

Interview with Mr Ted Hanlon

17 June, 2004

Interviewers: Judy Buckrich & Michele Prentice

Interview takes place at Mr Hanlon's home in Camberwell

Ted: They're still there, torn quadriceps and that sort of thing

Judy: Oh no. And they really bother you now, or...

Ted: Yeah. I was (unclear) Australian Weightlifting for years, I was President and international Vice-President. I competed for twelve years, and trained and kept fit after that, for a long time, now the years are catching up.

Judy: Ah. Well, how old are you, if you don't mind me asking?

Ted: Eighty seven

Judy: Ah well, you're doing alright

Ted: That's a pretty dangerous age, because cricketers get out at eighty seven

Judy: Ah yeah

Michele: (laughs)

Ted: they stick a catch...slips?

Judy: Well I think you're doing very well for eighty seven.

Ted: So I've got to get past that.

Michele: Yeah

Ted: Well, hopefully I will. Cause then I've got to hang around till 2006 for the Commonwealth Games

Judy: Commonwealth Games, yes. Well that's a good thing to look forward to

Ted: Well I'm the life governor of the Weight Wrestling Federation

Judy: Oh! Are you? Good on you.

Ted: They're kind to me, the kids say 'g'day Ted'

?

Michele: We saw Ted Petersen yesterday

Ted: Saw Ted did you?

Michele: Yeah

Judy: Yeah, he came in yesterday and had a talk to us. So he told us all about how you had actually lost your sight and then got it back.

Ted: What's that again?

Judy: He said that you had lost your sight

Ted: I did

Judy: And then got it back?

Ted: Yeah

Judy: How did that happen?

Ted: I was hit in the eye when I was a kid

Judy: Yeah

Ted: And six weeks after that, Dr Orr operated and punctured the aqua (?) and I had a sympathetic reaction and lost the sight in the other eye

Judy: Yeah

Ted: So from ten on, I was legally blind

Judy: Right

Ted: And it was not till 1948 that I got a contact lens which I could see past my nose, you know

Judy: Oh, I see

Michele: Very lucky

Ted: So I fairly well understood the visual politics

Judy and Michele: yes

Ted: So then I got a micro-lens and it was too early for the implants.

Michele: yes

Ted: Sir Thomas Travis did a miracle job on me because I had a traumatic cataract develop. All the specialists told me that I'd be blind, it was too difficult a job

Michele: yeah

Judy: ah

Ted: I was marketing director for Bells group at that time

Judy: Right

Ted: They offered to pay, to send me anywhere in the world ... or Switzerland or England

Michele: Yeah

Ted: And I cirulised (?) all their top boys and they said have the operation in Australia, our blokes are more experienced

Judy: Oh, really?

Ted: And it's still the same but we've got the highest incidence of ...of ah..

Michele: Of cataracts?

Ted: Yeah. And our blokes can maybe get half a dozen operations a week and the other boys might get one or two a year.

Michele and Judy: Ah, ok

Ted: So at any rate, I went to see six of them, I was very careful. What prompted me, at that stage, I got to the stage, I couldn't see

Michele: Yeah

Ted: And I walked, I nearly walked into an open lift door

Judy: (gasp)

Ted: I'm sure that they had the sign, danger, you're dead there, hanging over the door...I suddenly realised, there's no bloody lift there

Judy: My God

Ted: That straightened me up, so I went there. I saw Richard, ah, Council, my current doctor...ah, what was his name? I'll think of his name in a minute. At any rate, my own doctor, Tommy Spring, who I put on the board afterwards. He said, ah, I can do the job Ted, as well as anyone else but you don't operate on your mates, go and get somebody else.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: So I finished up with Tom Travers. He said, 'Mr Hanlon this is a bastard of a job, with a bit of luck I'll fix it'

Michele: (laughs)

Judy: Oh, really? Is that what he said to you?

Ted: So I went to see him....positive approach. So he did the operation. It was seven months before I could see again. I had a massive haemorrhage in the eye and all that sort of thing

Judy: Oh God. Were you working through the whole time, or...

Ted: No, the company funded me. I was the manager for Bell's Marketing Group at the time

Judy: They must have thought you were fantastic

Ted: my secretary used to come and see me every day with papers for me to sign. She assured me that my blindness varied considerably

Michele: Laughs

Judy: Right

Ted: Joyce Alice Walker. She joined Vulcan Engineering, which I set up. She'd been secretary to a yankee Brigadier General and she had learned some appalling language

Michele: laughs

Ted: She used it in the office, I didn't mind. She was a superb secretary.

Judy: So tell us, how did you get involved with the Institute for the Blind? How did you actually get involved in the first place?

Ted: My ah, parents of course. They didn't know much, they thought...I was at home for four years, going to the hospital every week, until I could remember Eddie O'Brien telling my mother, I'm afraid the boy's reached his zenith there. I didn't know what zenith meant, I was worried about that for a long time until I realized he said I wasn't going to get any better. Somebody must have told my parents that...not having ah, education, you know...I was hit when I was a candy row/role boy and didn't go back till...I went to the blind school when I was fourteen.

Judy: Right. And did you actually go to the school, then, for a while, or...

Ted: Yeah. I went to the school then I went to the...I didn't, wasn't a border, I used to travel every day on the train from ah, out at Pascoe Vale to Prahran, and walk up Greville street to the institutue.

Judy: By yourself?

Ted: Yeah.

Judy: ok

Ted: But I had to count the damn stations, didn't I? (laughs)

Michele: laughs

Judy: Just to make sure you didn't miss it. And what was it like for you, being a student there? Did you like it?

Ted: Ah well, it was marvellous to be in contact with the kids again, instead of with the adult family, I was the youngest of five kids. I was twelve years younger than my younger, er, eldest sister.

Judy: Yeah.

Ted: So I quite enjoyed it, yeah. There was some interesting people there, in my time. Phillis Gratton was a student there, Laurie Wilson was a superb pianist, Jimmy Smith ...(something) was an SP bookie

Judy: yes, yes, yes, yes

Ted: Great guy was Jim. Ah, Miss Bryan was the teacher of the infants

Michele: Yes

Ted: A very charming old lady, well, she was old to me at that stage

Michele: laughs

Ted: well she must have been about forty-odd and I thought she...and the headmaster was a guy called Findlayson

Judy: Right

Ted: And ultimately sent me a telegram of congratulations when I joined the board

Judy: Oh, that's good

Ted: And a couple of blind teachers, Don Forbes

Judy: Yes

Ted: And Neil Westh

Judy: Yeah, ah Neil Westh

Ted: Yes

Judy: The famous Neil Westh who everybody loved

Ted: He was a nice guy. Don Forbes was a pretty good guy, too. But I can remember sitting around, nudging sixteen, cause we got turfed out at sixteen, you had to go to the factory, and ah I'm chatting about the Melbourne Cup and I suddenly get called up by old Don, he's saying, Ted, don't you think this is er, an odd discussion for school?

Michele: laughs

Ted: So I realised that 'praps he was right. So I didn't carry on.

Michele: Ah, ok

Ted: At any rate I went over into the factory and became a basket maker

Judy: Right

Ted: 48 hours a week, seven and six a week. I was six foot, same height as I am now, so I was young and strong, and my main function was to carry the bundles of cane from the store up to the places where they were wet, in the troughs.

Michele: Ah yeah

Ted: So on top of that I wasn't a bad basket maker. Ultimately though, I s'pose I was the assistant foreman to old Arthur Routan

Judy: Right

Ted: And I wasn't very keen on basket making, but I was young, and I was fit and they used to make half the baskets for the other ....weren't so good.

Judy: Right

Ted: So when I got to be 21, I went to see Hedger and told him I wanted the award rate. Cause if you got the award rate, you didn't get your pension.

Judy: Oh, ok

Ted: So that stopped when I was 21. The main thing that happened at that age group, was a blind constable called Bob Bloochee started at the gymnasium after a lot of persuasion

Judy: A blind constable?

Ted: Yeah, he went over the handlebars of his motorbike, into the gravel and got blinded

Judy: Right

Ted: So they kept him on the job for a long time till they find out....unloaded him...but he come and talked...he was a light heavy wrestling champion. A very interesting guy. And at that time in the early 30s, a lot of young men at the factory, doing nothing, so Bloochee started a gym.

Judy: Right

Ted: Very interesting guy. And at that time in the early thirties, a lot of young men at the factory, doing nothing, and ah

Judy: Right

Ted: And so Bloocher started a gym. That's how I thought was very good indeed.

Judy: So that's how you got involved with weight lifting?

Ted: Well I was an all rounder, then wrestling, riding the bikes and...

Judy: Right

Ted: jumping and all that sort of thing. And we set up a Victorian Gymnasiums Association...included our club there, which we called the Trojan Club, should have called it (historic?) in hindsight. And the RVIB, Victorian Institute was there, the lighting club...ah, a couple of other gyms, so we competed there. And then ultimately, a group of weight lifters came up and they couldn't ah, they were trained under an old guy called Sass and were charging sixpence a week and they couldn't afford it. And you can't believe...

Judy: Oh, no, I can believe it.

Ted: So they joined and I'm about 18, tall, and can move, and they said well, you should be lifting weights

Judy: Right

Ted: So that's when I stopped playing blind cricket

Judy: oh, I see.

Ted: Yeah

Judy: And how did you get from being someone who worked in the factory to being the manager of a big firm? What happened with your career?

Ted: Well basically, we can take the Japanese in Pearl Harbour at that stage, because I was, as I say, assistant foreman, I was president of the Blind Workers' Union, President of the Social Club and I decided that with the war, there was no way we were going to get more materials, so..yarn from India, cane from Indonesia, and so on, so I went to see Hedger, who was a remarkable man, I must say – and said, we should be putting these fellas out into jobs. You couldn't get into industry prior to that, because they wouldn't cover you with insurance

Judy: Sure

Ted: So I started with (Vult?) who patted me on the back and said, my you're a big fellow, and said go back to the institute, and then Curtain came in and I

saw Eddie Ward with the same idea and he said, very good idea, we need everybody

Judy: And who was Eddie Ward?

Ted: He was a labour member, a labour minister under Curtin

Judy: Right

Ted: There was a ....something...polititician from Sydney south west. Brilliant bloke and he said, it's good idea, go and see Don Cameron, that was er, Senator Don Cameron who was the minister for aircraft production

Judy: Right

Ted: And he opened the doors for me and we placed so many bods in industry. Everything from working on the machine shop lathe, to making chocolates at Hobart-Hoadleys-.and that's when I first went down to see Malcolm Bradley, who was at that stage chief engineer for Kodak to tell him that we had some smart blind blokes, and he said, we should try them in the dark room. I always thought that was worth a try. Because then the films used to come through in the drying rooms with a 16<sup>th</sup> of an inch each side, to peg

Judy: Yes

Ted: And obviously in the dark room, the ideal job for blind people

Judy & Michele: Yes

Ted: we had half a dozen there and it worked for thirty years. I reckon it was the best thing I ever did, to place the visually impaired, for want of the bloody blind, in industry. There's some people there that lasted for the rest of their life. And there were some of them that were remarkably good, Jack Dowdle he spent thirty odd years at Kodak

Judy: How do you spell his last name?

Ted: D-o-w-d-l-e

Judy: Right

Ted: You'll find him in the book, in the records

Judy: Right

Ted: He's worth talking to

Judy: Ok

Ted: And ah, yeah I liked Jack, I taught him to make baskets

Judy: Ah yeah

Ted: So he's about 4, 5, years younger than me. His parents had a pretty decent sort of a shoe shop, so he had real money compared to the rest of us

Judy: ok. So you went and, you stopped working for the institute at some point during the war?

Ted: Yeah well I had placed (people in) jobs, I had to get a job for myself

Judy: Right

Ted: So I decided I'd better go for the best pay I could get

Judy&Michele: yeah

Ted: which was working at Peters Ice Cream

Judy: oh, ok

Ted: a labourer, in other words. That was in about 1943-44. So I spent a few...at that stage I was fairly accurate deliberately (?) and eh, I would describe myself as a left winger and er, I was president of St Kilda Labour Party branch, and one of the members there was a scientist from Kodak. He knew I knew Bradley who then was general manager, and he said (unclear) I was working 12 hours a day producing ice cream for the yanks and the pay was good, probably around 7 quid a week and Malcolm had a few patents, in the steam field and he....manufacturing industrial supplies, they needed a sales bloke and he said, you'd better go and see them. Now here's me, I never knew a thing about engineering, I knew what a spanner was, even less about selling. So I went along and I saw this John Rutherford, tell him I wanted the job, I didn't know anything, but I could learn

Michele: Yeah, good on you

Ted: And he said we'll give you a try. Then God, I had to work (unclear) so I could read with my nose on the paper

Judy: oh yeah

Ted: (unclear) so that was that

Judy: Ok

Ted: So I worked there...(unclear)

Judy: So what year was that—about?

Ted: Wait'll I think (long pause) would have been about '42, '43, somewhere around there.

Judy: So in the midst of the war.

Ted: After the war. Because I got out of the Peters job. At the same time I was delegate to the Trades Hall Council from the Blind Workers' Union

Judy: Right

Ted: That was my education there. Don Thompson the tavernist (?) on one side, bashin' my ear. Reg (someone) on the other side, tramway union, secretary (Authur?) was the secretary of the ATU, extreme right-winger

Judy: Oh yeah, yeah?

Ted: A hell of a nice guy, ultimately secretary of the ACTU. And the Tramway Union of course, raised the money for the swimming pool (Burwood School)

Judy: That's right, yeah

Ted: So the..pretty good guy. So at any rate, good experience

Judy: So how did you get back involved with the institute?

Ted: How did I get back to the institute? Well, I quit the industrial supplies, at that stage I was the manager because the owner come back from living in Sydney and he and I had a clash of personalities, for want of a better description. So...(something) the director, so I quit. I'd been in touch with a company called Green (something) Steam Equipment and I went to see them, three tradesmen who were working in a plumbers shop, producing valves, and I told them that I'd sell for them and I got the Australian distribution rights and we wanted a mark up but we wanted a margin of 30% and I'd triple their sales for them in two years.

Judy: God

Ted: So they said ok, give it a go, we've got nothing to loose. So there you are, the tail end of the '40s ...somebody had told me about the contact lenses that were kicking around and I went to see a fella called Girtz, who was German seems he worked for Albert Knott and company in Collins Street and he said, gee it's a hell of a job, with a bit of luck we can do something for you

Judy: Right

Ted: So he shoves a big lens in, at that stage they just had to use a buffer solution

Judy: Gosh

Ted: And come out the door on Collins Street, it was on the corner of Russell and Collins, and I look opposite and there's this tree ...

Judy & Michele: (gasp)

Ted: and I realise that instead of being a blob of green, it has leaves.

Michele: laughs

Judy: It must have been fantastic

Ted: ...surprise and shock. So I went back and he made a lens for me that fitted, so instead of being in a lot of pain, so, ah, so at that stage you could only wear it for about four hours at a time because the buffer solution used to break down.

Judy: Right

Ted: and you'd get a rainbow around the...terrible

Judy: Right

Michele: How old were you then?

Ted: Thirty one

Michele: Thirty one, wow.

Ted: So from there on in I could read a bit more, did a few courses, you know, management courses, sales course that sort of nonsense

Judy: Right, right

Ted: It was pretty hard. We built up (G-something) steam equipment pretty well. As I say, er, finished up with oh, 50, 60 workers in the shop and I established branches around Australia. I had a partner called Bill Lawrence who initially had been my sales manager at the Toloroid. Toloroid means toroidal flow, which is – at any rate, we won't worry about that.

Judy: All right (laughs)

Ted: And Bill was in the air force, they got him in the air force in the finish and he was a very brilliant sales bloke and he was based in Sydney, and he was – and I was – I was up there for Toloroid – I had to see the branch manager and I called Bill up to say, I want to see you and he said, I want to see you. So we went and had a quick wet in the hotel Australia and...

Judy: Yes, yes, beautiful place

Ted: And I said, want to set up a business? He said, I want to set up a business and I said, I've got this agency and we've got to have NSW as a market and he said, I want to set up a direct mail business and I said, this is not my (something) I know you love direct mail and so forth and as I said.... Anyway, we started Falcon Engineering... Trying to think of a name, come up with a name, I tell you, it's not easy.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: We thought of everything. I wanted something to denote quality, so I thought of Coventry Engineering, you see?

Judy: Ah, yeah

Ted: We couldn't register that, so after tossing a lot of names around we come up with Falcon

Judy: Well look, if you can think of a name for this book...

Ted: (indistinct)

Judy: No, no, no, for this book that we're writing, that would be good too.

Ted: What's that?

Judy: If you can think of a name for the book that we're writing, that would be good.

Ted: Falcon

Judy & Michele: No, no, no, (laughing)

Ted: It was a brilliant idea, anyway. (indistinct) Falcon Engineering...New South, South Australia, Queensland and so on and then we had to come up with a logo, so we finished up with a falcon sitting on a gauntlet and the slogan, 'on hand for service'

Michele: Oh, right, yeah

Judy: Oh, good

Ted: ...then we produced our catalogue and we went from there and we're chiffling along very well and from 1956 ...Bells were at the time importing English spirex traps and English victor bells and so forth. Greigor was making a copy of the victor bell and he pushed the poms off the market

Judy: Oh, good for you

Ted: Because we were intensively, intensive selling, quality products, very well made and we took it from, ah, practically nothing, when I started, to £700,000 turnover by '56 and poms decided this is too much, they're killing us, we'll buy 'em out

Judy: Oh! (surprise) Oh, ok.

Ted: So they went and bought out the manufacturing arm, (Dreadnought Steam) they gave the boys enough money to retire on, and they bought us out, because they wanted our sales contact. They stuck me under a five year

contract and called me Marketing Manager for the Australian division, Dreadnought Steam Equipment Australia, Pty Ltd, Falcon Engineering

Judy: Right

Ted: So then of course, I started to get the traumatic cataracts so the contact lens was useless, and they were very decent, I must say. I can remember Jeff Allan, the Chairman of the Board, great Scotch drinker.

Michele: laughs

Ted: I can remember when they came to buy us out, in the '56, '57, he said Ted, I understand you've got a new car on order. I said yes HF, we weren't going to call him Mr Allen all the time we had his initials

Michele: yes

Ted: And I said yes, I'd ordered a Mercedes 220. He said you can't do that my boy. I said what? I'm not going to be told by this fat pom what I'm going to do. He owns the business now of course. He said, no, no, no, (fast ponders???) get yourself a nice English car like a Rover. So consequently for many years I had the nice English cars, Rovers, while I worked for them, anyhow....at any rate, I'm doing the marketing here, doing a good job, I think. By that time we had, the chairman of our board was a fella called Rear Admiral H. J. McKenna, from Australian Navy, a nice guy, a good sailor, bloody (something) awful businessman

Judy: Right

Ted: (unclear), anyway, he was picked up by Patterson, as being the Chairman of the Board, an Englishman. He had a beautiful home in Sydney, company home of course...met his wife, he had six kids...and Mrs Patterson said, if we don't get back to England soon we'll have to have the fallopian tubes cut

Judy: ok

Michele: laughs

Ted: and poor old (Arthur?) nearly swallowed his whisky. At any rate, he made it clear that Patterson had to find a successor for him, and he found the Admiral. And again, in the Hotel Australia, having a wet and I guess sufficient, sufficient social standing for the..England, to have a Rear Admiral.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: So any rate, that's what happened there.

Judy: So how were you – how did you get back to the Institute for the Blind?

Ted: Oh, how did I get back? Oh yeah, oh I've been talking a fair bit.

Judy: Well that's alright, but we just...I have to get you back there

Ted: Charles Bennett, the president of the board, approached me in 1960. He's apparently had a pretty tight election when McCredie went on the board

Judy: Yeah

Ted: In '56 I think it was, and he come to me, he took me to the pub, took me for lunch, so I was pretty well accepted by them then.

Judy: Right

Ted: And he said we'd like you to join the board, and I said ok. So that's how it was, Charles Bennett recruited me. So (something) a lot of nice social people

Judy: Right

Ted: Leighton Erwin was the vice president I think, he was the top architect, who I'd known, cause I was dealing with him, his mechanical side, anyway – any rate, that's when I went on the Board. So as soon as I was on the board, they made me the Chairman of the Alleged Industrial Committee because the main thing was the continuous loss of the workshop because they were (something) about 1961 I think

Judy: Right

Ted: Interesting people.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: At any rate, old Charles, who was a very, very good president, a very kindly bloke for the blind and (something), I think he treated most of them for nothing, was the senior Honorary for Prince Henry hospital, and like all senior honorary physicians, he was a pain in the neck as an individual, but again, he was good. At any rate, I chaired the industrial committee with a lot of changes, I realised there was no future for handicraft work, making baskets and mats, and so forth and that's when we tried – actively sought alternative employment. It wasn't easy, particularly there had been some people there that had spent a lifetime on the mats, remarkable fellows, er, fella called Freddie Cam (?) they were still making matting when he was into the seventies Perc Collins he was a trumpeter, he was about 72

Michele: Do you remember someone who was called The Father of the Workshops? There's a photo in one of the annual reports and it's got a picture of this guy and he's just called 'The Father of the Workshops'

Ted: What time would that be? What era?

Michele: ah, probably the '40s. Or maybe even...

Ted: It might have been Foster, who was the mat shop foreman

Michele: oh, ok

Ted: Could have been. Little bloke. It might have been that.

Judy: So you said Perc Collins, and who was the other old man who was still making mats?

Ted: Yeah

Judy: Who was the other one, Perc Collins and ?

Ted: Freddie Can.

Judy: Ok

Ted: And at that stage, when I came on the scene we decided we should be retiring people over 70 because I'd stopped these new bods coming in and I thought well, you've got to do it at both ends, and ah, had many discussions with Fred and Perc about them having to retire and um, they were both very fit men, and a damn sight fitter than most of the blind bods that were in the shops in my day. Cause I was away for 18 years so when I came back and looked through the basket shop and see the standard of the workmanship and the work that was there, I was appalled.

Judy: Oh, right.

Ted: A very good friend of mine was a blind bloke, Charley Bradley, whose name you probably have heard, the Bradley cricket down at Glenferrie, when I was there as foreman, he was doing four baskets a day. When I came back 18 years later, he's fiddling around and doing two and a half. I say, 'Charlie, what the hell are you doing? You must be bored to tears.' And he said, 'it's all we gotta do'.

Judy: Right

Ted: Because at that stage really, in the '50s, there'd been considerable strife between the executive director and the board, and Hedger was trying to make sure that the blind bods would support him against the board.

Judy: Oh I see

Ted: Anyway, that's the internal politics

Judy: Oh no, that's very interesting you see. Cause it's quite interesting that they got rid of Hedger

Ted: At any rate, I'm back on the board and then we get the big fund raising ...Major General...I'll think of his name in due course. Nice little bloke....(unclear) At that stage, the emphasis was on the blind babies and children and emphasising the fact that the blind weren't capable and of course in my time there I used to resent this enormously..

Judy: Of course, of course

Ted: ...cause when I joined I had enough sense...er, one of the consulting groups, a psychologist in charge was a friend of mine and I sat six..blind bods to see him for assessment you see. Cause at this stage I rather fancied myself as a manager, you know.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: At any rate I sent...(unclear)...come back in the top ten percent, they're very intelligent, (something) education. Same as for all the...the McKinley boys, same. Ah, Jimmy Smith, who come up in the top ten percent...had potential. So I reckon it's ridiculous to try and er, work, there's no future.

Judy: Yeah

Ted: So we had to have a big debate about that, at that stage we also (the board) brought out the mobility boy from America.

Judy: Yes, yes. Hoover.

Ted: And his wife. And his younger son is Australian, he was born out here. (shows something) Dick sent me them (something) from Vienna, cause I took care of him and looked after him and so forth and he – at that stage, when I couldn't see, I had a one of my bods was a driver fellow called Jack Wilkins, and I sent him along to the psychologist too and he reckons he was an ideal bloke to be a mobility instructor

Judy: Right

Ted: So Jack Wilkins had six weeks training under Hoover and I'm certain was the best mobility instructor the institute's ever had. (shows photo) And he's a remarkable bloke too. Superb mechanic. He could crack the bible (?)

Judy: Oh, could he?

Ted: He was mad keen on politics. But he had empathy with blind people and understanding. He was the sort of bloke that, er, when he's gonna teach someone mobility...he was so helpful, when they come out the back door they get lost. He told them to put the radio – the transistor – on the back step so they could come back. Simple things.

Judy: What a simple thing, yeah. So you became the president of the board in...what year was it?

Ted: Well, must have been in the late '60s

Judy: Right

Ted: Because..old Freddy Knight was the senior vice president and Alec Mair was the vice president. Alec Mair had been the Premier of New South... He resigned as vice president so I could get the job. So I jumped over (something) people, after all, I knew more of what I was talking about than anybody else. So, we went through a couple of executive directors, or, superintendent managers they used to call them.

Judy/Michele: yeah

Ted: The (something) was a nice guy but he was above his ceiling, and then Frank Turley who was a brilliant master of semantics, he was a really superb speaker, but he tried to keep the board away from learning anything that he didn't want them to learn.

Judy: Oh, ok

Ted: Didn't like that ultimately, old (sp? ) woke up to it, so Turley had to go. That's when Ted Petersen was appointed, cause he had 26 years. He was a very, very good accountant and a very honest bloke. We had the (something) the politics. My friend Ralph Lightfoot probably taught him the politics of the blind. Then of course Ted finished up as the president of the charity organisation.

Judy: Oh, you mentioned that yesterday, what was it?

Michele: Rotary?

Judy: No, it wasn't Rotary, it was the other one.

Ted: It was the one based in Canberra

Judy: anyway, he did mention it yesterday, we'll have it on the tape.

Ted: He was very good, and he was flexible and the (things) under him were good, he set up the social centres, which were very very successful. He saw the development of the rehabilitation and the tertiary tapes. He and I got on because I knew enough of management so my job was policy, his job was the manager. It was a bit different from old Charles Bennett, who rather fancied that he was president and the owner.

Judy: Oh!

Michele: (laughs)

Ted: It was a totally different approach. Ted got his AM for service to that place in Canberra. I'll think of it in a moment, he was treasurer for years, and then president. Any rate, he got that and he well and truly deserves it. I guess the most outstanding lass there was Margaret Fialides who started the Tertiary Tape Services. This is where we were searching, we were having troubles with the costs of the industrial section as it was called. It was a sheltered workshop, you know, which is an impossible way of describing it. And when Margaret started the Tertiary Tape Services in '68, I think it was, she had two

students, at the finish she had 250 on secondary and tertiary level. She had a group of 300 odd people reading the textbooks. So she was an extraordinarily talented woman.

Judy: What was her last name?

Ted and Michele: Fialaides

Judy: I've got it written down...

Ted: (spells out name) a Greek name, she was married to a Greek guy.

Judy: Right

Ted: she used to talk to them, an extraordinarily talented woman. Er, I set up the Foundation for the Institute, when we sold half the property in Burwood. My (unclear) on that. Cause I'd seen when I first joined the board that ...a nice building in Swanston Street, which the then board sold, and then within two years the cupboard was gone (unclear). And I wasn't going to sell any of their property unless I had it safeguarded against the funding being disposed of. Where I got onto that (unclear). So we had to protect their income, we had to protect the funds of the Federation

Judy: Oh, right

Ted: Which is now the Australian Olympic Committee cause they can't be a Federation...affiliated to the IRC and

Judy: So you set up the foundation, that's interesting.

Ted: ...(unclear) sold 17 of the 40 odd acres there, got 13 million, and you'll find me one of the first donaters to the federation (foundation), I give 100 quid, which annoyed me immensely because I recognised a hell of a lot of good service.

Judy?Michele: yes

Ted: I don't know what's in it now, cause there's nothing the past president (unclear)

Judy: So how long did you stay president for?

Ted: 16 years, which is too long.

Judy: Too long?

Ted: I was going to be there for two Olympiads you see, but then I saw...

Judy: No, no no, in the Blind Institute, how long were you...

Ted: I'm talking about that..

Judy: Oh, alright

Ted: Charley Bradley stayed for 21 years, 10 years of which he was beyond his capacity. I didn't want to finish up the same, but nevertheless I did 16 years. When I first joined of course, we were, the board was a self-perpetuating body and when I joined I looked for people who could contribute. Cannon (?) of people in their own field, like Bradley was general manager of Kodak, er, Professor Wilson, Dr Molo...? Professor in Sydney, architect, the top accountant of course, that was George Dyer, he used to be group secretary of a company of...he's still on the board I think. George Dyer?

Judy: We'll have a look.

Michele: Yeah, I don't think so.

Ted: And then of course the government wanted other controls if they're funding they've got to have a say, so that gave the foreign national lines ?? the federation (union?) the opportunity to stand people for the board and they got four elected that election, because a third of the board was rotating, so they stood and obviously they come to vote, so I talked to the bods and I said, 'stand three and I'll guarantee to get another one on the board for you in due course, because I don't want my treasurer to be beaten and if I stand then you fellas'll drop the vote cause after all there's only (?) quid, and they were able to line up a lot of blind blokes ... and any rate, they wouldn't listen to me, so I said, 'listen, I'm going to get a board member to resign and I'm going to nominate a treasurer and I don't want you fellas to oppose me, cause I'm telling you now what I'm going to do

Judy: yeah

Ted: gotta have a treasurer that I've got confidence in.

Judy: yeah, yeah

Ted: So anyway, they had their four there then (>?) Rosie Cunningham, um..

Michele: Eileen

Ted: Eileen, I put Eileen on the board, and the girl that got herself elected was Sandra

Michele: Oh right, yeah.

Ted: And ... (unclear) it's just a totally different concept, I believe that the board is balanced now. There's no reason why vision impairment should justify you on the board unless you've got something to contribute. And I feel that they went too far, any rate that's a personal opinion.

Judy/Michele: Yeah

Ted: And bear in mind I was always in favour of the blind, themselves, running their own organisation.

Judy: sure, sure.

Ted: They always supported the marvellous Trojan Club....my university...put me in touch with ....

Judy: Was the Trojan club only for blind people?

Ted: Yeah, one blind bloke and one sighted. That's how we set it up. It ...come to the stage where the young group failed to turn up, particularly of course when we put them out in the jobs and um, (something) were going to take over the building. We had the top floor of the back building. And it was very decent of Hedger, we had the best wrestling ring in Melbourne there and all apparatus and all that sort of thing ...the bars....I've got the dumb bells in my back room now (unclear)

Ted: Don't forget we've got girls' weightlifting now.

Judy: Yeah

Michele: So is this above where the old stables were? You know where the old stables were? Is that where it was? Above that?

Ted: ....workshops at the back

Michele: yeah

Ted: they gym was in that, on the top floor, because it was mainly used as a broom shop, that's right, and the eh, and the top floor, it was half for the blinded soldiers from the first war, and mat making there, we had a big space. It was terrific, because I was bursting with energy

Judy: Well you still are, you're still very fit, now.

Ted: I'm reasonably fit. If it wasn't for the hearing, I'd be pretty good. The hearing's atrocious, if I take the hearing aids out, I can't hear.

Judy: Can't hear anything, oh.

Ted: So any rate, I'm a pretty good boy for a bionic, with the contact lens and a pace maker.

Judy: Oh, you've got a pace maker?

Ted: Yeah.

Judy: Oh well you're doing alright...

Ted: I was appalled that I'd need it. I thought a slow pulse rate was a tribute to fitness.

Michele: laughs

Ted: Within reason you know.

Michele: within reason, yeah

Ted: Too damn slow

Judy: (laughs) too damn slow, yeah.

Ted: What are we up to....talk to Margaret Fialiedes. You can come and talk to me again if you like. I don't normally talk as much as I do...but

Judy: Oh no, no, we're very happy, we're very happy that you talk...

Michele: yes

Ted: (something) you girls coming

Judy: No, no it's great, and it's very good to hear about your life, too. We want to hear about your life, too, so it's good

Ted: Anyway, we finished with the Bell's group, I quit there and I didn't know what to do, and I thought I'd make my hobby my business so I bought Findlay's fitness centre from Frank Findlay who was a physical culturalist who at the time used to work with Harry Hopman who trained our top tennis players.

Judy: Right, right

Ted: on the weights. So anyways, I found it was a mistake. I enjoyed getting the middle aged blokes fit. I couldn't stand the body builders ...(something) better than, or WAS

Judy: Yeah

Ted: if you're an athlete...flexing your biceps in front of the mirror...

Judy: Right

Michele: laughs

Ted: so anyway we got out of that, and what to do next, we eh, started manufacturing luggage, cause I reckoned that was going to be an expanding field. And it was, too, until Gough Whitlam knocked the tariffs to hell and we couldn't possibly compete, with manufacture of cheap labour overseas, so I got out of that, but only by the skin of my teeth. But it was a very good experience. So what with engineering...

Michele: Fitness

Ted: Fitness, sales and what have you

Judy: You've done fantastically.

Ted: I stayed on the board. I should have stepped down when Ted Petersen retired, because he and I had, had a good thing. But I didn't want to ah, I thought Laurie McCredie had to be president, all the years he'd been there, and I hung on for an extra couple of years before I re?something. Because you should go before you're pushed.

Judy/Michele: yes

Ted: The same as when I was...incredible, I had thirty five years president of the weightlifting association. Ridiculous in hindsight.

Judy: well, still...they must have liked you

Ted: well they liked me alright but I was the balance between competing forces. You know in a sport with no money, egos are enormous.

Judy: well that's all there is, there's only egos and no money

Ted: and your spare coach...your top athlete is your pride and joy. Now we set up the Australian Institute of Sport and weightlifting was one of the first eight sports to go there. Interesting because none of the coaches wanted their stars to go up to Canberra. Poor old Len Jones we made director up there, he had to get promising juniors, and then he was always under pressure to produce a champion and he couldn't, because it takes about five years to make a very good international weightlifter, at training discipline is there, if it's a good coach, good instructor. I can remember arguing with Dixon when he was a top sports minister in Victoria and he was very much opposed to the Australian Institute because he wanted it in Victoria

Judy: oh yes, of course

Ted: Brian Dixon. And he was a marvellous football player for Melbourne. And what was the name of the guy who started the kitchen ?

Judy: I don't know

Ted: I was talking to Dixon, telling him that he started it with their funds from the Australian capital

Judy: Right

Ted: with no preference to any sports minister. He said that politics was the art of the possible and the (something) possible who can take action.

Judy: Ok. Very good.

Ted: He did a great job, so he was a tremendous fellow. Any rate, I've had some interesting people in my life.

Judy: yes, you certainly have  
Michele: yes

Ted: Now what else do you want to know?

Judy: Well look, nothing for the moment, I think what I'll do is we'll take this home and I'll listen to it and then I might give you a call.

Ted: you fellas are gonna write a book, are you?

Judy: Well I'm writing the book and Michele helps me with the research

Ted: Well good on you Michele. And you're June.

Judy: I'm Judy

Ted: Judy

Judy: yes, Judy.

Ted: Good girl Judy

Judy: I'll give you my card and if you think of anything you can just ring me up