, especially some of the grade six boys, were more of a discipline problem, and that was sort of a little bit draining on your psyche. So yeah, I then went back to the infant area of the school and taught there for many years.

Amy: And is it the same school that you went to?

Norma: No, the school's been upgraded a lot. The old school, I can't remember how many years ago, maybe it could have even been about 10 now, was basically upgraded and rebuilt. And the classrooms are much bigger and more comfortable. And there's even things called air conditioners, which we never had. Summer on hot days was quite difficult. Yeah. Kids were tired and wanted to go home and yeah, it was difficult but, you know, we don't live in a very hot climate, so I guess that's not a real problem for our area.

Amy: And how different was it when you were teaching from when you were being taught?

Norma: Well, I guess when you're a student you're sort of quite unaware of a teacher having to deliver a curriculum. So I guess she just went along and you had fun all day with your friends and you just waited for the time when it was

lunchtime or playtime when you can go outside and play again. So yeah, I did enjoy learning though. But learning was a lot more structured in those days, there was rote learning especially. In maths where we learned the tables and I think that was actually a good thing because I could still tell you any table right now, seven times 9 63.

So yeah, that was really good. We had to chant them every morning in the higher primary years. It was one of the first things we did when we came into the classroom and we learned every table by rote. And I think most of the people of my generation would probably tell you the same, that they're good at their tables, they're better than the current generation. But then again, I think learning experiences are more relevant and more practical these days. But nevertheless, there were some very good skills which were learned in those days. And spelling, I think too. It was a quite a big emphasis on correct spelling and correct grammar. So, sometimes it does rankle me when I've been taught certain ways of structuring language and people use it incorrectly and it sort of makes me squirm a bit.

Amy: Anything in particular?

Norma: Well, one that's pretty current is when people are speaking about other people and they say a sentence where instead of who, they say the people that were there. And it really should be the people who were there. I hear that quite a lot and it makes me sort of squirm and think, my goodness, you know, in my day, we weren't allowed to speak like that. So yeah, some things are a bit more informal these days, which is good and bad.

Amy: Yeah. What kind of technological changes did you see while you were you teaching?

Norma: Well, in my early teaching days, we probably, we did have a chalkboard. Yes, we and the children probably still had chalkboards, little chalkboards. The small ones. But as time progressed we moved on to things like cassette decks and tape decks and what else? [00:30:00] Then we, as in later years, we got things like whiteboards and children learnt to write on whiteboards. And then I think there was also overhead projectors and as time went by and I was sort of in my later years, no such thing as a computer for each child as the situation is today. But computers were taught in my later years Computer technology. Yeah. So times have changed.

Amy: Yes. Interesting. I'm asking because I'm looking into communication history in the area as well. I thought it would be interesting to ask your

experience of mobile phones coming in and internet and that kind of opening up of technology in that area as well. Do you remember getting your first email or phone?

Norma: Yeah. When we as teachers all had our own email addresses for the Ministry of Education, then we did get private email addresses. So as I was leaving teaching, internet communication well it was introduced and people sent emails. But what I thought was particularly humorous was that we were encouraged to send emails within our own staff to other staff members who we saw at morning tea and lunchtime and I thought that's really going a bit too far. But I think that still happens.

Amy: Yeah. It's funny. And did you see much change in the postal system and the use of house telephones and things?

Norma: Well students didn't have their own phones, that was not a scenario when I was a teacher. We had a house telephone when I was younger yes and I remember us getting the phone on. It was a very big event to have a phone of your own. And our phone number was Apollo Bay 149 and it went through a local exchange and we had to be very careful about what we said over the phone because there was a person at the exchange who could hear all our conversations. So we were told that by our parents. We ran a business in the early days and I just think that it must have been interesting for that phone lady, what was her name? telephonist, that's the word, a telephonist. So she was there putting little chords into little plugs, which is something that's probably out at the museum. And that was down at the telephone exchange was down at the building, called Moontide down there, which is now sort of a gift shop and a clothing store right on the corner of the Great Ocean Road opposite the golf course. And then eventually std came in and communication through telephones became wider and more popular and people had maybe two telephones in a home, and sometimes you could walk around with a phone system in your home, which had a sort of a portable phone, but mobile phones, I'm not exactly sure of the year they came in, but no such thing as mobile phones.

We had a business and it was a family business and I still remember my mother receiving telephone calls to her (It was a caravan park, our business) and my mother she did all the bookings and the secretarial work and I would be in the office. A telephone call would come in. It would be something to do with the booking. And when I was younger, I didn't know about the bookings and later mum did teach me, so I would have to run down to the back of the caravan park, which was probably you know, two acres worth of land, and run down to the bottom of the caravan park, try to find out where mum was and then I would say

to mum, there's a call for you, you better run back up to the office. And that was the way that business was conducted in the very early days. And so it was a good way to keep thin.

Amy: That's right. You would've been fit. Yeah. I'd love to hear more about the caravan park. Do you need a break or a drink or [00:35:00] anything?

Norma: I wouldn't mind getting a little bit of water.

Amy: I'll just stop this and we'll pick it up.

I'm just thinking that obviously tourism is a big industry here and yeah the caravan park. Can you tell me a bit more about that and any changes you would've seen?

Norma: Oh, well, I grew up in a caravan park, which was probably a little bit different to most people. We developed a caravan park from its early beginnings beginning in the late fifties to the early sixties. My parents developed the land on Point Bunbury, which is exactly opposite my home at the moment, opposite near the golf course. And dad had the idea that it would become, that could become a caravan park as people were starting to get around more so in caravans than tents in those days. And so over the decades they did build and develop a caravan park, which was called the Waratah Caravan Park, on Point Bunbury, and became very popular and successful. And that's where I spent most of my childhood. It was interesting, I thought it was normal, but you know, it wasn't. You meet a lot of interesting people, very interesting tales that they tell, and you develop friendships with those people because they are return customers. And so when people only had one holiday per year, you used to look forward to them returning and hearing about their year and seeing how their family had grown. And resuming your friendships with them. And for me as a child, I loved to re-meet all the kids that came to stay in our caravan park. It was a great time.

Amy: You talked about running back and forth with messages. Can you describe what it was sort of like walking around?

Norma: Well in the summertime, at Christmastime in the school holidays, the caravan park was full. So there were a lot of people, and a lot of kids. And just about every child had a bike. And they used to ride them round and round and round the caravan park. Sometimes that was great and it was good but my parents were always very wary that a child might have an accident with a car. So they were always sort of trying to suggest that they get off the road when

cars came in. You got to know people. So every time you went out there into the car park, you'd be sort of drawn into a conversation, which used to happen to mum in particular because she loved to have a chat so she could be gone for quite a long while. So yeah, we became good at cooking our own food if she didn't turn up on time. We'd certainly make our own lunch or dinner. And not that she meant to but she could get drawn into lots of conversations. What was it like? It was fun, it was inclusive and it was, people had their own little friendship groups and little parties at night and all that sort of thing. Sometimes you had to curtail the night time parties a bit because of the closeness of other families nearby to the ones that had the parties. Uh, they could come and suggest that they needed to be told to be quiet, which was part of the job. But generally it was very friendly and usually a lot of fun.

Amy: Yeah. And is the caravan park still there?

Norma: No we sold out in 2005 and developers bought it and they divided up the land into smaller house size blocks. [00:40:00] And those houses are, most of the blocks have been built on now since 2005, but there still are a couple, a few blocks, which are vacant. That was all a caravan park over there on point Bunbury. Yeah.

Amy: Do you have photos? I'd love to see.

Norma: I do. Yeah. I'd have to put my hands on them. Yeah, I'll show you later.

Amy: Yeah, trying to picture. Was the golf course there as well?

Norma: Yes. We had big cypress pine trees right around the perimeter of the caravan park, the pine trees sort of were the boundary. Oh, what a great place to grow up. It was a lot of fun. We climbed those trees endlessly. I got to play a lot of board games because the kids obviously who were in families bought their board games with them on holidays, so I got exposure to lots of different board games.

Amy: What kind of games?

Norma: Oh, Scrabble, monopoly, cards, whatever was fashionable at the time. There used to be one where we had to lift, oh, I've forgotten what it's called. There were monkeys and you lifted them up by it. Ah, the barrel, barrel of monkeys. Yeah, those sorts of things. I can't remember them all now. But, yeah, lots of different games that lots of different kids had.

Amy: and the beach was right there as well.

Norma: The beach was, yeah. We spent many hours at the beach here. Sometimes mum would sort of, coz she was always busy and she didn't have time to take us to the beach, sometimes people would say, would you like us to take the kids to the beach with us? And so she would agree and we'd spend afternoons down the beach and come home and yeah, we often spent hours at the beach. Yeah. That was our main sort of playground. Uh, great time. Had a great time.

Amy: Amazing. With the tourist town and having that childhood as well, what's it like living in a place that sort of fills up and then empties throughout the year?

Norma: Uh, fun. Yeah. I would say from a child's point of view, it was a lot of fun from my point of view. It was a lot of fun. Um, some people older, I mean basically I suppose it's sort of like you can develop as an adult an us versus them philosophy because you can tend to find that lots of the parking spaces get taken when you, in the summertime when you are you know, when you go down to the town, the parking spaces have been taken up by tourists or the shops are very busy and you can't get what you want quickly. But I think at the same time, you have to remember that this town is kept alive through tourism and many people's livelihoods depend upon it. So there's two ways of thinking of the tourist industry, and I think the tourist industry has really made our town proceed forward. So rather than the old industries of fishing and timber and dairying, which of all sort of basically, really they're not that so important these days at all. I think there's only one dairy farmer here now, as far as I know anyway. So dairy farming was definitely an industry, a primary industry that was pretty important here. And there was a butter factory, you know, nearby farmers would take their milk into the butter factory and their cream. And I think from memory, probably in the real glory days of dairy farming, there were probably about 26 or 27 dairy farms around in the hills nearby. And then of course there were fishermen and fishing was very important.

My father was a fisherman at one stage of his life. He was a fisherman before he became a caravan park proprietor. So fishing was important. And then there was a timber industry and all those industries employed lots of local, mostly men. Yep. But [00:45:00] these industries are not so important these days. It's tourism, which is the heartbeat of the town. Yeah. Yeah.

Amy: Well, thanks so much. I'm sure we could chat for hours. I've just got a couple of questions here about your life now. This just popped into my head about being retired as well. Do you find that you are busier or quieter?

Norma: Um, well, you can be as busy as you want to be in a small town. And you can be very busy in this town if you want to be or as quiet as you want to be. You can be very involved in local groups and organizations. For me, when I first finished teaching, I missed it a lot. I missed my friends and I also missed the kids. But now I learned to play golf and I'm a golfer and I spend quite a lot of time on the golf course, so I don't miss it so much. Now these days just out here.

Amy: Yeah. Do you just walk?

Norma: Yes. I thought to myself, if I don't play golf I'm mad. Look at where I live, you know? Yeah. So I do and I love it. It's great fun.

Amy: So who do you go golfing with?

Norma: Well, there is a club and lots of ladies are in the club as members and we all meet at the clubhouse on a Monday and a Thursday, and sometimes a Friday as well, and a Saturday, if you play pennant golf for Apollo Bay you go out to other towns and play golf on their golf courses as well. So other towns like Lorne, Anglesea, Colac, Winchelsea, even Lara, our club goes to Lara.

Amy: Do you have your own bus that you go around in?

Norma: No, we just, that'd be a good idea. But no, we just go with each other in our own cars. So we usually have person who drives and they'll take two or three or four people with them. So yeah, we do that. That's a lot of fun. And then there's competitions sometimes on Saturdays as well, so you can be very occupied with golf.

Amy: And you were just at a writing workshop as well.

Norma: Yeah, it was good fun. I do like writing but I know that family tell me that they like reading what I write, but I think you ought to spread your audience beyond your family. There's lots of skills which you can improve, and I just wanted to go to that course and improve the skills that I already have. And you soon find out, as with anything, that there are lots of people who are better than you at writing and I found that out the other day. And I sat next to a person who's both parents were journalists. And I thought, oh my goodness, I know nothing. So no it was good. It's good to improve your skills and just sort of see how you can make your writing more interesting. So, yeah, I enjoyed that.

I also go to a singing group which I love and that's usually once a week.

Amy: What's that called?

Norma: It's just called the seasonal singers. Just a group of people that get together, like singing and we don't have rehearsals and we don't have great structure in our meetings or our singing sessions. And we sing a lot, quite a few songs from other cultures. And we learn new songs and we practice them. Maybe we practice them at home just quietly to ourselves during the week. But it's a lot of fun and we have a lot of laughs.

Amy: Would you sing something?

Norma: Would I, [00:50:00] I could. Here we go. [sings]

That's one of the sort of songs that we sing. As well as songs in English too. But that's I think it's an African song and we sing it sometimes in harmonies, so it sounds beautiful. There's a few that we do in harmony and amazing when you get human voices together, how good they can sound when you put harmonies into them. So yeah, we have a lot of, a lot of fun doing that.

Amy: Do you ever perform around town?

Norma: Sometimes we have, yeah. I was in a choir which was a lot more structured before that, and we did sing and rehearse around town. But this one we just do a lot more informally. And sometimes, you know, you meet up with someone in the choir in the street and you'll have a bit of a sing. But I'm mainly sort of just invading my family's ears. And I try and teach my grandchildren some of the songs too. And they love it. Oh, which is good. Yeah.

Amy: Do they live here?

Norma: No, they live in Geelong but they love it. I've got two little granddaughters who absolutely love it when I teach them songs from other countries and they listen with great interest. We've got one call response song, which we sang just last weekend. And so I call it, and they respond and they think it's great. So they love that. Would you like to respond to it?

Amy: Sure. Let's do it.

Norma: and you do this together with me, which you obviously don't know it, but I'll do it as a call and response.

[singing]

Norma: So it's called hule and just call and response, but you do the last bit. From then on, you do that together. Yeah. So they think it's really good fun.

Amy: Yeah, singing together is wonderful. It's great. Yeah. I'll have to come join you one day.

Norma: You should. You'll love it. It's quite fun. Love it.

Amy: Oh, beautiful. Thanks so much. I wonder, this idea of the heart maps is sort of looking at, you know, like you've talked about, the places of connection for you, growing up and now, and I wonder if you'd have any hopes for the community or this place in the future as well.

Norma: Well, one of the things that I do hope in for the future in our town is that we do maintain our sense of community. And I think at this stage we do have a strong sense of community. So I hope we don't lose that through increased population. At the moment it doesn't seem like we are so I hope that continues. Just recently, before I went to Tasmania, there was a meeting, a community meeting for people who objected to the closure of the Point Bunbury walk over here. And I think at that meeting there were probably about a hundred people who had opposed the closure of the Walk by Parks or GORPACA these days. And everyone spoke really passionately and with knowledge and each person who was there seemed to be very definite about the fact that they didn't want that walk closed. And it, the closure of the walk was sort of conducted quite secretly. We felt there was no community consultation about it and so I felt that that showed a good, strong sense of community when people would come out for a meeting [00:55:00] and lodge their protests in a community meeting. So that's the sort of thing I think, I would like to see maintained and just all the community activities that go on, the clubs, the groups, you know, the arts council, the arts, the clubs, the golf club, the cricket club, the football club, the Bowls club, and any other groups of which there are plenty. Continue on and maintain the sense of community as a great place to live. I would think that would be one of my main hopes.

Amy: Sounds good. Would you have any life advice you'd like to share?

Norma: Look after your health, would be my main one. Look after your health. Maintain a sense of family if you can. And enjoy nature and be with nature as often as you can because I think it grounds you and makes you feel that nature is a bigger stronger force than humanity. It's very grounding and makes you feel

very appreciative that you're living in a beautiful place such we are. I think that's about it for the moment, I could go on!

Amy: We can always do a part 2. Amazing. Thank you so much.

Norma: No problems. It was fun.