

**THE MEMOIR OF
ARTHUR GUNTER
1862-1948**



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Several people have asked me, at different times, to jot down different things that I remember during a long life. My first recollections were when I was about 6 years old - that was in the year 1868. Perhaps I had better start with the year and place I was born.

I was born in a town called Staines, in Middlesex, about twenty miles from London and five miles from Windsor Castle, in the year 1862. I don't know how many inhabitants there were, but there was a linoleum factory employing three hundred hands, a flour mill, a mustard mill, and two breweries, so there must have been a fair population. This little town was right on the banks of the Thames, and for miles and miles away from the river the country was as level as a billiard table, with plenty of farms and big park lands belonging to the gentry, also plenty of deer and game, and the little river Colne that emptied into the Thames.

If any of us kids snared a rabbit or caught a fish, and the keeper caught us, we were hauled by the scruff to the police station, where we had a years growth frightened out of us. Of course, if the grown-ups were caught doing it, it almost meant transportation - at least, a long term of imprisonment. Plenty of people at that time got up to six months gaol for snaring a rabbit to give a feed to perhaps their half-starved children. Even if the bunnies burrowed under the fences onto the roads, one dared not touch them, as they belonged to the "Haristocracy".

Outside the town, on one side, there was what were called "The Moors" - about two miles square of level grassland where the better class of residents could graze a few cows or horses. There were two canals running through this moor, and a water wheel in the different factories to get power to drive the machinery. They had to have steam power also, as in the summer, the water was low and in winter the canals were frozen.

Fishing was allowed in these canals, and us boys used to earn a few coppers digging up worms and selling them to the fishermen. We got twopence a quart for live worms.

At one end of this moor there was a rifle butts where riflemen used to come from London and other parts to practise shooting. After every shot we would gather up the discarded copper caps and the leaden bullets that were flattened after striking the iron target. We got fourpence a pound for the caps which were very small (about $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter), and it took about three or four hundred of them to make a pound. For the lead bullets we got a halfpenny a pound.

Here is another way in which we made a few coppers in the winter time: The moor would be flooded to a depth of a foot or so by the canals overflowing, and then frozen solid. People came from miles for the skating, and when it snowed the boys used to take brooms from home and sweep the snow off the ice, so the skaters could skate. I have made as much as a shilling in a day, principally holidays. Nearly all the boys were the same. They would take all the pennies, half-pennies and farthings home to mother as there was always a shortage of food in the winter time, and we never dreamt of spending even a halfpenny in a lolly shop.

Even in the summer time we were always hungry. Sometimes we would go to the outskirts of a farm when the potatoes were fit to dig (and sometimes even when they weren't) and, what is called in Australia, "bandicoot" our pockets full. We would then go onto the moor and gather up dry cow dung to make a fire, roast the taters and have a glorious blow out.

When there were no spuds to be had, we'd pull up turnips, sweeds or mangle-wurzles, and tare them into us. We boys were not too badly off, but the poor little girls had to stay at home to help mother or mind the babies or something. However we could generally manage to sneak a baked spud or turnip home to them.

The London and Southwestern Railway from Waterloo to Windsor ran across the moor, parallel to one of the canals and about 300 feet from it, leaving a strip of rich land between the canal and railway right across the moor. Some rich philanthropist who owned it cut it up into half acre allotments and left it to the poor of the town. There was a trust appointed, before I was born, to allot one of the allotments to the most deserving householder, in perpetuity, the conditions being you had to keep it cultivated and cared for. If you neglected it in any way, the trustees could take it from you and give it to someone else.

However no person was to have more than one block. The only other condition was to pay what was known as a pepper corn rent, which was to be paid each Michaelmas Day. Mother sent me to pay it several times. This rent was fourpence a year, and on paying it at the Hall each person was given a 4lb. loaf of bread, 1 lb. of cheese and a quart of beer. The occupiers of the blocks were always ready to pay their fourpence in fact, they would like to pay it every week, instead of once a year.

Nearly all the poorer houses in the town were two storeys with the front door opening on to the footpath, no gardens in front, but about a half an acre of good land at the back. The poor whp could cultivate their two blocks, that is the one at the house, and the one on the moor, always had plenty of vegetables. most of them also kept two or three pigs in the back garden. I know we had three of different sizes, and there was always plenty of green stuff in the gardens to feed them.

To mix with the green stuff we could always get plenty of brewers grains for carting away. One of the bigger boys of the family would take the barrow for a load every night, no charge being made. The brewery was glad to get them away. In case you don't know what brewers grains are, they are the refuse of the malt used for brewing beer.

After giving a somewhat vague description of the little town of Staines, I will now refer to what I remember first. The mothers would come to the front door to tell the children to come off the street at dusk, telling us the "Fenians" were coming. We would scurry inside pretty lively. For a long time that was how they could scare us. I suppose that must have been the time of the Fenian Rising.

Another incident which I remember about the Fenians is this: Over the Thames there was a bridge built of grey granite with four big arches, as the river was about 200 feet wide at this point. This bridge was the main road from London to Windsor in Surrey. Well, one morning Father came home to breakfast (I might state here that everyone started work at

6 a.m. and came home to breakfast at 8 a.m.) and told Mother that the Fenians had blown up the bridge, with whatever explosives were used at that time.

Of course the kids had to go and have a look. Hundreds of people came from all parts for weeks after, and a lot of them carried away bits of granite, (I learnt after, as souvenirs). My eldest brother and I carried away a lot of it, thinking it was valuable. We had a heap of it in the back yard. However, Dad made us cart it all away again, so our good intentions to enrich our parents fell flat.

I might mention that the only damage the so-called blowing up of Staines bridge did was to shatter one of the piers on the land side; this was quickly repaired. All over the place the people were saying, "The Fenians have blown up the bridge". It goes to show that people, at that time as well as the present, were ready to make a mouthful out of trivial things.

At certain times of the year the river Constabulary, four or five of them in a row-boat, would go up the river catching the big white swans. I daresay there were thousands of them. It took the police weeks to catch them all. The swans used to nest in the backwaters. The men in the boat, two rowing and the others with long light bamboo poles with a crook, could get quite close to the birds. The man with the pole would hook them around the neck, pull them aboard, and brand them by punching a hole about the size of a pea through the web of the foot.

All this was recorded in a book with any other remarks concerning past brandings, the number of birds etc. They were quite tame as there was a lot of boat traffic on the river for 8 or 9 months of the year. It was common talk at that time that all the swans belonged to the Queen. I never heard of anyone interfering with them, not because they belonged to the Queen, but perhaps because they were un-eatable.

Plenty of people used to get through the hedges or fences during the season to get some chestnuts at Windsor Park. When the nuts were ripe they would fall to the ground. As nearly all the trees in the park were chestnut trees, the nuts would lie thick on the ground. One could shovel them up, but let any of the gamekeepers catch you (they always carried a gun) and it meant gaol for you. The prosecutor would tell the Court that you were trespassing and that Her Majesty wanted the nuts for Her deers.

I don't remember my age when I first went to school. It was not compulsory. I know I left when I was 8 and had to go to work. My first job was with a neighbour who had a couple of cows. After they were milked I had to deliver the milk to the customers. I carried it in a couple of billy-cans, each holding about a gallon, and had a half pint measure to deal it out.

When all the milk was sold I would take the cows to the moor, do little jobs about the house, fetch the cows home at evening, and do the rounds again. For all this, I got one and sixpence a week and my breakfast.

In the harvest time, for a couple of years before I left school, Mother used to put up some tucker and take 3 or 4 of us to the harvest field gleaning. After the wheat had been carted to the farm yard, people were allowed to gather up odd

straws that lay about the field. Mother would make a camp under a hedge and one of us would mind the baby, (there was always a baby at our house). Mother and the other kids would roam about picking up straws, and when our hands were full take them to Mother.

At about 8 o'clock we would have breakfast. I might say here that we left home at 4 in the morning; it was quite light at 3 a.m. in the summer months. Our breakfast was a slice of bread about 2 inches thick with a lump of dripping in the centre. We would eat all around the dripping, saving the centre till the last, then lick round the dripping and smacking our lips, just like the present day children lick round their ice-blocks.

Dinner time was ditto repeato, and about 4 in the evening we would go home with as much wheat as we could carry. Mother was as strong as a horse and could carry a good load as well as the baby.

You can understand why I said there was always a baby at our house when I say I was the sixteenth of twenty-two children - eleven boys and eleven girls! Later on there was only one brother besides myself that had a trade - my brother a blacksmith and myself a bricklayer. All the girls went to do domestic service and five of the boys enlisted in the army, one in the navy and the others just labourers.

To go back to the gleaning. After we cleaned up all the fields, we would start thrashing. A sheet was laid on the ground and the wheat was belted with sticks, and winnowed by the wind. At that time the farm hands threshed the wheat with flails, just a couple of sticks like broom handles about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and hinged with a strip of leather. One stick was held and the other was swung up and down. There were no reaping machines then: the wheat was cut with a sickle or reap-hook, later they used a scythe.

After our wheat was thrashed and cleaned, one of us bigger boys would wheel it to the flour mill, where no charge was made for grinding, but took the offal for their trouble. In a season we would have nearly a hundred pounds of flour for our work. Then for a few weeks there were no baker's bills, but home-made bread, (and didn't we enjoy it!) The end of the gleaning came when some clever Alec invented the horse rake, that never left a straw. So that was the end of that business.

The biggest brewery was run by a family named Ashby, who was very wealthy (even though beer was only four pence a quart). The reason I mentioned the Ashbys is because when I left school my Father sent me to a night school run by Miss Elizabeth Ashby. She was a very good woman. We went in at 7 o'clock till 9, and then played all sorts of indoor games. In winter we were given a cup of coffee before we went home. Later, one of her brothers, who was a musician, started a drum and fife band. Every summer she would get four or five of her brothers' covered-in wagons and take us for a picnic to Kew Gardens, Hampton Court, or Virginia Waters. She did all sorts of good deeds to keep the boys interested, and to attend regularly.

There were five denominations in Staines, the English Church which stood in the centre of a burial ground, (or as it is called here a cemetery), the Congregational, Methodists, Quakers, and Baptists. I don't remember any of us ever going to church, but Dad was very strict about us going to Sunday

School. While I was on the milk round, I was allowed to go to the English Church every Saturday afternoon (before I went for the cows) to blow the organ for the organist, who paid twopence for the two hours I pumped. There were lots of ways a willing boy could earn a few pence.

There was what we called a causeway or towing path. It was a high bank of earth built originally to keep the river in bounds, otherwise it would spread over the low-lying country. The bank would be about twelve feet higher than normal water level and twenty or thirty feet wide at the top. That towing path was built for a couple of miles each side of Staines Bridge. The gasworks got all its coal by lighters drawn by four horses (tandem fashion), and the timber yard all its timber the same way. Hence, the causeway served a double purpose.

Going back a little, as I said before, the English Church stood in the centre of the burial ground. A stone-paved footpath led from the front gate, winding in and out among the tombstones, to the Church door about a hundred yards away.

I don't know whether it was compulsory or not, but when the church bells rang for service, everybody that did not go remained indoors, except the men who had their block of land on the moor. They spent all day Sunday cultivating their land. It was like a procession to see the people walking along the footpath to church. I never saw anyone riding. It was the same when anyone died. I never saw a hearse. The body was always carried on the shoulders of four men, no matter how far. Another four men would relieve these later on. Two walked at the front holding back the pall so the carriers could see where they were walking, and two others carried tresles which were set down every hundred yards or so according to the weight. And so the carriers would be relieved. The mourners and friends walked behind; even the wealthy people walked to church.

I asked Mother why she never went to Church. She said that the working class didn't go because they weren't respectable - it was only respectable people who went to Church. Although my parents weren't respectable, they made us kids go to Sunday School. Dad told Mum one day that a new Methodist preacher had come to Staines and was going around to visit his flock. He called at a house and asked a lady if her husband was a Methodist. "No Sir", she replied, "he's a plumber!" That was almost as good as the man who was also asked what his religion was. He replied, "I'm a Calithumpion, and that means I pay twenty shillings in the pound, and mind me own business!"

The hotels and beer houses had to close at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning and open again at 1 o'clock, after the people had gone home from Church. Another thing that was common

Another thing that was common in those days was, when times were good, that means when the men were working, we, as well as others used to have a joint for Sunday dinner. The joint was usually pork or mutton as beef was too dear, and pork was the cheapest, (pork was 8 pence, mutton one shilling, and beef one and sixpence). The bakers had their ovens hot and mother would prepare the dinner, usually potatoes or Yorkshire pudden under the joint, and pack us off to the bakers with it at 10 o'clock, then we would go for it after church at 1 o'clock cautioned by mother not to be dipping our fingers in the gravy and sucking them on the way home.

The charge for baking the dinner was 1½d. Our mouths used to water while waiting in the bake-house, perhaps

20 or 30 of us, while the baker was pulling the joints out of the oven and singing out the names for the owners to pay up and take it away. I never knew him to make a mistake and give one the wrong dinner.

Mother would give us a cloth to cover it with and a bit of board to carry it on. We would often have to put it down for a rest once or twice before we got home, and Mother knew that was the time our fingers got into the dish to see if it was still hot. There were generally six or seven of us youngsters at home, so one can imagine there wasn't much left for tea. However we could fill up with bread and dripping or treacle, except in the bad times, (which were mostly in winter), then we were rationed.

Many years after, I was told of a man in Queensland who, like myself, had a pretty rough time as a boy. Later on in life he became fairly successful, got married, and had a family. His children, like most colonial children, were very finnick about their food - didn't like fat or vegetables, always poked half of their dinner on the edge of the plate. The Father told a friend one day that liver was too fat for some kids. Anyhow, one day he started to tell his children about what a hard time he had when he was a boy. When He'd finished his eldest child looked at him and said "Ain't you glad you came to live with us Dad?" That's one instance of the precociousness of the Australian children.

Another, - one day in Melbourne (I was about 60 then) a little boy about eight was selling Heralds in Swanston Street. As I was passing He had a butt of a cigarette in his mouth. He came up to me and said, "Got a match on yer dig?"

I can remember quite well, on the first of May each year, a small party of boys and girls perhaps ten or twelve, tying a bunch of flowers on the end of a stick (perhaps their mothers helped). They'd go round the town to the Gentlemen's houses, and holding up the rose-gays would sing, "First of May is Maypole day, please remember the Maypole, only once a year", and keep on singing it till the owner came out and gave us a few coppers or a piece of cake or fruit.

None of us would be more than 8 or 9. I know I was only six when I was initiated to the job. The eldest girl was always the leader and carried the money box. The coppers, mostly ha'pence and farthings that we got, were put in the box and I believe, fairly and evenly divided up at the end of the day. I never saw any 3d. bits among the collection. When I started work at 8 years old, I gave it up as too childish.

I think it was in May that the Annual Fair was held in the main street. All sorts of stalls, roundabouts, swings, donkey rides, and all sorts of amusements. I think it would look funny now, to see a lot of tents put up in the main street but that day was a strict holiday. People came for miles around to see Staines Fair and to spend a little money.

It was a little money too as this conversation, which was overheard, will bear out. A yokel (nickname for a farm-hand) was roaming about the fair with his girl and decided to make her a present, usually called a "fairing". He came to a stall where they had a lot of coloured ribbon. Says he, "How much is that red and yaller ribbon a yard"? The woman said "Three apence". Says he, "Well, gives us half a yard of it for my gal. I don't care what I spend today, I'm going to make the money fly". And he did too. He took her to a tent

and paid a penny to see a fat woman with whiskers, and two funny donkey rides, and a penny bottle of scent. The days outing must have cost him over sixpence. All those sorts of things seem very funny to me now - over seventy years after.

At that time there was a toll bar gate on the Staines bridge. All traffic going either way had to pay before they opened the gates, except foot passengers who were allowed to cross over free, although in 1874 when I was working in London I had to pay a halfpenny to go over Waterloo Bridge. I think it was a penny for a horse and cart and a halfpenny for each passenger.

I am not too sure of the year but I think it was in 1873 that the tolls received, had paid the cost of building the bridge. I know there was a great ceremony with the town officials and others in authority when they declared the bridge open and free to all. The officials had a lot of workmen there to pull down the gate, and then throw it over the parapet into the river.

They would have shown more sense if they had let the poor have it for firewood, as they had very little fuel owing to bad times. In fact, a younger brother and myself used to take a barrow down to the moor to gather up dry cow dung till we filled the shed, as it was likely to be a hard winter, so we could have a bit of a fire at night. It seems a strange coincidence the cow dung fires, as many years after I had to do the same thing in Queensland to keep the mosquitoes out of the tent, where I was camped.

On the opposite side of the town from the moor was another large open piece of land, I suppose anything up to a thousand acres, called the Lammas. Where it joined the Thames there was a granite memorial about 15 ft. high with a lot of letters and inscriptions cut into it, but so weatherworn that it couldn't be read. No-one seemed to know what it was or when it was built. My Father who was born in Staines in 1815 didn't know, and neither did his father who was a native of that place. Anyway, the Lammas wasn't fenced and anybody could graze their cow or horse on it. In the summer months the grass would be a couple of feet high and a neighbouring farmer used to cut it for hay, but who he paid for the privilege I don't know.

There was a creek, or what we called a brook, running along side it and emptying into the Thames, and that brook was the boundary between Middlesex and Buckinghamshire. There was a road running right through the centre of it, through Wraysbury, Datchet, Slough, and Eton to Windsor, but the main road to Windsor was over Staines bridge through Egham, by the racecourse, and past the place where King John signed the Magna Charter.

There used to be a great ceremony in part of Windsor Castle grounds every year; It was called Thanksgiving Day to commemorate the recovery of the Prince of Wales who was near death with typhoid fever. That was Queen Victoria's eldest son afterward King Edward married to Princess Alexandra of Denmark the most beautiful woman in England at the time. I saw her several times, but I am rambling.

The Thanksgiving Day ceremony consisted of roasting three whole bullocks. An iron spindle went right through the carcase and revolved slowly over a big fire. I couldn't say whether it revolved by machinery or men turned a handle, probably the latter. As it was an annual affair, after the bullocks were roasted they were cut up into small joints and given to the poor. I know none of it ever came to our house.

When the Royal Family were away from Windsor, there are certain days when the public are admitted to look over the castle, excepting the private rooms. Several times when a boy I have been up on the round tower. The top of it must have been 50 or 60 feet across with cannon all around poking their nose through the embrasures. There is a wonderful view from the top for miles around.

There is one carriage drive in a straight line from the castle, through the Park, to the monument of one of the Georges (a distance of three miles), with chestnut trees on either side, about 40 feet apart, in a dead straight line; the branches almost meeting overhead with just a gap here and there to let the sun in, otherwise it would look like a tunnel.

There were several locks in the river, otherwise the flow of the river would scour the banks. One lock was at Teddington about a mile from Staines, and another 3 miles down stream. Each had a rise of 15 feet or more and for all that the stream would be running at over two miles an hour. I don't know how many more there were as I was never farther up the river than Windsor. I've heard my Dad say that one year in the 50's, the Thames was frozen over at Staines and the ice was so thick that a fair was held on it. Being 200 or 300 feet wide and running at 2 miles an hour it must have been some cold to freeze it.

Another thing that was always kept up was Guy Fawkes Day. An immense bonfire would be lit on the moor and plenty of fireworks and tar barrels, which would be lit and rolled along the main street to the bonfire. Two men with poles would push the barrel along. There would be 20 or 30 of these barrels, the flames rising 6 or 8 feet high, and from 30 to 40 feet between them. So the front men had to go for their lives in case the following barrel would be close on their heels. It was great sport, I don't think, especially if it had been snowing. The bonfire would melt the snow in the vicinity and it would become slush.

Those sort of things amused the people in those times, as the only outdoor sport in the summer was cricket, rifle shooting, and regattas and in the winter it was sliding, skating, and snowballing. Most of the pubs had a skittle alley for indoor sport and perhaps quoits and draughts and shove-a-penny, but the working class were not too wrapped up in sport as they had to start work at 6 in the morning till 6 at night, and on Saturday the same as any other day, with very few holidays. No notice was taken of the Queens Birthday; the only holidays I remember were Christmas, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, and Good Friday.

My Father was a bricklayer and so was his father, and when I was a boy bricklayers wages were 30/- a week, if you didn't lose any time through rain or other causes. We had a five roomed house and the rent was 4/6. One of the numerous ministers in the town asked Dad one day what he did with ALL his wages. He replied, "Well when I've paid the rent and fed and clothed 7 or 8 children and the Mother and myself, I stack the rest away in barrels. I wouldn't trust a bank with all that".

When I think of the hard life my poor old Mother had. Often during a hard winter, she would go out washing and scrubbing all day for 1/6, and always have to take the baby with her. When she would come home dog tired and sit down for a minute and look at all the hungry faces round her, she would take off her bonnet while she was feeding the baby and then try and satisfy us; but she always came up smiling.

My Jove she was game alright. There was a railway running along our back fence and Mother had never been on a train in her life till she was over sixty. Father had not been dead long when a brother of mine, who had emigrated to Canada and was doing fairly well in Victoria, Vancouver Island sent home for Mother. And taking the train to London she boarded the ship for America and then about a three thousand mile journey across the American continent to Vancouver. That was train riding with a vengeance at last.

Well I'm glad to say that was the end of her hardships. There was only one daughter in my brother's family, so mother led a happy and peaceful life until she was 86. The last 20 years or so of her life she had not a thing to worry her. She well deserved every bit of it. That little bit about Mother had made me jump ahead too quick, however we will go back again to when I was about 8, just before I started to work.

There was great doings at Windsor as the Shar of Persia was paying a visit to Queen Victoria, and she held a great review of troops in Windsor Great Park in his honor. The day before the review, the troops were coming in thousands and were billeted in the different towns or villages a few miles round Windsor, so that they would be within easy marching distance of the park. But the regiment that was the daddy of them all was the Life Guards, a fine body of men none under 6'2" and riding medium draught horses. The men wore white buckskin breeches with top boots, and shiny helmets with a plume hanging from the crown, and drawn swords carried over the right shoulder. My word, they did look splendid.

But what tickled us kids most was the drummer. He had two drums shaped like a large basin with the skin drawn tight over the top, one on each side of the horse, and resting on his thighs with the reins round his wrist. But the horse being well broke into was guided by the soldiers knees.

The drummer always led the bandsmen who were in a single file, one each side of the road. As they were marching through Staines on their way with the band playing, 6 or 7 of us kids (none over 8) walked along side the band the 4 or 5 miles to Windsor by Egham racecourse (on which I have a little incident to mention later on), to a private carriage drive into the park. At the entrance were large iron gates, with a stone lodge for the gatekeeper, and on the outside of the park about 50 police to stop anyone of the public from getting in. Anyway, we boys were still walking beside the band when a policeman blocked us from going in. The bandmaster who was a sport said, "It's alright Sergeant, they all belong to the band". Whether it was the pleasant smile of the bandsman, or being called Sergeant I don't know, but he let us through and what a sight.

All the military in their different formations and the different coloured uniforms formed up on a large open part of the park, bigger than Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne. None of the general public were admitted, but thousands of lords and earls and dukes and "dookesses", with the principal aristocrats in the carriages and drags and four-in-hand all round the review ground.

Well at midday everybody was getting ready for lunch. Hundreds of lackeys in their top hats with a cockade in the side of it were busy opening bottles. I supposed since, it would be champagne as I don't expect any of that superior class of people would drink common beer. All kinds of food was thrown out of the different carriages, and didn't us kids have a blow out, tell me, although the lackeys looked sideways at us picking up tit bits. I know I never got filled up like it before or after.

I suppose all the dukes and marquises were around the place with the royal family, in the middle of which was Queen Victoria with the Shah, who had a sort of head-dress like a British Hussar, only covered with diamonds and other jewels. In fact one could hardly see him without winking, as the diamonds were dazzling in the sun. Round about where he was, were a lot of his countrymen - a sort of coppery colour. I supposed they were there to see that no-one pinched any of his jewels, or that he indulged too freely.

The nearest we got to them was about a hundred yards away and then only getting a squint of him through the spokes of the carriage wheels. We didn't see much of the review. After it was over the Life Guards escorted the carriage back to the castle and in the bustle of the different vehicles getting away, all us boys got separated.

I know about 6 o'clock (in the park) I got lost and the keeper caught sight of me and hustled me off to Virginia Waters to give me in charge to the police. But somehow, while he was getting over a fence, I gave him the slip. I don't think he was too keen on catching me, but didn't I run, I'll bet yer, knowing where I was now as I had often been to Virginia Waters chessnutting.

I was about eight miles from home. I arrived there about 10 o'clock and so it would be impressed on my memory, Dad gave me the father of a hiding for being out late. He asked me where I had been. I told him "to see the Queen". He said, "You've seen her dozens of times". I said, "Yes, but I wanted to see the blackfellow that was with her". If he had asked me first, I would have told him and missed the hiding but he got in first.

I might mention here that we had to pay a penny a week for school. The school-master was paid by the Ashby family, but at 4 o'clock when school was over he had to do clerical work in Ashby's office till 6 and sometimes till 9 o'clock.

That's about all I remember up to the time I was 8½, when Dad took me from the dairying business to work with him on his different jobs. That was worse for mother as she lost the 1/6 a week I was earning because Dad didn't give me anything.

It was about that time that the Franco-Prussian war was on, and a little later the Turko-Russian war, (that would be in 70, 71, or 72, I am not certain to a year or so). The only thing in connection with it was talk about Arabi Pasha holding Plevna against the Russians. Otherwise I don't

remember who won or who lost as the people didn't bother their heads much about it, one way or the other. In those times when two countries were at war they could fight it out amongst themselves. It is different nowadays. When there is a war on every country is sticking their beak in. I think that goes to show that all wars are trade wars, every country thinking that some others were getting a better deal than themselves.

At the time I started work for Dad, he was building some stables for a Spanish Count at Sunningdale. At that time Father was foreman for a builder named Thomas Taylor of Staines. Father was looking after his work and we used to drive in a wagonette night and morning, to and fro. I didn't do much work then, only running messages and odd jobs. If I remember rightly Sunningdale would be about 7 or 8 miles from Staines.

I never remember seeing the Count as I believe he was mostly in Spain, but the Countess was quite able to look after things. The stables Dad was building were lined inside with white enamel tiles, and floored with Staffordshire bricks, the best procurable at the time.

She used to go out riding side-saddle with a groom in attendance and when she would come back she would gather up her habit and go up the ladder on to the scaffold where the bricklayers were working, and ask questions of Dad about the work. She didn't mind getting splashed with mortar, but of course she didn't have to clean it.

Of a morning after breakfast, she would go into the stable yard and tell the grooms to fetch out the horses. I suppose there would be 20 or more carriage horses, hunters, hacks, and ponies for the children. She would always have a new pair of white kid gloves on, and pass her hand all over the horse and then look at her glove to see if any dirt was there. If there was, didn't she give the head groom a tongue thrashing, who afterwards passed it on to the culprit in the working mens home.

All the kitchens and wash-house floors were paved with brick or stone flags, and instead of carpets or lino, they would sprinkle sand all over the floor. The next day they would sweep it all up, (it would collect all the dirt) and sprinkle fresh sand on it. It used to cost mother three pence a week for sand. The price of it I remember well was a ha'penny a bottle, (about a quart) three quarts of sand to last a week. It could not be laid on very thick.

Every house had their own well with a pump in the wash-house. Any part of Staines you could get beautiful water by sinking the well five or six feet deep, as there was a deep bed of sand and gravel at that depth, and with all the pumps going it was never known to be dry.

Before going any farther, I must relate one little incident that happened about 1867. I don't remember it, but people talked about it years after, that's how I got to know about it. There was a circus in London run by a firm named Sangers & Astleys. They had a trick rider named Charley Cook who owned the horse he used to perform with, a thoroughbred, and Cook was very proud of his speed.

Some aristocrat who owned race horses made a bet, after a lot of talk, that he had a horse that could run

rings round Cook's. Anyhow the bet was made for £500 a side, over $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, to be run on Egham racecourse quite close to Runny Mead. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles was in a straight line, no curves or bends on that course. Cook was leading and just before reaching the post he stooped down, undid the girths, and stood up and rode on the horses back riding in a winner waving the saddle. I can't vouch for the truth of it, but it was talked about for years afterwards, what a marvellous bit of horsemanship it was, so I think there must have been some truth in it.

I had an uncle in London who started life as a butcher and gradually worked his way up to be lessee of the underground refreshment rooms at St. Martins-Le-Grand, that is the General Post Office in London. He and my Aunt had four daughters, the eldest being about 25 at that time and the youngest about my own age. They all helped in the refreshment rooms, which was what is called now a sort of cafeteria where one could get a slice of bread and butter for a ha'penny, a cup of coffee for a ha'penny, herring toasted 3 fathings, boiled egg 3 fathings or a ha'penny according to market prices, a hot dinner of meat and vegetables for 4 pence, and cake and pudding for a penny.

His family, with the help of several employees, supplied meals for 4000 letter sorters between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. as the sorters worked all night. Well after a few years he made a lot of money and eventually made a fortune.

When I was 10 years old, this uncle (who lived in Lambs Conduit Street running off Bloomsbury Square) came down to Staines to confer with Dad about investing some of his money. He bought some land next to where we lived and employed Dad to supervise the building of 30 two-storied houses, 20 of them were built of concrete and 10 of brick. That is where I got my first lessons in concrete construction. That kept us going from 1871 to 73, and while that was going on uncle gave me 4/- a week, with instructions to put it in the P.C. savings bank, with good intentions probably of giving me a start later in life.

At the end of 12 months uncle wanted to see the bank book. There was only a shilling in it. Before it ever reached a pound poor old mother would want it to tide her over some trouble or other. Anyway when uncle saw how it was, he stopped giving me any. It was poor mother that suffered, not me. I don't know if he ever gave dad any wages for me or not, I don't think mother knew either.

After these houses were finished, dad and I did repair work and alterations mostly at gentlemens and noble-mens houses of which there were plenty around Staines. Most of the jobs necessitated employing labour. One job in particular I remember - a mansion about two miles from Staines at a place called Wraysbury, standing in large grounds with about 2 or 3 acres of lawns in the front, running right down to the bank of the Thames, with ornamental trees and statues standing about. At the front of this mansion was a flight of marble steps leading up to an open hall about 80 feet by 40 feet, with marble columns about 10 feet apart supporting the upper structure.

Inside of these columns dad had to lay a concrete floor to receive a covering of Minton tiles and some of these tiles would be as small as sixpence. Dad got 3 or 4 expert tile layers from London to lay the tiles; he and some labourers did the concreting. The pattern worked on the

floors was double life size of the Lords Supper with other figures grouped about to fill up the 80ft. x 40ft. space.

It was after that job was finished that my uncle Robinson wanted to take me to London to live and work with him. I did go, for a fortnight. My cousin and I had to go round the tables gathering up the dirty crockery in a clothes basket and take it to be washed up by the women-folk. When the things were washed up, they were placed on a big tray on steam pipes and dried. That way no towels were used to dry them. That would be in 1873, just after the Turkish war.

Well after I had been there a fortnight or so, Dad said he wanted me with him, I suppose to save paying someone else, as he said he wanted to make a bricklayer of me. I was glad as I loved messing about with bricks and mortar far more than gathering up dirty crockery. And so I continued with Dad until I was 12 years old, when I branched off into a bigger life as I will try to explain.

Before I start I want to go back twelve months to mention some of my brothers and sisters. Fred, the blacksmith, who was 7 years older than me, got married before he was 18 and lived at a little hamlet called Thorpe-Lea about a mile out of Staines near Chertsey. But he only lived there six months, when he and his wife emigrated to New Zealand. Brother Bill, 2 years younger than Fred, also went on the same boat. I had to mention them as I will be referring to them later. The year I went to London to work was the year the emigrant ship "Northfleet" sank in the English Channel with all hands and 600 or 700 emigrants bound for Australia or New Zealand, I am not sure which. Anyway, my sister Charlotte 12 years older than me was one of the drowned.

When Dad was building uncle's houses, he had a Bricklayer named Tom Blake working for him and after they were finished he went to London to work on a big school in Bloomsbury Square. He knew the foreman for years and so did Dad. Anyhow, between them they decided to apprentice me to the contractor, who I might say was in a fairly big way but did not pay any premium, nor did I receive any wages for the first twelve months. After that I was to be self supporting at 13 years of age.

Uncle Robinson was brought into it by agreeing to "stand Sam" for the first twelve months. Mr. Blake took me up on Sunday night to Waterloo station and we then walked to his lodging in Camden Town. He introduced me to the landlady (whose husband was a bricklayer and worked on the same job) who said I was to pay 2/- a week, but had to sleep in a double bed with 3 of her sons (2 at the head and 2 at the foot). It was alright in the winter time but a bit stuffy in summer.

The street was Johnson Street, quite close to Euston Station. We had $\frac{3}{4}$ hours walk to the job, and as work started at 6 o'clock it meant leaving our lodging at 5 a.m. At nearly all the street corners were coffee stalls where one could get a cup of coffee for ha'penny and a piece of cake for ha'penny. That was a start for work. At 8 o'clock we knocked off for breakfast, then to an eating house for a cup of coffee for ha'penny, 2 rounds of bread and butter (not too much butter) at three-fathings a round, an egg, herring or rasher of bacon also for three-fathings each. The eggs or herrings varied in price, sometimes ha'penny, three-fathings, or penny according to supply and demand.

I would have a very fair breakfast for 3 pence or so then start work again at 9 a.m. and work until 1 o'clock. Dinner was till 2 o'clock and we got a fair dinner for 4 pence, 3 pence for a little meat and vegetable, and penny for a good size lump of pudding. We would knock off work at 6 o'clock and have tea on the road home, which was mostly a cup of tea, bread and butter, and perhaps an egg.

After the living at home, I thought I was having a glorious time. On Saturday we knocked off at 4 o'clock, then away to the lodging to have a wash and change, and walk to Waterloo Station, (that was where we had to pay ha'penny toll to cross Waterloo Bridge). I would catch the train to Staines and get home about 7 o'clock. Then I would have tea and give a full account of every days happenings to mother. That was the regular thing.

All the time I was in London and coming home every Saturday and back on Sunday evening, Mother would give me enough money to last the week.

About that time, John Bull of South-hampton had the contract for the new Law Courts in London. While I was in London there was a strike on with the masons. There were about 500 masons and 200 or 300 bricklayers employed there. The bricklayers were getting 10 pence an hour and the masons 9½ pence, so they struck for the extra ½ pence the same as the brickys. The contractor would not give it, his reason being the masons were mostly working under cover and did not have as much lost time as the bricklayers.

After it lasted a few weeks, he sent over to Germany for 500 masons. They had to be housed and fed on the job, and watched over by a lot of police, who also had to be paid. After a few weeks he found that one Englishman was equal to two Germans. In the end he had to ship them back to Germany. After costing him a few thousands he gave up, and never had any more trouble while the job lasted, which was several years.

I never saw much of London while I was there, as I went home every weekend. And so the time went on. For the five years I was in London the only thing I saw in the pleasure line was on wet days when we couldn't work, we would go to the zoo, Madame Tussard's, or St. Paul's and Westminster. All the time I was in England I never saw a ship or the sea till I came to Australia.

One thing some of the tobacconists used to do to encourage trade was, when one bought an ounce of tobacco for 2 pence, they would give you a coupon entitling you to go to a music hall which was generally attached to a pub. There you gave up the coupon and was admitted to a sort of vaudeville entertainment, and given a brass coin entitling you to a pennorth of refreshments, (half pint of beer or a bottle of lemonade).

I never smoked or drank while I was in England, but Tom Blake who I was working with often sent me for an ounce of tobacco so that I could get the coupon. I was never in a theatre or other place of entertainment until I came to Australia. The working kids didn't get much pleasure in those times. Someone told me of a boy who asked his father for 3 pence to go to a circus that was visiting Staines. The father refused and said, "Why you always want to be enjoying yourself, why it was only last week I took you down to the moor to see the eclipse of the moon". That is about the way the elders treated their youngsters. I suppose what one never had, he never misses.

Now I come to the time I was 16. My brothers, Fred and Bill who went to New Zealand 5 years before, came home. Fred, the married and careful one, worked for a firm of iron-workers in Dunedin all the time he was there. By industry, a constant job, and a bit of luck in buying and selling houses, he saved about £600. Bill, the harum scarum one, with no trade, worked for farmers and would go down to Dunedin a couple of times a year and knock down his cheque, which was fashionable with bushmen at that time. When Fred decided to go home he offered to pay Bill's fare, so they came home together.

Fred had two children at that time. When they arrived in Staines Dad sent me a wire. I got a weeks holiday from the boss, without pay of course, (I might mention now that during my 70 years work, I never got paid for one holiday or for one hour that I didn't work. But as I said before, what one never had one never misses,) and went down home to meet my brothers.

One thing impressed me more than anything. A few days after their arrival Fred went to the bank to get his money that he'd sent on ahead of himself by draft or the way they do that sort of business. He drew it all in gold and I quite well remember, we were all in the kitchen, Dad Mum and 5 or 6 brothers and sisters, when Fred emptied 500 or 600 sovereigns into mother's lap. We were all mesmerized as we had never seen so much money before, and I never saw so much money since.

Night after night they would be telling us what they had been doing and what a fine country New Zealand was, till I was quite unsettled. I was always thinking of how I could go and do likewise.

Well, I continued going up and down to London to work until I was 17 and out of my apprenticeship. I would just like to mention here that bricklayers in the country districts had to learn plastering, tiling, tuckpointing, and concrete work. I was receiving full pay, that is 10 pence an hour and 10 hours a day.

Another young fellow in Staines about my age, named Rick Newland, and myself decided we would go to New Zealand. I left my job in London and worked for a few weeks in Staines as a fully fledged bricklayer. After reading a lot of propaganda that was broadcast all over England about how one could pick up gold in the streets and plenty of work for everyone in Queensland at high wages, my mate and I, after a talk with my brothers, went to a town called Uxbridge which was about 10 miles from Staines. There we saw the emigration officer, a Mr. Hetherington, and he told us there was no emigration to New Zealand. The only colony where there was free emigration was Queensland.

He made out the necessary papers and told us there was an amount of £2 to be paid to the Purser when we sailed for bedding and utensils used on board. We were to be notified a week before sailing and told the name of the ship, so I started to work again for about a month.

Then we got a letter from the agent saying our ship was the Ironsides sailing from East India Docks on the 31st January 1879.

The day we went to London to the ship, (Father and Mother took it quite as a matter of course when I promised to return in 5 years with my fortune made and to make them comfortable for the rest of their lives). Father just shook hands at the front gate. When I was leaving Mother cried a little and so too did my little brothers and sisters. But I was in the seventh heaven to use an old expression.

Fred gave me a couple of pounds, Uncle Robinson a fiver, and the others a little. Altogether I had £10, a box full of clothes and eatables mostly, and started off for my great adventure to get some colonial experience - and I got it.

Fred, Bill and Jack came to see me off and to pick out a bank, as being travellers themselves they knew more than I did. I haven't mentioned brother Jack before, so will transgress a little.

He was a soldier in the 11th Hussars and on furlough after just arriving at Colchester from India where he had been stationed for the past 11 years. (They, that is the 11th Hussars, were called the cherry bottoms on account of their scarlet trousers.) That was the first time I saw him to my recollection.

While I am talking about soldiers I might mention my brother Tom who was in the 15th Hussars and died in Bengal a few years before. Then Bill who was just home from New Zealand, couldn't settle down to anything, and having no money enlisted in a Grenadier regiment. A bit later the regiment was ordered abroad and Bill served in the Sudan. He was at the relief of Khartoum where General Gordon was killed, (I am not certain about the date).

However, after he had served his 7 years in the army, which was the time they enlisted for, he was discharged. Later with the help of Fred, he went to Canada and a few months later joined the North West Mounted Police. But after a few years in that he resigned and got married and settled down in Vancouver on a berry farm. He was doing well when he took ill and died early in the 1900s. Twelve months after, his wife who had realised his estate as they had no children, went for a trip and was killed in the great earthquake in Japan.

The next soldier in the family was Sam, four years younger than me, (He would be 12 the year I left England). When he was 18 he joined a Dragoon regiment and served his 7 years. He was another careful one like Fred. He then got married and went to Winnipeg in Canada. As he was handy with tools he soon blossomed out as a contractor. He afterwards went to Vancouver and got a good job as inspector for building in the City of Victoria, and that was the boy who sent for Mother after Father died, as stated previously. Sam died in 1937 and left a fair amount of money, I don't know how much but in the thousands. He had much help from his wife who was a nurse and had more than she could do. They only had one daughter.

The next brother to join the army was Charlie who was 5 years old when I left. He joined up with the territorials during the Great War and was killed in France, so that was five brothers that served in the British army. One reads a lot these days of the boys who fought for their homes. The majority of them enlisted because they were destitute and hungry and homeless.

To resume, we went on board the ship about 10 in the morning and after looking it over my brothers gave me

Fred

Jack

Tom
Bill

Bill - Ca

Japan

Sam -

Charlie
WWI -

Voyage

a bit of a talk. They told me such things as to get well forard if the sea was rough so that I wouldn't get as sea-sick. After a bit of lunch which Mother had put up for us, my three brothers shook hands and went.

Was I downhearted? No fear. Wasn't I going to make my fortune!

The ship was divided into three parts. The fore-part for single men, midship for the married, and the stern for single girls. There was 150 single men, 75 single girls, and the married couples with their children made a total of 325 passengers and a crew of 45.

What we stood up in and a change of underclothing we kept in our bunk, also any other little things we were likely to want such as towel, soap, et. and the rest of our things were in our box and put down into the hold after we were told to label the box wanted on the voyage. Every Monday during the voyage they were brought up on deck for us to get what we wanted for the next week. Then they were put down into the hold again till the next Monday, and so on.

After my brothers left, the Chief Officer and the Purser mustered all the single men forard and called the roll, then we paid our £2 and received bedding and utensils. Then they called the names of 10 men for each mess, then the 10 men of each mess drew lots to see who would be captain of the mess for a week. The duty of this man was to collect the rations for that mess and to prepare the food. He then had to take it to the cook then collect it at mealtimes and divide it among the mess. After meals he would wash up and stow the things away till next meal.

We had an oil drum holding between two and three gallons and every day each mess received that amount of fresh water for cooking or making tea. There was no fresh water for washing ourselves. All washing was done in salt water and there was no scarcity of that.

After a week the other nine men would draw lots to see who was to be captain for the next week, and so on till every man had his turn. Every man in the mess had to be captain once every 10 weeks.

Most of us had some tea or coffee and sugar, and just before we turned in we took it in turns to make something to drink, but before the cocks would give us hot water, we had to give him the equivalent in cold, as our ration of fresh water belonged to themess. We would generally have enough water for that in the cold weather, but later on when the weather was getting hot we wanted all there was for drinking purposes. The captain of the mess had to keep a sharp eye on it to see no one had more than his share.

As soon as we got into the channel the tug cast off, and having a following wind with all sails set, we raced down the channel, and no one was sick in our part. I put in the first night on deck as my brothers told me and as far forard as I could get hanging on to the jib stays, but the second night we got into the Bay of Biscay and my word it was rough.

The sailors said that this was nothing and to wait till we get a gale, however never having seen the sea before, I thought different. Hanging on to the stays the ship would run up a tremendous wave, shiver for a moment, then plunge down into the hollow. Was I scared? Too right I was!

One minute you were looking up at the stern, and the next you were looking down at it with the spray drenching you. There was only one man stuck it out with me all night. The rest went below and turned in. They had to hang on or they would get turned out.

They say everything has its compensations. About three parts of the single chaps were sick and I was one of the rest who weren't. While the sea-sickness was on, we had plenty of tucker. Some of them were off eating for 2 or 3 weeks. I don't know how the girls and married people got on because we were not allowed to mix. Some of the biggest of the men were sworn in as constables to keep order and to keep us to our own part of the ship.

If it was very rough the captain would spill half of our food going from the cookhouse down the steps to the tween decks where we ate and slept. The tween decks was about 8ft. high. The bunks were 3ft. wide and high on each side of the ship. At the foot of those bunks there was a narrow passage about 18 inches wide so that the men sleeping in the middle and the side of the ship, wouldn't have to crawl over others when they went to bye-bye.

There would be nine bunks with the feet to the passage then nine more head to head, then another little passage, and so on up to the so called companion-way which was an ordinary step ladder. So it was a bit of an acrobatic feat for the captain to carry a billy of soup in one hand and a dish of meat in the other, and negotiate those steps.

But they weren't a bad lot of fellows on the whole. There was always some of us to lend a hand at mealtimes. There was a baker on board and we had bread two days a week (Monday and Thursday). The married people had theirs on two different days, and the girls on two other days. So the bread had to be baked every day and what bread it was. It was always sour and if we were not hungry we couldn't eat it. Sometimes it was sodden or burnt on the outside. We were always hungry and some of the men complained to the Purser but he said we weren't paying for it and what do you expect for nothing.

After two or three weeks of it and the time hanging heavy on my hands, (not being able to play cards as I had never seen a pack of cards before) I got hanging round the cook-house and doing little things for him, like peeling spuds, (only the officers had them) or washing up. There was three cooks and the baker, so they were glad of any little help I could give them, and I always had plenty to eat except the week I was captain.

There was the Skipper, four Officers, the Doctor and his assistant, the Purser, and the Matron who kept the girls in order who ate in the cabin.

By the time we reached the tropics all the tucker I had in my box was eaten, except 18 tins of condensed milk and about a dozen tins of salmon. I didn't care much for the milk and was offered 18 pence a tin for it. But instead I gave it to some of the married women who had little children, some of them only babies in arms, and they were very thankful for it.

As I said before, when we sailed I had 10 sovereigns and some silver but one night someone stole all the money except 5 shillings that was in another pocket. The only one who knew I had the money was the chap who left Staines with me, so I accused him of stealing it. That led to high words

and we would have come to blows only the constable separated us and kept his eye on us after. I told him I had been robbed of nearly all my money and that this fellow Rick Newland was the only one who knew I had it.

The constable sent for the Purser, who sent for the Skipper who ordered the constable to search Newland. They only found a couple of pound on him, and as you can't swear to sovereigns they let him keep them as he swore they were his own and all that he had.

But I felt sure in my own mind that he had them planted somewhere, anyhow, I never got them and that was the reason that I gave the condensed milk away. I thought what is the use of selling them. I would only get robbed again some time when I was asleep. The Skipper said I should have given it to the Purser to mind, which most of the passengers did on leaving London, but I was too clever. As the constable said, anyone who took me for a mug was no fool, and that's that.

We were three weeks in the tropics with not a breath of wind and the sails flapping against the masts. One of the sailors said we had drifted back over three miles with the ship just rolling backwards and forwards, and the ends of the yards nearly touching the water first one side then the other. Some of the men threw ropes over the side and then dived into the sea off the bulwork. The Chief Officer whose watch it was ordered them back, but they refused to until he yelled out to look out for sharks. That brought them back quick and lively.

Later in the morning the Skipper read the riot act and threatened to imprison anyone who repeated the performance. As it was so hot, most of us wanted a bath but there was no provision for that sort of thing on an emigrant ship. One of the sailors solved the difficulty for us and this is what we did. The fo'castle deck was about 6 feet above the main deck. Those who wanted a bath, half of them went up on the fo'castle with ropes and buckets, (provided by the Boatswain) and the other half stood on the main deck stripped. The others would pull up water out of the sea and throw it over us. When we had enough of it, we would do the same to the others. The Skipper allowed it provided it was done before 6a.m. and all the women and children were not allowed on deck until it was all over.

The poop deck where the Officers cabins and dining room were was the same height above the main deck as the fo'castle. The store room was on the main deck adjoining the poop on the port side, and every day the captain of the mess had to go to the store and receive his drum of fresh water from the Purser's mate. While we were in the tropics, all the men had to march down to the poop and receive his daily dose of lime juice. That was the only chance the men had of speaking to the womenfolk.

Just while I think of it, when we landed at Brisbane the colonials would remark to each other, "Here's another load of new chums, can't you smell the lime juice." They could pick us out for months after, I suppose it was our clothes put us away. Now days the new arrivals are called Pommys but now back to the tropics.

While we were rolling from side to side in the big oily swells of the sea the albatross were sailing round and round the ship, diving now and again to pick up scraps that were thrown over from the cook-house or galley as it was called.

The sailors caught several. One, when it was stretched out on the deck, measured 20 feet from tip to tip. We never saw a shark although the sailors tried to catch one with hook and line. There was plenty of delphin and bonita swimming around and later when we got a wind there were plenty of porpoises swimming near the surface, turning over and over showing their white belly. The ship could never catch up with them, they were too fast.

Just a word as to how we washed our clothes. We just tied them up in bundles and dropped them overboard and towed them for an hour or so. Then we hauled them on board and tramped on them with our bare feet and threw them back again until they were reasonable clean. You couldn't wash them any other way, only by squeezing and rinsing. Then what a sight it was to see the clothes tied to the rigging and right up past the yard arm. I don't know how the girls dried their things. I think they hung them on the rails round the poop. All the lavatories were on the starboard side, three sets, one forward, one amidships, and one at the stern.

Well now we were bowling along after leaving the tropics with a strong wind behind us off the port quarter. The rate we were going made the skipper smile I'll bet.

I forgot to mention that when we were a month out the sailors made a sort of dummy horse with old clothes and straw, and hauled it up almost to the yard arm after soaking it with tar and setting it on fire. This was what they called working off the dead horse, as it was customary to pay sailors a months wages in advance before sailing. It was spent before they went aboard, so after a month at sea they started earning money for when they landed in Brisbane. They would have another beano and start again off scratch.

That was the way with the majority of sailors, just like a lot of the bushmen in Australia. They work on the stations all the year then have what they call a glorious time at the nearest township. I knew one man, a fencer on a cattle station. He went to the township after 12 months work with a cheque for £50, and all he brought was a pair of moleskin trousers and a shirt, all the rest went in rum.

Now back on the ship we were making good time until we were near the Cape of Good Hope. Then we struck gale after gale and were driven I don't know how many miles off our course. One gale in particular struck the side of the ship and burst one of the port-holes in the single mens part of the ship. A lot of the bunks were flooded and the mess utensils and bedding were floating about the tween-decks.

That was an anxious time for all hands, and the carpenter after a lot of hard work, shored up the hole with mattresses and timber and ultimately stopped the leak. One of the sailors told me after that another ship was nearly into us. He swore their yards touched ours. He was on the lookout that night and it was as black as pitch, but he said he didn't see their lights till they were almost on top of us. I know that we all had what the Aussie calls "the wind up" that night and for a week after.

Then we got some decent weather again and everything was lovely for a while, then more gales and fine weather alternatively until we sighted Morton Island. Our water ration had been reduced some weeks before and what there was of it was like pea soup with iron rust. All our drinking water for the whole voyage was carried in square iron tanks.

Soon after we sighted Morton Island, (and that was the first land we saw after leaving the English Channel) the pilot schooner showed up about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away. The Pilot got into a rowing boat with half a dozen men, who rowed him to our ship. I know everyone rushed to that side of the ship to see what sort of animals the Australians were. The Pilot came on deck and took charge and it wasn't long before we were through the reef and safe in Morton Bay.

We dropped anchor on the 24th May after being 115 days on the water without seeing land. At one time the sailors pointed out to us what appeared to be a cloud in the sky. They said it was the Canary Islands, but it soon disappeared. Whether it was land or they were just pulling our legs I don't know.

The day after we dropped anchor the doctors and other officials came on board and gave us the once over. Shortly after that the government steamer "Lady Lock" came and tied up alongside. They brought us plenty of roast beef and vegetables all piping hot which was cooked on the steamer as she came from Brisbane, and didn't we have a feast. It was the first fresh meat or vegetables we had had since leaving London. Some of the passengers ate that greedily that it made them ill - talk about giving a hungry dog a bone, it was just the same.

After filling us up with roast beef, the steamer went back to Brisbane. The single men were told to prepare to leave the ship the following morning. All our boxes and dunnage were got up out of the hold and sorted out and claimed by the men who then took charge of them. In the morning about 8 o'clock the Lady Lock again came alongside and gave us a good breakfast of steak, chops, potatoes in their jackets, and coffee, and above all bread and butter. It was the first for 4 months and my word that made us happy. We were longing to get ashore and to believe all the good things we read about Australia before we had left home.

Well after breakfast all the single men collared their things and boarded the steamer and waved goodbye to the sailors and the ship. I might mention that she had to make three trips to get all the emigrants ashore. While I think of it, on the papers each one received in London was a proviso that all free emigrants should remain in Queensland for at least three years. I suppose that was to make each colony pay for their own importations. That was before Federation, anyway that was only a matter of form for no one bothered their heads about us after we landed.

Just before we entered the Brisbane river from Morton Bay, we passed quite close to Sandgate, then only a village, and then steaming up the river we saw green slopes and on either side sheep and cattle grazing in paddocks, and in some places orange and banana plantations. It was a treat for sore eyes just to sit still and look first one side then the other after seeing nothing but water for four months. We never even saw a ship except the one the sailors said hearily run into us off the Cape.

However at about mid-day we drew into the wharf and started going ashore. Quite close was a big two storied brick building called the depot. We were taken charge of by a number of officials and escorted to the depot and domiciled in an immense room with bunks 2' high right around it. There were tables in the centre and a good hot dinner waiting for us, and we didn't need to be asked twice. After dinner some bloke made a long speech about what to do, to work hard, and ultimately make our fortune, and wound up by saying we would

be allowed to stay in the depot for 48 hours and if we didn't get a job in that time, as good as told us we could shift for ourselves. Well that didn't matter much for if there was a job to be had we were the blokes that would get it. Why, didn't I say I would go home after 5 years with my fortune made. Of course!

Well after dinner another young fellow and I did a prowl round the principle streets and the Botanic Gardens which sloped down to the river, the Parliament House at the top end, and arrived back at the depot in time for a hot tea. Then I turned in and did a bit of thinking. As I said before I only had five shillings in the world. I had often read about the American millionaire and how they started with half a crown, so I reckoned I had a good chance having 5 bob.

The next morning my mate, who was a carpenter, got up about 5 a.m. as was the custom in the old country and went around looking for buildings in the course of erection, but never struck one. After walking about for a couple of hours we were making for the depot and breakfast when we saw a lot of men going different ways with a billy can in one hand and their lunch in the other. We made a few enquiries after breakfast and was told the men didn't start work till 8 o'clock and the billys contained tea for their lunch, (that was a bit we learnt already).

After breakfast we hung about the depot until dinner time. Farmers and other employers came from all parts to engage the New Chums mostly as farm servants and domestic workers. Employers came from as far away as Ipswich, Toowoomba, and the Darling Downs. But no one wanted men in the building trade. I think the reason employers flocked to Brisbane when they heard an Emigrant ship had arrived was because they got them cheap and not because there was a shortage of workers. They always fixed the wage and as it was lower than they usually paid, the New Chums were blamed for engaging at low wages. They couldn't help themselves as they did not know the ruling rate for one thing, and the Government time limit at the depot compelled them to accept whatever was offered. It looked as if the Government was in league with the employer class to reduce wages.

After dinner my mate and I did about 5 hours walking about Brisbane looking for any buildings that were in progress, but we never saw but one, and that was on the road to Yoorong. We were told by one of the men that there was a slump in the building trade and there were hundreds of tradesmen walking about and taking anything that offered.

We came back again to supper and bed and found the biggest part of our shipmates had been engaged and were gone to different parts. In the morning after breakfast I borrowed a paper. I quite well remember it was the Courier. Looking down the advertisements I saw that a registry office in Queens Street wanted a young man able to milk and help in the garden, preferably a new arrival, wages 15/- a week and accomadation.

So away I goes to the address, and the lady asked me what ship I came in, (I don't know how she knew I had just landed) and if I could milk and I said yes, (as I was told by the boatswain on the ship always to say I could do what I was asked). She gave me a letter to my prospective employer and said that would be 2/6 please. "If they don't engage you come back and we will try and find you another position".

The address on the envelope was Mrs. George Raff, New Farm. She gave me a few directions which way to go.

It was out through what was called the Valley. I made a few enquiries on the route and ultimately arrived there. I was interviewed by the missus and after giving me the once over and looking me up and down and thinking a good while, (I suppose she was wondering if she could get a loan from the bank to meet the expense) she said, "Very well, come out this evening and start work in the morning." I was to see a man called Pat Scanlon, the gardener, who was to instruct me in my duties.

As I previously said, I landed with only 5/-, and the two days I was roaming about Brisbane I had spent 2/6 and the registry office took the other 2/6, so I was properly on the rocks.

I have forgotten how far it was from town to New Farm, but it must have been 3 or 4 miles. Anyway away I go back to the depot and made better time of it as I was in good spirits having got a job. I saw my mate and told him I had a job. I never saw him or any of my shipmates again.

I went and told one of the officials and got my box. There wasn't much in it, only a couple of shirts and socks and a blanket. I only had the suit I was wearing and boots, all my other clothes were either blown overboard or stolen. Anyhow, off I go humping my box with all my possessions, out to New Farm. And as the song goes, not a penny in his pocket La-de-da I introduced myself to Mr. Pat Scanlon the gardener and general major domo of the place.

He took me round the place, showed me my room which was part of a two-roomed cottage, (the other room was occupied by the coachman) and told me my duties. First job in the morning was to fetch the two cows from the meadow or paddock and take them to the cowshed at the bottom of the garden and milk them. Then the fun started.

In the Old Country there were no bails. The cows were tied to the manger with a rope round their horns, (I don't know how they managed with Faly cows). The only time I saw it done was when I was a boy working at a little dairy. Anyhow, I saw the leg rope hanging on the rail and when the cow poked her head through the bail I put the leg rope round her horns, and tied her to the bail. I got the bucket from the cook and started to milk but couldn't get any. The old cow kicked the bucket over and started to get nasty, then I heard someone laughing and saw the coachman sitting on the stockyard fence laughing fit to split.

Says he, "My word, many a good cow you never milked". I admitted it and said I was willing to learn, and like a sport he got off the fence and showed me how to secure the animal and gave me my first lesson in milking. He said get some warm water in a dipper from the cook, (who was an Irish woman and always grinning), and then proceeded to wash the tits, which he said must always be done and it helped to make the milk come free-er.

Between us we got them milked. He showed me where the hay was, and we have them a bundle to chew while we went to breakfast which we had in the kitchen with the servant girls, (4 besides the cook).

After breakfast at 8 a.m., I had to go to the wood pile and cut enough for the day. As the ladies of the house had a fire going in the dining and drawing rooms in the winter, and the cook had a big range which ate up the wood, I soon rose a few blisters.

After I had filled the box with wood, Pat Scanlon took me to the bottom of the garden joining the cowshed where the well was with a pump on it and a large wheel which took some turning. As the water had to be pumped to a tank on top of the house which supplied the bath-rooms and kitchen, and as the house was about a hundred yards from the pump, I don't mind telling you it was hard work. There was a gauge on the tank which told me when it was full. To fill it meant a solid two hours pumping.

After a couple of hours wood-cutting brought dinner-time. After dinner I worked in the garden with Pat till 6 o'clock when we knocked off for the day.

One good job, the cows were only milked once a day and as the coachman, Dick Aster, drove the ladies into the city or somewhere in the afternoon, I would not have had any assistance from him had the milking to be done in the evening. Like a trump he turned up next morning and saw me through the business again.

The work in the following days was a repetition of the first day. The third morning I had to do it myself as Dick was missing, but I succeeded after a fashion. The old cook had to have a growl about not getting as much milk as before. I suggested that perhaps it was because they smelt the lime juice on me. All the girls as well as Pat and Dick were always slinging off about lime juice.

I might mention here a little about the Raff family. The boss was a merchant of some sort in Greek Street Brisbane near the wharf and his son assisted in the business. He also had a sugar plantation at Cabooture some miles north of Brisbane and he went up there twice a week. Dick would drive him up there and back the next day in the buggy and pair they had. There was also the carriage, two pair of horses, and some saddle hacks.

They had two daughters and one son. Mrs. Raff was the boss of the home and servants and she could talk some when she was properly wound up. The first Sunday I was there she sent out word that I was to sit on the box seat with the coachman when he drove them to church. Well, as I only had the clothes I was working in and an old cap that the purser of the ship gave me, when her and her daughters got into the carriage and saw me, she immediately cancelled the order. Probably she thought I would attract too much attention. Anyhow it amused the girls and didn't hurt me, so why worry.

There was about an acre of garden, flowers, lawn, and vegetables on the front and about two acres of orchard on one side mostly bananas, pineapples and guavas, and on the other side a couple or three acres of paddock for the cows and horses.

I forgot to mention one of my duties was to feed the fowls and clean their houses and collect the eggs, and they had about 100 fowls.

The day my first week ended Pat brought me out 15/- for my weeks wages and told me I didn't suit. I suppose the reason was because I only had one suit and she couldn't show off her flunky to her friends. Pat kindly told me I could sleep there that night, as they didn't want to send a newchum out in the dark, but to make myself scarce the next morning. Thanks to the old cook I got a bit of breakfast. The colonials as a rule don't make it too easy for a new chum.

Well, I got my box on my shoulder and tramped into Brisbane via the valley. Going along Queen Street I asked a policeman if he knew of a cheap boardinghouse. He directed me to one in Margaret Street overlooking the Botanical gardens.

It was a two story house built of corrugated iron. I saw the landlord who told me it was 2/6 for three meals and a bed. I told him I didn't know how long I would be stopping but he showed me a room with three beds init.

I dumped my box and went out for a stroll as it was only 11 o'clock. I was told dinner would be ready at 12. When I returned for dinner I met the landlady who told me their casual boarders paid in advance, daily. She said the meals were at 8 o'clock, 12 o'clock and 6 o'clock and to be in not later than 11 p.m. so as not to disturb the other boarders. That didn't worry me as I didn't know a soul and had no money to spare for theatres.

After tea I sat on the verandah ruminating till 8 o'clock then turned in. The next day I done a lot of walking but couldn't burg a job. This was the beginning of June and was pretty cold at night, but nothing to inconvenience me although some of the boarders complained about it. One advantage the cold weather had, (but I didn't know it then) was the absence of mosquitoes.

The next day I did the same. At midday I was a long way from the boarding house so didn't go back for dinner although they charged me for it saying the dinner was there for me. If I didn't come for it they had to throw it out.

The next day I did all South Brusbane and towards evening got a job at Overends Dry Dock in South Brisbane breaking stones into 2" metal, at 2/6 a cubic yard. I told the boss I was only just off the ship and had no hammer. He said he would lend me one till I was able to get one, and to start the next morning at 8 o'clock.

I went home in better spirits and told the landlord I got a job and had to start at 8. He arranged for me to have breakfast at 7 and cut me up a bit of lunch as it was too far to get back to have it.

I got to the job early and was given the hammer and directed to the heap of stones I had to break. I think it was granite. I bogged in till dinner time when the boss came round to see how I was shaping. He said, "I don't think you broke many stones before." I said, "No, the only stone I ever broke was a grindstone in the old country". He laughed and gave me a bit of an idea how to go about it. He said, "You'll get on better when you get used to it", so I went at it hammer and tong till night. When he came round to measure it up he said there was not quite half a yard so I told him I would have to ding it as I couldn't earn enough to pay my board. He just said right O and gave me 1/3 and reckoned he was overpaying me.

From when I was 8 years old to the time I emigrated, I had never worked anywhere, only on a building, but I was learning a lot. Going home that night I began reckoning up how I stood financially. After squaring up with the landlord the following morning, I found I had 6/- left. It was a good job I neither drank or smoked, that helped to reduce expenses.

If I stayed there I should have been completely on the rocks after a couple of days, so I decided to go into the bush. As things were shaping, I began to think the time would have to be extended a bit before I made a fortune.

After breakfast I asked the landlord if I could leave my box there until I could send for it. He agreed to keep it, so I rolled up my blanket. He showed me how to roll a swag and away I went over the river, through South Brisbane where I had been stone breaking. I bought a loaf of bread but had no billy as I couldn't afford to buy one, or tea and sugar either. I got out of town on the main road. I didn't know where I was going and didn't care.

At midday I sat down by a little water hole, had a drink and ate half the loaf. I rested for an hour then was off again. I saw a farm house back from the road a bit and went in and asked for work but there was nothing doing. The cocky told me there was a sugar mill about 6 miles farther on any I might get a job there.

I arrived there about 4 p.m. and saw the boss. I asked for a job and got it. He said the wages were 15/- a week and found, and to start at once unloading firewood from german waggons. There were 8 or 9 of them each holding 6 or 7 tons of 6 ft. wood, mostly young trees.

The whistle blew at 6 and we knocked off and I was pretty tired. We went to the bunkhouse which was a shed built of bark. There were 6 bunks in it and a sort of table built of slabs. They provided a cook who was a kanaka. I found there were 5 white men beside myself. They told me the owners were two brothers named Lahey. One was the engine driver and the other worked at different jobs about the mill and helped his brother supervise operations.

The mill was on the banks of the Logan River, 5 or 6 miles from Beenleigh. The farms on both sides of the river were owned by Germans who grew the sugar cane and brought it to the mill in flat bottomed punts. It was unloaded at the little jetty into german trucks and was hauled up to the mill by a steam winch. After the cane was crushed the residue was spread over a paddock to dry and then used for fuel in the boiler.

I was told the weeks rations for each man was: 12 lb flour, 10 lb beef or mutton which ever was the cheapest, 2 lb sugar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb tea. That was what they called being "found".

The owners had a store. If we wanted any extras such as jam etc, it was booked against us. We could get plenty of molasses which didn't pay the owners to save, so it just ran into the river. Later on I believe the price for it rose and made it profitable to save it. They put it in barrels and sent it to the refinery at Brisbane where they turned it into breacle, and later still into Golden Syrup.

None of us enjoyed our meals as it was damper and meat for breakfast, and meat and damper for dinner. Nothing else all the time I was there. It took a bit of getting used to, to see the kanaka mixing up the flour and water on the inner side of a sheet of bark. He might have been clean but he didn't look it, and it is said that hunger is a fine sauce.

He had a camp oven to bake the damper in and a kerosine tin to boil the meat. The meat was always boiled as we rarely got any fresh meat and when we did, about once a month, it was boiled. The owners kindly provided us with a tin plate, knife, fork, and pannikin, but no spoon. We stirred our tea with a bit of stick. Although we were rationed with 2 lb sugar, we were never short as one of us was always in the sugar house filling bags. As I had no towel or soap I had to buy them at the store.

On Sunday my mates played cards but not for money as we never received any until we were paid off, and that was by cheque on a Brisbane bank which meant us going there to cash it. I generally laid about on the river bank watching the parrots and cockatoos, of which there seemed to be thousands. The screeching was bedlam. After I had been there a few weeks one of the men taught me to play euchre and cribbage, but I never took kindly to it.

I found out after that all the sugar mills and stations had the same scale of rations. It was called the 12-10-2-&¼, and they all kept a store. 15/- a week was the regular wage whether one was in south Queensland or up north. As the price for commodities was about 50% above town prices, they did their best to make one eat up the biggest part of the wages, especially if one smoked or drank. You could get a bottle of rum at any time. I suppose they would get into trouble if the authorities knew, as it was sly grog selling.

After 10 weeks the mill closed down as there was no more cane to crush and we were paid off. I suppose the kanaka was kept on as they had to be engaged through the government for a three year term, and he would be doing odds and ends about the mill till crushing started again.

I had a cheque for 7 pounds as the store only had 10/- booked against me so the kanaka didn't bother me, although I hoped I would not be mixed up with them anymore but I was later. Thinks I, "This £7 ought to get me a job in Brisbane as I will have more time to look around and I will not spend a halfpenny more than is necessary."

One little incident I forgot to mention before was that one Sunday I got 1 lb. of raisins from the store. One of my mates had a billy and he tore the back out of an old shirt he had, washed it, and made a plum pudding for our Sunday dinner as we thought it would be a bit of a change. He put it in the billy and hung it on the fire. The fire was out in the open with a couple of sheets of bark on a frame for a roof. We kept it boiling for 2 or 3 hours then considered it was done and took it off the fire. We couldn't get it out of the billy so we had to cut the billy open with my mates pocket knife. Oh boy, it was a lovely pudding, a bit doughy in the middle and a bit burnt outside, but it was bonzer after the kanakas dampers. We divided it up for the six of us. There wasn't much for each of us, but perhaps that made it taste better. My mate who provided the billy grissled a bit but I pointed out that I paid 1/- for the raisins and he could get a billy for 1/- so that made us 50-50.

Early in the morning after being paid, this chap and I rolled up our swags and hoofed it to Brisbane. The other 4 men who had not much to draw owing to their liking for rum and tobacco, decided to go the other way towards Beenleigh and Southport, across the border into N.S.W. as they said they were more likely to get a job in the bush than the city so we parted.

My mate and I headed for the city at a 4 mile an hour gate. After going about 10 miles we pulled up and lit a fire to boil the billy. We had pinched a bit of tea and sugar, also some damper and Beef, and had a feed and then off again. We arrived in Brisbane at about 2 o'clock and headed for the bank in Queen Street.

We cashed our cheques and parted, he into a pub and myself to a drapers (as I was still wearing the clothes I landed in), where I bought a cheap rig-out and a slouch hat and a pair of boots that swallowed up 50/-. I was a colonial now, and discarded that old cap with the peak fore and aft.

I found my boarding house again, and the landlord welcomed me. I told him what I had been doing and he congratulated me on trying to get on. I had been in the country about 3 months and was £4 ahead of it. I think I will have to speed up a bit to get that fortune in 5 years. Anyhow I says to myself, "Keep smiling, you never know your luck in this country".

I went to my room, dropped the swag and parcels, and laid on the bed till tea-time just cogitating. Next morning I got a paper but there was nothing in it for me. So then I started tramping about the city and repeated the performance for a fortnight with no results.

It was about that time that the late King George, who was the Duke of York at that time, and his brother the Duke of Clarence, together with Lord Mountbatten who was their chaperone or batman, were making a tour of the world as ornamental mid-shipmen in the warship "Bacchante". They had just arrived in Brisbane and there were great doings at Government House. All the society ladies were doing their block about them. They did not worry me as I was too busy worrying how I was going to make my fortune.

One morning about three weeks after I left the sugar mill and with my money shrinking fast, the landlord showed me an ad in the Courier and asked if it was any good to me. In it the advertiser called for 60 men for a sugar plantation in N.S.W. to be on a certain wharf at 10 a.m. to be interviewed by the employer. Says I, "That will do me".

I got there at about 9 a.m. and there were about 100 men there then and more kept coming. At 10 o'clock sharp he arrived and lined us up and gave us the once over. Then he picked one man out and told him to get behind him and so he went down the line till he got his 60 men. Then he told us, (I forgot to say I was one of the lucky ones: I suppose he liked them young and stupid-looking) to get into a bunch so as he could talk to us.

He was a miserable-looking fellow about 5 foot one with sandy whiskers. He told us his firm was composed of three men named Pringle, (the bloke that engaged us) Shank and Burns. The plantation was on the Tweed River in N.S.W. He told us that the wages were the usual 15/- a week with rations 10-12-2- $\frac{1}{4}$ and to be on the boat at 8 p.m. If anyone didn't want the job he was to hold up his hand before the crowd left so he could have another pick. As no one put us his hand, we all cleared out until 8 p.m.

I made arrangements to leave my box at the boarding house. I didn't care much if I never saw it again, as there was nothing in it.

After tea I went to the wharf and found the little steamer named "Albatross". At 8 o'clock Pringle came on board and called the roll and found us all there. The boat didn't get away till after 9 p.m. There was no place to sleep so we just laid about the deck and dozed a bit till daylight.

We were just leaving the river into Moreton Bay again at daybreak. One side was Sandgate which I believe is similar to the Melbourne St. Kilda now. We turned off the other way at about 9 o'clock and anchored off a little seaside village named Southport and were given our breakfast of bread, meat and tea.

We were anchored in a little bay about 100 yards from the shore. The sailors lowered a couple of rowing boats. They had to make several trips as they would only hold 10 people besides the sailors. The boats could not get far up the beach, so we had to get out and wade for a few yards with the water just over our boot tops.

This was on the opposite side of the bay to Southport. There was not a house or any thing in sight, only the village on the other side of the Bay. We gathered up our swags and Pringle the boss took the lead saying we had to walk the rest of the way. It must have been over 25 miles to the Tweed.

After walking along the beach for a couple of hours we struck inland. Among the crowd was one married man with his wife. He had a big swag and she had a bundle tied up in a towel or something. After going through the bush a couple of hours or so, we came to a creek which we had to ford, but the water was only about 18 inches deep with a muddy bottom. We rolled up our pants well above the knees and kept our boots on as none of us had any socks. The only good thing about having no socks was a saving in washing.

We all got over without getting wet except the married man. He took his swag and his wife's bundle over, then went back to fetch his wife on his back. When he was half way over his foot must have stuck in the mud or something because he lost his balance and fell over backwards with his wife underneath. They got up and scrambled through somehow like drowned rats. My word, I did feel sorry for them. The poor thing started to cry and bemoaning her lot. The boss had no swag so he carried the woman's bundle.

Some of the men started grumbling and wanted to know what about dinner. This would be about 2.30 p.m. Pringle smoothed them over saying we would soon reach the pub where a hot meal would be waiting for us. But it was 4 o'clock before we reached the township named Tallibuchgerree which consisted of a bush pub and three or four huts belonging to a cedar getters gang.

To his credit, the first thing the boss done was to arrange for a room so that the woman could get off her wet clothes. The bundle she carried was dry and like most women I suppose she had 2 or 3 of everything. Anyhow after a hot drink of tea and something to eat she was alright again.

Mrs. Public House said she would dry her clothes as we were staying there that night. We lined up and 3 or 4 men and a couple of women in the kitchen were dealing out the food. This was a johnny cake about 6 inches across and 1 inch thick, with a fair helping of hot corned beef and 2 or 3 spuds boiled in their jackets. We sat about on the verandah and logs that were laying about the yard, if one could call it a yard, as there was no fence anywhere.

Two of the men brought out a couple of kerosine tins of sweetened tea with a few pannikins and mugs, one of which had to do 5 or 6 of us. We had a real good blow out. They gave us all we wanted, even another helping if we wanted. I had a pocket knife and a billy, so had several of the others, so we didn't do too bad. The man and his wife had theirs inside. The Boss must have made arrangements with the people before hand.

In case anyone doesn't know what a Johnny cake is I will explain. It is just flour and water mixed up into a dough and flattened out into a sort of pancake. It is then put on hot coals and cooked that way being turned occasionally. The only oven they had at the pub was a camp oven and they couldn't cook many with that, so they were nearly all done on the hot cinders. We were that hungry that we didn't mind a few bits of charcoal that were stuck in.

We were told we were to camp there that night and to pick out a suitable spot to unroll our swags, and to keep an eye on our belongings as in a crowd of 60 men, all strangers to one another, one didn't know who was who, and the boss said he wouldn't be responsible. I'm glad to say they found a bed inside for the poor woman.

We were to have breakfast at 7 the next morning and get an early start as the next 10 miles were all up hill. Some of it was pretty steep as we were going up and over the range that divided Queensland from N.S.W.. As I think I was the only New Chum in the gang, and supposed to live in Queensland the first three years according to agreement, if any one troubled to get on my tracks I had a good argument to put up. Their agents in London told us we could get plenty of work and they didn't keep their agreement, so it was 50-50 again.

There was no water for us to wash with as they had to depend on the rain water for themselves. We were told we could make up for it when we reached the Tweed River. We had a good breakfast the same as our tea, and a second helping to wrap up in our blankets or billys for our lunch. We had nothing to drink as we wouldn't pass any water course. We were expected to reach our destination about 4 o'clock which we did at 4.30.

We had our lunch on top of the range. At about midday we started off again and it was better going as it was down hill. About 4 o'clock the boss pointed out to us the river which we could see through a gap in the bush. We reached the bank half an hour later. There was a farmer who grew cane for the mill waiting for us with his large punt. As the mill was a mile up stream on the other side of the river, he paddled us across and we footed it along the river bank to the mill where the other partners and storekeeper and sugar boiler were.

I will just explain who the sugar boiler was and his duties. He was a professional man who tested the temperature and density of the cane juice as it was boiling. He was inside-boss of the mill. Of course he lived in the house with the owners.

Well, the 5 bosses gave us a look over and Mr. Shanks, the field boss, picked out 20 men for cutting the cane and marched them off to the camp. It consisted of 7 or 8 tents and one large one to eat in.

The other 40 men including myself were to work the mill. We were taken to a large barracks built of bark. The bunks were two high on both sides of the building with a rough table running up the centre. The seat on either side was made of saplings. Tea was ready for us and we set to and did justice to it. The bosses told us we could have the next day off to fix up our bunks and have a look around.

Our barrack was about 100 yards from the mill. The proprietors had 1,000 acres of their own nearly all under cane. Maize was grown on a few acres to feed their horses. The cane cutters used to shift their camp about once a week to get closer to the work as the cane was cut.

As there was plenty of hay in a stack close to the barracks, we could take what we wanted for bedding. A bark shed lean-to was used as a kitchen. A man and his wife who were permanent, acted as cooks to serve out the meals. It wasn't the ordinary damper she made but good bread made with yeast she made herself when the crushing season was over. He acted as ploughman in the cane field and his wife was house-keeper for the bosses. While the season was on and she was cooking for us, the owners got a farmers daughter to look after them. The man and woman who came with us were given a hut to live in and double rations.

There were a lot of farmers on either side of the river growing cane for the mill. The mill gang cut all the cane, the farmer's as well as their own. The farmers carted it to the river bank and helped to load it into the punts.

There were several punts each worked by the owner. As it was a tidal river, he just waited till the tide suited him and then cast off and steered it with a big sweep at the stern. When it got to the mill the employees unloaded it on to trucks and the steam winch did the rest.

I had various jobs given me. Sometimes firing up the boiler or bagging sugar or feeding the crusher or skimming the dirt off the boiling sugar. I didn't mind what it was. Every week I was getting 15/- richer. I never got anything at the store.

I have already given a brief description of Pringle. The second partner, Shanks, was a typical long, thin, corn stalk with a face you could crack coke on, but a fair dealing man. Burns was a surly black-whiskered fellow who drove the engine and looked after the machinery and steam pipes that boiled the sugar in some of the tanks. He never spoke to anyone, only to say to the fireman as he pointed to the boiler, "Stir up that fire, the steams going down."

Pringle wasn't a bad sort when you knew him. He gave orders to the storekeeper to give the cook what raisens she wanted to make us a plum duff every Sunday. And she took it upon herself to make us a Brownie once a week.

I might explain that a Brownie was an ordinary loaf of bread with sugar and molasses in. That gave it the brown colour. It was good. She was a decent sort was the cook. So was her husband. In return we never let her go short of firewood.

There wasn't much to do at night, only go to bed. The only lighting was what they called slush lamps. This was a jam tin filled with fat, (if the cook could spare it) with a strip of moleskin for a wick. Rather primitive, but we got used to it. I suppose one can get used to anything.

The horses employed about the mill would stand nearly all night at the drain where the molasses ran into the river, licking it up. They did like it and it made their coats shine like satin.

There was a bit of a township about a mile up the river. It had an aboriginal name which I have forgotten. It had a pub, (of course) a store, blacksmith shop, a few houses, and a sort of barn which they called a church.

After we had been at the mill a month, Pringle asked us if anyone wanted a sub as he would sub anyone a pound who wanted it. They nearly all wanted it. Two or three besides myself did not take it as we had a few shillings on us and nothing to spend it on.

On the Saturday evening they got the money. All but about a dozen of us went to the township and had what they called a glorious time drinking and fighting all Saturday night and Sunday. The only thing to drink was rum. The bush rum was like streak lightning and sent them mad.

Anyhow they didn't come back to the mill till Monday morning. You can imagine what they looked like after soaking rum into them for 36 hours. Of course steam was up, but the mill could not start with the few men. The boss talked to them like a Dutch uncle, as the saying goes, and said there would be no more subs. The mill didn't get going till after dinner. The only one who benefited by it was the publican who had all their money. It was the first time for 12 months the little township had been so lively. The men at the mill weren't so lively though, plenty of bad heads going.

Things went on smoothly for the next month when some of them tapped the boss for another sub, but nothing doing. Just about then I fell sick. I was unable to eat, had a craving for water all the time and was shivering and shaking night and day. The cook's husband threw a lot of empty bags on me, but I could not get warm. There was no doctor or chemist within miles.

The 3 bosses and the storekeeper visited me every day and dosed me with quinine and other patent medicines from the store, but nothing did me any good. I kept getting worse, and after a week or so they reckoned I had a bad attack of fever and ague. The heads and the cook had a bit of a conference and decided I would have to go to the Brisbane Hospital. The sugar boat that called at the mill and township once a month with stores, and which took back a load of sugar, was not due for 4 or 5 days, so I just had to suffer it till the boat left for Brisbane.

I was carried on board and two days later we arrived in Brisbane. Pringle the boss, like the good fellow he was, went with me and got a cab to take me to the hospital. He gave a letter to the doctor, (I remember his name was Thompson), to give me when I was well enough to leave, and if I didn't live to give it to the police.

Anyway they took me in and the first thing they did was to give me a hot bath and some clean underclothes, as I had none in my swag. Before I got too bad I gave all particulars of where I came from and when, to Mr. Pringle. All that information was in the letter he gave the doctor, besides the name of his agents, and the receipted bill for the things I had out of the store. The balance of the money due to me could be collected from his agents.

It was some time in November when I went to hospital. After 4 or 5 weeks I began to pull around. By Christmas Eve I was up and doing light jobs for the other patients, like carrying their food to them and taking the dirty dishes to the kitchen.

I remember Christmas Day alright. We were in the fever ward and were not allowed any meat or vegetables or fruit, only porridge for breakfast, bread and butter (not too much butter), boiled rice and milk for dinner, and bread and butter and tea for supper.

On January 5th or 6th I saw Dr. Thompson who said I was now convalescent, and would have to leave on the next day as they were short of beds. On the next day I said goodbye to the patients and nurses, and saw the doctor who gave me the letter Mr. Pringle had given him for me.

I opened it and it stated I was to show it to his agents in some street in Brisbane, when he would pay me what was due. I had worked 8 weeks at the mill and not drawn anything, so there was coming to me £36.0.0. less £2 for quinine the storekeeper supplied during the fortnight I lay in the bunk, and £1 for my fare on the steamer which left a balance of £3 for me to collect from the agents.

I still had the 7 or 8 shillings that was on me when I went into the hospital. They were very good and kind to me there. No one was ever asked what they could afford, or whether they had any relations who could contribute. It was all done with a Government grant and what they could collect from the charitable.

The doctor told me to be careful of my diet for the next 2 or 3 weeks, when I should be quite alright again. He told me not to touch fruit or vegetables or meat, just to live on bread and butter, and milk or rice, anything like that.

So off I went with my swag on my back. I forgot to mention that there was a horse tram to South Brisbane, another to a suburb called Toowong, and another to the valley where the hospital was situated. I walked as far as the tram line then boarded the tram for the city. (I've forgotten what the fare was). I got off at Albert Street and went down to Margaret Street and found my old boarding house.

I saw the landlady who wanted to know what I had been doing and where. I told her all about it and what the doctor told me about meals. The landlady said that would be alright she would see to it, and she did, like a brick.

The next day at dinner time, there was roast beef and baked potatoes and didn't my mouth water for it, but I fought against the longing. No matter how much bread and butter and spoon food one ate, it didn't stop the hunger. I explained the empty feeling I always had to her, and how tempted I was to have a feed of meat. She arranged for me to have my meals in the kitchen after everyone else had had theirs, so as I would not be tempted. In fact both the landlord and his wife treated me like a homeless boy, which I was, being only 17½ years.

After being there 3 weeks, I told them I would have to leave as my money was getting short. As there was no work to be had in Brisbane, I would have to take the road again. I had nearly a pound left and that would take me a long way. They said I was not fit to camp out as there were heavy dews at night and it might fetch on the ague again.

They said if I liked to meet the trains and steamers, and tout for the boarders, and be on the look out for a job at the same time, I could live there free. I said I would try it but did not hope for any success as I was a bit backward in coming forward.

The first morning I met a steamer coming down from the north. They gave me a handful of tickets and I met the passengers as they came down the gangway and offered them tickets as they passed me, but they didn't take the least notice of me.

When they were all ashore, I went to the railway station and repeated the performance with no better results. It was the same every day and all the landlord said was never mind better luck tomorrow. After 10 or 12 days of it I was on the wharf one morning when the Albatross pulled in with a lot of the hands from the Tweed River on board.

One of the young fellows who was very kind to me when I was sick in the bunk recognised me and I him. He came and shook hands and said the crushing season was ended on the Tweed and all hands were paid off in cash, not cheques this time.

Some of them footed it to the New England district and others down South to Grafton and the Clarence River. About 30 came to Brisbane. I told the young fellow whose name was Jim Vickers what I was doing and he said, "Your luck has turned as I was wondering where to go, so I'll come with you and stay with you for a few days until I decide what I am going to do." None of the others wanted to recognise me. Perhaps they thought I might want to sting them.

After three more days Jim said he was going to the Gympie gold fields on foot. I said I would like to go too as I was beginning to feel pretty fit again. I was full up of sponging on those good people. They reckoned I wasn't sponging at all, and I was very foolish to go tramping through the bush, as something would be sure to turn up before long.

I said goodbye to them and told them if I didn't send for the box in 6 months, they could have it. There was only a few bricklayers tools in it and it didn't look as though I should ever want them.

We rolled up our swags and set off. On the outskirts of Brisbane we bought a supply of rations and a couple of billys and pannikins, and halved the cost. I think we spent about 15/- for rations and I got another shirt and some socks and that left me with only a couple of bob.

We started out about the beginning of February. The first day we did 10 miles and camped, boiled the billy, and had a feed. We gathered some ferns and made a sort of rough bed and spread the blanket on it and laid down in our clothes. It was warm in the daytime, but with heavy dews at night. We woke up at daylight shivering so lit a big fire and after a drink of hot tea we felt a bit better.

We went off again at a steady 3 miles an hour with a spell now and again. We camped for 2 or 3 hours in the middle of the day and had a snack. We did about 15 miles that day and I was not feeling too lively, but we were off again at sunrise but at a slower pace.

Towards evening we reached Caboolture and was told it was 30 miles from Brisbane. We never struck another township till we reached the Monkland, about 2 miles from Gympie, and we were 4 weeks doing that. We ran out of tucker a couple of weeks after leaving the city and there was no place to buy any.

I only had 2/- and Jim said he had 5/-, but I am sure he had more as he had just finished the sugar season of over 4 months, and he was a careful sort of chap with money. Anyhow, I did not intend to live on him, so made no comment. We decided to take it in turn to ask for tucker at the few farm houses we passed, first asking them if they had any work. Most of the cockys refused saying there were too many swaggies on the road cadging, and they would need a bank to give every one a feed. We just said thanks for nothing.

We only passed one station and they gave us rations. I found out afterwards that all stations whether cattle or sheep gave the travellers rations which was a pint of flour, 2 or 3 pounds of meat, beef or mutton according to what kind of station it was. One difference I noticed between the stations and the cockys was one called us cadgers and the other travellers.

A few days after leaving the station we called at a farmhouse on the roadside and asked if there was any work. The man said no. I asked if he would give us something to eat as we had had nothing since midday yesterday, but he said no. His house was on a bit of a rise before coming to a long flat open bit of country, with cultivated paddocks on each side of the road. He had maize growing in different stages of growth about 100 yards from the house.

We dropped our swags and got through the fence and pulled some cobs of maize and sat down to eat it. After a while Jim, who was facing the house, said "Look out, here comes the cocky". I said, "Let him come and do his worst, I don't care what happens". When he got near we saw he had a bundle in his arms. He said, "throw that stuff away, you look like black fellows chewing that stuff. Here is some tucker I've brought you. I know you must be hungry or you wouldn't be chewing that."

He gave us a big damper and a big lump of corned beef. He said all the swaggies pitch the yarn we told him. He thought most of them were only loafers and they don't encourage that. As soon as he saw us pull those cobs of corn he knew we were genuine. He gave us a bit of tea and sugar to make a few Billys of tea. He didn't want our thanks but said "So long, better luck". That put a bit of heart in us and proved that you cannot condemn all for the faults of a few.

That bit of tucker helped us a good many miles towards Gympie. A day or two before reaching the Monkland we began to get a bit empty again but there were no cultivated paddocks in sight. I daresay we passed plenty of farms but they were too far off the road for us to see.

There was one stretch of road for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile where the wagons which carted the cockys produce must have sprung a leak, as there was a trickle of maize along the track that must have leaked out of a bag, and there we were picking the grains up and wolfing them.

After we had eased our hunger a bit we continued to pick it up until we had filled our billys, and that is all we had to eat until we reached the Monkland. We made enquiries about work but nothing doing. There was a slump in mining at the time, and a lot of the mines were granted exemption from the labour conditions. Very few of the mines were payable I

was told, and when there was no gold being won everything else slumped.

The first thing we did when we reached the Monkland was to buy some bread and a tin of jam as we had to live as cheaply as possible to make our bit of money spin out until we could earn some.

From the Monkland we went through the one mile over Red Hill and Appalonian Vale, down Caledonian Hill, into Mary Street the main street in Gympie, but always the same tale, no work.

After passing the two mile called so as it was that distance from Gympie, we overtook a team of 6 horses and a wagon going empty to Maryborough, 60 miles from Gympie. There were dozens of horse and bullock teams carting goods from Maryborough. That was before the railway was built and Cobb & Co coaches were running between the two towns. The Teamster said he would give us a lift part of the way. There was not much back loading for the teams. Some of them would get a load of maize but they did not get much for carting it as there was too much competition amongst the teamsters. Our driver said he did the 60 miles in 3 days empty, but it took 5 days with a load.

We camped with him that night and gave him a hand to unyoke and feed the horses, as it was stoney ground and no feed. He tied the horses to the wagon and said there was only one good camping ground on the road where there was a bit of grass. Then he hobbled the horses and put a bell on them and let them go. They never left the flat as there was no feed anywhere else.

The second night we arrived at Tiaro, a little township 20 mile out of Maryborough. He said he was loading some stuff there for Maryborough and was staying there a couple of days, so we left him next morning and headed for Maryborough.

We reached the bridge over the Mary River at sundown and camped. In the morning we met a couple of swagmen going to Kilkivan who told us it was no use going to Maryborough as it was dead. However, we continued on and sure enough it was like every other place we had been. We didn't fancy going farther north so turned back, and managed to exist on the little bit we could buy and the little bit we could cadge. We could manage to get a bit of tucker in the towns but the cockys were very hard.

The next evening we reached Scaritts pub, the half-way house between Maryborough and Gympie. They directed us to Kilkivan which was a station and a diggings. We turned off the main road and after 5 miles crossed the Mary at a ford. The water was not very deep, about up to our knees.

About a mile farther on we came to the homestead of a sheep station called Miva, and the ford we crossed was called Miva Crossing. We were sent to the store and each received the regulation rations and were advised not to tackle the Kilkivan track as it was a good 25 - 30 miles. It was just a bush track with not a farm or station on the road, so we turned back, camped at the crossing, and then headed back to Gympie.

I might mention here that the McIlwraith government was in power at the time and often we said what a crime it was to fetch emigrants out here to starve. Not a bit of help was given one to get a job. I wonder what sort of conscience they had, broadcasting their lying propaganda all over the British Isles about the lovely country overflowing with milk and honey. I haven't seen any so far or the plenty of work waiting for us.

That evening we reached a place called Thompsons Flat 20 miles out of Gympie. It was just a house and stables and a changing station for the Cobb & Co coach horses. We called in and asked for a feed but the ostler who was a german refused. He asked us if we wanted work. Of course we did, that was what we were looking for. He wanted to fence in 5 or 6 acres with a dog leg fence for his horses to run in instead of keeping them in the stable all the time.

He said he would give us 6 pence a chain. We said alright but he would have to provide the tools, and as we had had nothing to eat since the night before, he would have to supply us with rations and we would start in the morning. We said he could stop it out of our pay when we finished. He agreed and gave us some flour, meat, tea and sugar and told us we could doss in one of the empty stalls. He told us not to be smoking there as he was afraid of fire, but as neither of us had ever smoked, we readily agreed.

We got a fire going then he lent us a kerosine tin to boil the meat in. We cut a small sheet of bark to mix our damper on and about 8 p.m. had a feed. Then we put the fire out and settled down in the straw for the night.

We had a bit of a conference before going to sleep. We had plenty of company as the fowls were roosting in the empty stalls. As there were very few saplings growing, we reckoned to make a two railed dog leg fence would require 8 saplings, 4 forked sticks let in the ground 18 inches, and 8 short saplings for legs. The bottom rail was made by laying the saplings in the forked sticks about 2 feet above the ground and the short saplings straddled the bottom rail to form a fork for the top rail.

We thought by working hard and long hours we might manage 2 chain a day. That would be a bob between us a day which wouldn't pay for the meat we ate. Jim reckoned he must have plenty of money to chuck it about like that, but I reckoned he could smell the lime juice on us and wanted to give us a little colonial experience. (We were getting plenty of that.)

Before we went to sleep, we agreed on what to do. In the early hours of the morning we rolled up our swags, after screwing the necks of a couple of fowls, and went on our way. We knew he couldn't leave the place to follow us, as he was a batchelor and lived alone, and if he did, what could he do. However we never saw him again. It was a case of the biter getting bit.

It must have been early when we left, as we did the 20 miles into Gympie by midday. We had enough of the German's tucker to do us that day so camped just outside Gympie near Long's baker shop. We had a few pence left and in the morning got a loaf of bread with it and had a good feed of bread and washed it down with a drink of water.

Going down Mary Street about 7 a.m. we saw a publican sweeping the footpath in front of his hotel. I've forgotten the name of the hotel, but found out later that his name was Corrigan. We asked him if he knew where we could get a job. He asked if we could plough. Jim said he could as he had been brought up on a farm in the old country.

Corrigan said he knew a man who wants a ploughman. His name is Bunworth and he has a lemonade factory a little lower down Mary Street. He comes along about 8 a.m. He has a little farm on the Widgie Road and comes into the factory every morning.

There was a form on the verandah and he told us to sit down until Bunworth was passing and he would call him over. Shortly after, Bunworth came along and Corrigan called him over and said, "This is a ploughman if you still want one." He asked Jim a few questions and then engaged him at 15/- a week plus tucker. He said he was going down to the factory and Jim could go with him then he would drive him out to the farm as soon as the men at the factory were started. Jim and I shook hands and said so long. I wonder if we will meet again.

After he had gone Corrigan said he could get me a job if I could milk. I had hoped I'd never have anything more to do with cows, but beggars can't be choosers, so I said I could. He said the milkman would call in about 9 a.m. after doing his round. His name is Bill O'Brien and lives on the Chatsworth Road about 2 miles out, and milks about 30 cows every morning. He poisoned him hand yesterday and couldn't milk. A neighbour helped him this morning but he would rather get a man in than inconvenience his neighbour.

At 9 o'clock he pulls up and gets a rum in a glass of milk. Then Corrigan tells him about me. He asked me could I milk and I said yes. He looked me up and down and seemed a bit dubious. At last he said alright, it will be 15/- a week (the eternal 15/-) and tucker. Then he said, "Come and have a rum and milk". I told him I didn't drink but would be glad of a glass of milk.

I expect my innards wondered what was the matter as it was a long time since I had swallowed anything so nourishing. I threw the swag into the cart and followed, and very soon we were there. He asked me if I had any breakfast. I told him I had half a loaf so he said to come on in and have a drink of coffee as he was going to have breakfast. "The girl will take the horse out", he said. (That was his 15 year old daughter.) I had some bread and butter and oh! didn't I enjoy it.

After he told me to put my swag on the sofa as he had no accomadation for a man, never having employed one before. "I shall only need you until my hand gets better" he said. We'll go down to the paddock now and do a bit of haymaking. That was alright, the neighbour had cut it for him a few days previous with his machine as Bill didn't have one.

At midday we knocked off for dinner and I did enjoy it. Hot roast meat and sweet potatoes. There were no English potatoes grown about Gympie in my time. We went haymaking again till sundown then had tea. The daughter brought the cows in to the yard from the paddock, ready for the milkman in the morning.

After tea he told me I had better start at 3 a.m. the next morning. He would call me and bail them up for me. He had to leave home at 6 on his round so he thought that would give me plenty of time.

There was no such thing as washing the tits. The only thing they did was to strain the milk through a bit of mosquito net to catch the hairs. The dirt off the tits got mixed thoroughly with the milk through the constant squeezing but ignorance is bliss etc.

There were 28 cows and about 5 o'clock I had done 14. Bill was ramping up and down cursing and going on a treat. To cut it short, he didn't get away till 7, still swearing. He told me to get my breakfast and to wait till he came home about 10. He had cooled down a bit by then and just said I didn't suit, and gave me 2/6 and off I go again.

On the road to Gympie I passed Elworthys slaughter yard and Longs bakery. I bought a loaf of bread and a pound of sugar as, having nothing but bread 2 or 3 times a day, a sprinkling of sugar makes it a bit more palatable.

I walked round the horseshoe bend, enquiring for work as I went along. I could have made better headway if I could have left my swag somewhere, but I had to take it where ever I went. I heard some timber splitters at work in the bush and found they were splitting sleepers for the railway from Maryborough to Gympie. A Jack Anheer had the contract. That was the first I had heard about the railway. It will mean goodbye to all the teams and the Clio & Co. coach.

The splitters were just a couple of men working for themselves so they couldn't lay me on to a job. I finished up the day in Duke Street just below where they afterwards built the Gympie Hospital. There was a little two-roomed cottage fenced in with a lot of vacant land round it. I spread out my blankets against the fence and finished my first loaf of bread. I had to be careful as I only had 2/- left and I wanted that to do me until I could earn something.

Just about dusk, the owner of the cottage looked at me over the fence and asked if I was camping there for the night. He said the dews were very heavy and my things would be wet through by morning. I told him I was used to that as I had just finished a walk from Brisbane to Maryborough and back. He said to fetch my things inside and sleep out of the dew, so I gathered up my things and went in.

He had just lit a fire to get his tea and invited me to some when it was ready. Gradually I told him about myself since I landed, and I think he believed me. I was footsore through walking on my uppers. He saw what my boots were like and gave me a pair of his old ones to try on. They fitted me fairly well and was told to keep them. Instead of me sleeping on the verandah, he let me have a spare bunk that was in his bedroom.

In the morning, he told me his name was Keeran Kenny and that he was a bushman splitting fencing post-rails, palings, and shingles for roofing as that was the main thing used for roofing then. At present he was putting up a fence in the town and came home every night, but sometimes when he was splitting shingles he only came home at week-ends, as he had to go about 6 or 7 miles out on the Glastonbury Road where the silky oak was. If you wanted to use the rainwater for drinking, you had to have pine or silky oak roof. Sometimes iron-bark or gum shingles were used, but the water off them was always stained and could never be used for household purposes.

His house was on a block of land called a residence area. Anyone who paid 10/- yearly for a Miners Right had the privilege of fencing in a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre allotment on any vacant land on the goldfield for residential purposes. If any company took up a lease for mining and they wanted the ground you were living on, they could take it by paying you compensation. The goldfields warden decided what that was. Now, after that bit of explanation I'll proceed.

Keeran told me he believe what I had told him, and made me an offer. I could live with him and do a bit of digging and planting on his allotment, (principally sweet-potatoes). He said not to rush it, but to take it quietly till I got strong again and had a look round for anything better. He couldn't pay me wages but when I was able, and nothing better offered, I could work with him in the bush.

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After the rough time I had during the time I had been in the country, I don't mind telling you I was far from strong. Anyhow, I snapped at his offer and stayed with him for 6 months. I soon had his garden in good shape and in the evening I would light the fire and get the tea ready, which pleased him greatly. Later on I told him if he could get the material, I would build him a brick chimney in place of the wooden one he had, where there was always the danger of it catching fire.

After a couple of months I began to feel as fit as a fiddle, and as he had just got a contract to split 20,000 shingles he said he would take me with him. He said he would learn me the art of splitting, and give me 5/- a week for pocket money and as I was neither a smoker or drinker I soon got together a few decent clothes. Poor old Keeran, he began to treat me more like a son than a stranger, and I've always been pleased to remember that he told friends of his that it was the best days work he ever did when he took me in out of the dewy night.

He had a bark hut on Scrubby Creek where he camped when he was splitting shingles. On the Monday morning he got a friend to pack out his tools and blankets and a weeks supply of rations and we footed it out. He got a friend to keep an eye on his place during the week. We got out to the hut at about midday, unloaded our gear, lit a fire and boiled the billy. After dinner our carrier rode his pack horse back.

We cleaned out the hut as it had not been used for 3 or 4 months, and there might have been snakes or other vermin living there. Then we cut some dry ferns and made things ship shape. He said we would not start work that day but would locate some suitable trees for felling. I might state that the silky oak trees only grew in the scrub, which mostly required a tomahawk to cut ones way through.

After supper that night Keeran, who was a kind-hearted jolly old fellow, sang songs in the gaelic language and told me yarns about the gold diggings and bushrangers. I knew the day of the month, and I suddenly remembered it was the 25th of May, the anniversary of my landing in this (what I called it then) rotten starvation country. I told old Keeran and he reckoned very few had as hard a time as I had during their first 12 months, and he hoped it would be very different in the future, which I endorsed.

We were up bright and early next morning and had to go about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to our first tree. The first thing we had to do was cut a track through the scrub so the bullock dray could load up when they were carted to the town. Keeran felled the trees with a crosscut saw as there was too much of the barrel wasted when felled with an axe. So I had my first lesson in falling a tree. I was a bit awkward with the saw at first, but soon got into the way of it, as Keeran was very patient with me.

After the first day we got on like a house on fire, so he said. On the Saturday we knocked off work at midday and walked into Gympie taking our blankets and towels and things with us as we were not like the bride who had two of everything. When we got home we gave the house a bit of a clean up and dug a few sweet potatoes. I grew to be very fond of them and could always make a good meal with them and a bit of butter or dripping if butter was off.

After tea, and getting on for 8 p.m., he suggested a walk down Mary Street. As we were living only about 200 yards from the Court House and Post Office which was at the corner of Mary and Shannon Streets it did not take us long to get there. To my surprise the street was packed, people all over the road and footpath, no vehicular traffic at all.

I thought all Gympie must be there. A great attraction was the Oddfellows band which was playing selections from the balcony of Dan Hendrys hotel at the corner of Mary & Shannon Streets. There was not a great deal of drinking going on, just walking up and down in little groups and talking nothing but mining.

There was nothing to do on Sunday, only potter about in the garden. Although Keeran was a Catholic, he never went to Mass. Father Horan was parish priest at that time.

On the Monday morning, we packed our things and rations and went off again to the shingle splitting. So we went on for 5 weeks. When we finished, we put our things on the last load and so had nothing to carry.

One night while we were yarning round the fire, he told me he was a married man with 3 children; 2 boys and a girl. He was a native of Kings County and one night when his children were little he was caught poaching. He was tried and transported That was 25 years ago. He served his time which was 10 or 12 years or whatever it was and then joined the gold rush to Gympie. I think it was in 67 or 68 that Nash found gold there. But Keeran did no good at mining so took on splitting at which he made a fair living. He was an ex-convict, but a more honest old man I never met.

The reason he told me about his family affairs was because he had a letter from home telling him his wife was dead and his three children, who were now grown up, were coming out to join him. They expected to be there 3 months after he received his letter. As we were doing nothing at the time he decided to put up a lean-to room. He got the material for that and the chimney. I built the chimney and then helped him to put up the room for his daughter.

I forgot to say that after I had been with him a few weeks that one Sunday I went to Bunworths farm to see Jim. Keeran knew Bunworth well, and directed me to it. I found it without any trouble and found Jim in his hut. He got a bit of a surprise and said he often wondered what had become of me. I told him all about it. He was amused at my experiences with cows and said he was comfortable, had good tucker, and was able to do all that was asked of him. After that, we visited each other every Sunday.

A few weeks before his family arrived, Keeran suggested it was time I earned a bit more money than he could give me, and also he expected his sons to help him with his work. He said he was sorry he would not be able to accomodate me when his family arrived but he would get me a job.

A friend of his, a carter of wood, had just got a contract for 100 cord of wood for the London gold mine situated at the two mile near Drakes pub. He wanted to let the cutting of it and was offering 15/- a cord at the stump. Keeran suggested that Jim leave his job and join me. I saw Jim and told him there was a hut on the mine we could have to batch in and so he agreed to come in with me.

I had been having a good bit of practice with the saw and axe for the 5 or 6 months I was with Keeran. The carter we took the work from lent us a cross-cut saw and an axe, and Keeran made me a present of an axe. All we wanted then was a few cooking utensils which did not cost much. The carter, (I forget his name) agreed to pay us weekly as we earned so there we were - all set.

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I said goodbye to Keeran and thanked him for putting me on my feet. He said I had more than paid him and to call in and see him when ever I passed.

The first day we didn't do much only fixing our bunks and making a rough table and fixing up a bit of a fireplace outside with some sheets of bark. Keeran had taught me how to strip bark and to know what trees were suitable.

The next day we felled a tree and by working 10 hours we cut a cord that day (a cord is about 3 ft. of wood). As it was the first bit of axwork Jim Had done he wasn't too clever at it for a start, but he soon got into it. After the first couple of weeks he was as good as I was. We agreed that he would buy all the tucker and whatever necessities we required and square up every Saturday and divide the balance equally. We did that all through the job.

Towards the end we could manage our $1\frac{1}{2}$ cord a day. As our living expenses was only about 9/- or 10/- a week each and we were averaging close on £3 per week each, we were saving a good bit. But we would have to do a lot better to make a fortune in 5 years. I'm beginning to "ha ma doots" as the Scotsman says.

Two or three weeks before we finished our contract, Jack Scott the manager of the mine, had become a bit friendly. He knew we were new chums. I don't know how many years one has got to live in the colonies before becoming an old chum. But the manager asked us if we would like to go down a gold mine. We said yes. They were not on gold at the time otherwise we were not allowed below.

He took us down one evening when they were changing shifts. There was no cage there at the time. The men rode up and down on the bucket which was about the size of a beer barrel. Two men stood on the edge of the bucket on each side of the handle.

When we were ready he gave us a bit of candle and got one on one side of the bucket or tub, and Jim and I on the other side and down we goes. All our insides came into our mouths. It was just the same sort of feeling that I had during a storm in the Bay of Biscay when the ship, after mounting to the top of a giant wave, made a plunge down to the valley, when I thought we were going down and down and never coming up again. But we came up alright, and so we did from the mine. It was an awful sensation, but later when we worked in other mines we soon got used to it, and nothing is difficult when you know how.

When we got down to the 200ft. level the platman steadied the tub while we got off. We lit our candles and followed our leader about 300 ft. in from the shaft, then along a crosscut drive where a couple of miners were boring holes. There wasn't a stick of timber anywhere, just a rough sort of tunnel about 6 or 7 feet high and the same width, where the men had blasted their way through.

He explained a lot to us and took us all over the workings. In one drive he showed us a reef where the gold is found, but this reef was barren, but would possibly be gold bearing at a lower depth. There was about a dozen men in each shaft and we had a look at them all. At the time there was only one level working. After nearly an hour below up we comes again.

We made ourselves as friendly as possible, hoping he would give us a go when he put more men on, but it was no use. Shortly after, the company who were all miners applied to the warden for an exemption of labour conditions for 3 months. The application was postponed for 2 months and then granted, so the London was closed down and I was never near it again.

During the time we were woodcutting we made the acquaintance of a family living on the Chatsworth Road named Bonny, and his wife and three children, the eldest being a girl of 15 or 16. He was an old miner well known to Gympieites, and was called "Blink Bonny" owing to a habit of never keeping his eyes still. After we finished our contract I never saw him again. I heard he had gone off to a rush at Mount Morgan. The reason I referred to him was this. About 40 years later I read in the Melbourne papers that Bert Hinkler the aviator was killed and that his mother who lived in Bundaberg at the time was the eldest daughter of the late Blink Bonny, a miner at Gympie and other places, and to think I had known that long legged girl who was to become the mother of a great flying man. I won't need to refer to him again. I only did so because one never knows what the future of one may be.

After we had squared up with the carter, (I have quite forgotten his name. It is very strange that I can remember all sorts of things right back to the time I was 6 years old and to then forget the name of a man I worked for. Oh well, I suppose there is any amount of things I have forgotten. At the time I am writing this, I am nearly 79 so its excusable if I forget some things, although I have an excellent memory. All the names and places I am writing about are perfectly true and I am just putting things down exactly as they happened.

As I was saying, when we squared up with the carter he told us that a man named Jack Sorenson, a ganger for the road board, was wanting a couple of men to complete his gang. We found him and got the job.

He had to build three culverts 15 miles out on the Maryborough Road and to cut down a few hills and fill up the hollows, just ordinary road work. Although that is 50 years ago, I can remember the names of all the party. There was Sorenson an expert squarer of logs, Mick Shannon and Bill Sullivan axe-men, Charley McGrath Sorensons father-in-law who was a drayman with two horses, Mick Casey, Jim and I pick & shovel men, and to help get the logs in position when required.

The culverts were not being built before they were required as the carriers were often bogged in some of the gullies and sometimes on the level. They usually travelled in pairs, that is two teams together as they often had to double bank when bogged. I have seen two teams of bullocks on to a wagon, with 16 or 18 bullocks in a team.

And talking of bullock teams reminds me of one thing I had forgotten. When Jim and I left Gootchy where the road turned off to Miva, (it was called Gootchy but the only house there was Scarits Pub or Shanty). We hadn't gone very far on the road to Gympie when we overtook a bullock dray bogged. The driver asked us to off-side for him till he got out, and he would give us a bit of rations. To off-side for a bullocky was to run up and down on the off-side from the polers to the leaders with a sharp pointed waddy or stout stick, jabbing it in the ribs of the off-side bullock while he attended to the near side with his whip, and he could use it too.

After flogging and jabbing the poor beasts for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour he got out. He gave us a bit of meat and damper, and a little tea and sugar. As he was only travelling 8 or 10 miles a day we left him and pushed on to the german ostler at Cobbs station, but did not call on him. Sometimes Cobbs coach had to unload passengers and luggage while the 6 horses pulled the coach out.

To proceed, Sorenson told us the wages were 6/- per day and to start on Monday. The government were providing the tents and other gear and tools. We were to be at Jimmy Woodrows store with our swags and enough rations to last a month by 9 o'clock on Monday morning. Jim and Casey and I rode on the dray, while the others had their own saddle horses to ride.

We arrived at the place where we were to camp at about 2 o'clock. The horsemen were there a good bit before us and picked out a site. We unloaded and started to pitch our tents. We told Sorenson that we'd never put up a tent so he sent Mick Shannon to help me, and Jim to help Sullivan.

There were four tents with two in each. The ganger was by himself as he had other things in with him. Jim and I had a tent to ourselves. We brought enough bread to last us three days. We were told we could get bread or any other thing we needed from Gympie by the coach, twice a week. The coach ran every day, and we were to give Sorenson a list of what we wanted the day before. He got everything in his own name and we paid him when he gave us the bill. One thing we were glad of we didn't have to bother with making dampers.

There was a fair amount of grass for the horses. They were all hobbled with a bell on. The three horsemen went into Gympie every week end and the dray once a month. We got on alright with Sorenson and his men as neither Jim nor myself was frightened of work.

The second day while Sorenson and Shannon were locating some good trees for the first culvert, and prospecting the stoney ridges for suitable gravel to put on the new filling, the rest of us started to strip some bark to put up a rough shed for horse feed, harnesses etc.

Everything went along fine. Nothing interesting or exciting happened till about a week before Christmas when we finished what we had been sent out to do. We broke camp and went into Gympie to get paid off at the courthouse. We squared off with Sorenson and the others and sat down on the steps to consider our next move.

The first thing to do was to get a 10 x 12 tent, (I forget what it cost) and some flour sacks to make bunks. We pitched the tent on the Horse-shoe bend Road, not far from the Northumberland Hotel. That was the terminus of the Maryborough - Gympie Coach.

After we put up the tent, as it was getting on for night, I went back to Mary Street for some tucker including candles. While Jim put up the bunks and gathered some wood of which there was plenty I got a fire going.

After tea we were wondering if our luck would last. We had a good bit of money on us from the woodcutting and Sorenson, so there was no danger of going hungry for some time.

It was the first chance we had of looking around while we were getting the tucker. I had a sudden fit of trying a smoke, so I got some tobacco and a couple of pipes and we tried it out after tea, but didn't go nap on it.. We tried it again after breakfast and felt rotten. Jim threw his pipe away and never tried it again, but I stuck to it and have been smoking ever since and that is 59 years ago.

We didn't feel like strolling around as we felt a bit squeemish. I was alright after a couple of hours and went to the Post Office to write home and send Mother a bit of money. That would make her feel I was doing alright more than anything. When I went back to camp Jim was lying on his bunk and still a bit off. I got a fire going and after a drink of tea he was alright again, but he never took on smoking again while he lived. He came out here from Lincolnshire the ship before mine. He had no relations so letter writing did not trouble him any.

We went down Mary Street and had a yarn with Tom Corrigan the publican who got us our first start in Gympie. He told me how savage Bill O'Brien was that morning and what a dud milker I was. I could smile now, but I didn't that morning when he gave me the half-crown. We continued our walk, after refusing to have a drink with him.

We just sauntered along Mary Street to the culvert at Nash's gully which was at the foot of Caledonian Hill. Just to show the ups and downs of life, a few remarks about Nash, the man who founded Gympie, might not be out of place here.

In his prospecting claim in Nash's Gully, named after him, he was reported to have found a nugget weighing over 3,000 ozs. He also found plenty of smaller ones and other fine gold making a fine fortune. Ten or twelve years later, or it may have been more, he was stony broke and a sympathetic government, as a reward to a man who was the cause of a lot of people making their fortunes and thousands their living, gave him a job in his old age as powder magazine keeper at 52, a week. Well, I suppose you couldn't expect any thing better from a government who brought shiploads of emigrants out here to starve.

Well, we went up Caledonian Hill. On the top there was a cross road running past the Catholic church to the chinamens flat one way, and past the cemetary and Horace Tozer's place (the great lawyer at that time) round the horse shoe bend, past our tent and by the Northumberland Hotel and into Mary Street. On the chinamens flat there was living about 50 Chinese. Three or four were market gardeners and the rest were fossicking, mostly working old claims abandoned by Europeans.

On top of the hill at the cross roads mentioned, No. 1 South Caledonian mine shaft occupied one corner, with Scotts store, Tom Findlays pub, and a blacksmiths shop on the other corners.

We wandered along down Appalonian Vale, passed Johnny Bennetts pub, up Red Hill by Cox & Roberts news agency, down Prospect Hill Road past the Phoenix and back around by the Hilton and Catholic Church, into Mary Street by the varieties theatre and home.

On account of the difficulty in getting drinking water where we were, we decided to shift camp in the morning to the bottom end of Wickam Street near the Mary. Where we were there was plenty of wood, but no water. Where we were going there was plenty of water but no wood, but we could store a supply of wood but had nothing to hold a supply of water.

We found when shifting camp, that if our possessions increased much more we would have to get a dray. As it was we had to make two trips. Every house in Gympie had one or more tanks to catch the rain water. During the dry season people had to buy water. A man named Campbell was a wood and water Joey. He had two barrels on his dray and charged 2/- a barrel in the dry season. One could walk miles along the river bed which was sand and gravel. The water ran underneath. By sinking a hole 2 or 3 feet you could always get water.

I I forget whether Gympie was a municipality or a Shire but there was some kind of a town authority. They employed a ganger or overseer, 2 horses and drays, and 6 men in metaling the roads. They used stone from the mine tips. The harder the stone the smaller it was broken up by blasting. There was always plenty of fine metal to be had without breaking it, so in repairing the roads the stuff was taken from the nearest mine. The footpaths were in their natural state.

I mentioned this because on Christmas Eve we were outside Hendrys pub listening to the band when we saw Mick Shannon passing. We called out to him and he said he wondered what had become of us. He thought he could lay us on to a job. He told us that Jack Sorenson and his father-in-law Charley McGrath were going to help a road party on the Noosa Road; that he and Casey had got a job with Ned Baker the overseer; that Sullivan had started underground work with Joe Lamond the manager of the Phoenix. He said Baker had a fairly big job to put in a cutting in a hill and fill up some low lying ground just over the Shannon Street Bridge, about 200 yards from where we were camped. He suggested we see Ned Baker as soon as possible as he was wanting 5 or 6 more men

Baker, he told us, lived on Mount Pleasant Road. As he, Shannon lived with his people on Red Hill close to Baker's place he said he would see him next day (Christmas Day) and put in a word for us. We saw Baker later and he gave us a job to start on 2nd January 1881. The wages were 6/- a day and we supplied our own shovel. He provided all the rest of the tools.

Before the New Year, we shifted camp again. We picked out a nice clean spot near the proposed work where there was plenty of wood and water, and shook hands with ourselves.

I should like to mention that before leaving Mick on Christmas Eve, he invited us to have a drink. We went into Jack Gorry's pub, a little lower down Mary Street and I had a port wine and so did Jim. I said that it was the first alcoholic drink we have ever had. He laughed and said there had to be a first time for everything and hoped it wouldn't be the last. When going to camp we reckoned we hoped it would, as we didn't enjoy it a bit. Like a lot of other things one has to acquire a taste for it.

Christmas Day was like other days to us. The only difference, we had a plum pudding for dinner. It was a bit better than our first attempt.

The Shannon Street Bridge was 50 feet above the river bed and had very steep banks on either side. When there was heavy rain up country, by standing on the bridge you could see the water coming down like a wall, in big waves. On one occasion while we were camped there, there was a bit of a flood. The water rose 2 feet over the bridge and all our work was stopped for a week. All the men, except ourselves, lived on the town side of the river. We were beginning to get short of rations, but by the end of the week we were able to cross over the bridge. Just near the bridge on the town side a man and his wife lived in a cottage on half an acre of land on which he made a living by growing vegetables, and on the quiet a sly grog shop. His name was Steve Baker, a cockney, but more about him later.

We were camped on a nice clear patch of rising ground and the flood came within 2 or 3 feet of our tent. A couple of troopers came over in a boat to take us over. It was impossible to row straight across as the river was running too swift. They were plucky to attempt it. They had to go up stream a couple of hundred yards and come across on a skew. There was the danger of being capsized by the cedar logs, of which there were plenty, being washed down the Maryborough where the tidal waters were.

While I am on the cedar business, I will say a few words about it. There were several cedar getters in the Mary Valley but I will mention one as typical of the rest. His name was Matthew Meller, president of the Town Council and half owner of Imbil Station. He would take out a cedar licence for £5 and be given a registered brand. He had a team of ten bullocks, their driver, and 7 or 8 axemen who would fall the trees and cut them up into logs. Then they branded each end of the log, and the bullocky would drag them to the nearest water course and leave them there till a flood came.

Other licenced cutters would do the same, all higgledy piggledy and mixed up together. Your licence entitled you to cut on any Crown Land. When the fresh or flood came, men from the different camps would follow in boats to keep the logs in the centre of the stream. It didn't matter whose logs they were as it was a sort of co-operative affair with all the camps to get them to port where they were pulled ashore and sorted out.

I was told of one man who had a licence and registered brand but never fell a tree. He and his mate would saw off 2" off the ends of a log and knock his own brand into it. He would burn the piece he cut off. They were caught however and got a couple of years gaol, another proof that thieves don't prosper. But that is enough about cedar. I'll get back to Shannon Street on New Years Day.

We went to the sports on the Gympie cricket ground which was in Walkers pocket. There were several pockets on the river, from 10 to 50 acres, caused by the bends in the river. Some of the bends would go round and come back almost to the river again making the pocket look like an island between two points of the river. It would sometimes be only 50 or 100 feet and then open out into a fine flat without a tree on it. It was very rich land, most of it cultivated with oats and maize and lucerne. There were no houses in these pockets as they were all under the flood mark.

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As I said before, we went to the sports ground and the great attraction was Donald Dinnie the Scots athlete and champion Greco Roman wrestler, who gave an exhibition of his athletic skill, but not in competition as he was brought there by the promoters of the sports club. I heard after that the great Professor Miller, English Champion Athlete and wrestler met him in Brisbane and got beaten. Anyhow we were not very interested and soon got tired of it and went back to camp to get ready for work as we were starting the next day.

Jim and I were put onto pick and shovel work in the first cutting with some others, while a couple of axemen fell timber for the Corduroy Road, about 100 yards from the river. It was thick scrub on either side and swampy land for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, then rising ground. This swamp was boggy in the wet weather, but firm enough in the dry season. It was mostly horse traffic with an odd dray now and then and that was the place we were to make the Corduroy Road.

Just across the swamp a track was cut through the scrub to another pocket called Cobbs Pocket after an old driver of Cobbs Coaches, who had settled near there on the rising ground.

In a large house, the gold field warden and magistrate lived. We used to see him ride to and fro to the courthouse escorted by his orderly and a couple of troopers. During the flood he stayed at the Northumberland. His name was Lukin and he had a son about 16 who was a student at a Brisbane university. Many years after he was known as Judge Lukin of the Federal Arbitration Court. I'll have to refer to the Warden again later.

This road we were making was going to Glastonbury. Half a mile or so past the river was a blacks camp. They would all head for the town in the morning, not looking for work but just cadging tucker or tobacco, or what they called "an old pfeller chirt", meaning an old shirt that was not torn. That was about the only thing the black and their gins wore.

It was against the law to give them any kind of grog as it made them quarrelsome and caused the skin and hair to fly when they got to camp. Every evening just before sundown the troopers used to scour the town with stockwhips and hunt them all back to camp. If any stray black was found in the town at night, he put in a few days in the lockup.

My experience of the blacks was that they were a lazy lot, although they made good stockmen and troopers, anything where they could ride a horse. But work, that was a different proposition.

I only saw one corroboree. That was on the road to Scrubby Creek. About 100 blacks and their gins arrived from different parts of the district and talk about a row and antics I couldn't describe it. But 40 or 50 years later I heard something like it over the wireless. It was called jazz music and crooning.

Well everything went on well for nearly three months when one Monday old Keeran Kenny was passing on his way to Scrubby Creek, shingle splitting. He saw me and wondered why I hadn't been to see him. He was ageing a lot. I had heard a bad account of his sons who were just drunken loafers and spent a lot of their time in the lock up through being so quarrelsome in drink. But I couldn't tell the old man that so I made what excuses I could. He asked me if I had been down Mary Street lately. I told him I had not been past

Elworthy's butcher shop the past three months. He then told me that Tronson a boot manufacturer was just taking out the foundations for a foot factory near Bytheways the drapers, and that the only bricklayer in Gympie was a Jack Farnsworth. He suggested I might get a job with him unless I was going to stick to navying or bushwork all my life.

After I had thanked him and he left, I thought to myself that this looks like the first chance I have had in this country to use the tools, so I asked the boss if I could get the afternoon off. After a bit of grumbling he said alright. After dinner time I told Jim and he didn't half like the idea. However, I went and saw Farnsworth and he said alright he could do with a man but he wouldn't be ready to start the brickwork till Monday.

He suggested a wage of 10/- a day and that I should board with him at his place on Red Hill. He had a wife and 2 children, a boy and a girl. This was on Wednesday, so I went to an ironmonger, Cullinane was the name, to see if he had any suitable tools. All he had was a level and lines. He said there was no demand for trowels, so he didn't stock them.

There wasn't time to send to Brisbane for my box. It was 15 months nearly since I left, so perhaps the boarding house keeper was gone, and goodness knows what had become of it. Anyway I had told him before I left that if I didn't return in 6 months to sell it or do what he liked with it, so it was no use thinking of that.

I then went up the street to Ferguson Bros. store and they had all I wanted except a plumb rule. I knew a carpenter by the name of Joe Jew, and got him to make me one, so there I was all set for the work I liked.

I took the kit over to the camp. It was after knock off time and Jim was getting the tea. I told him all about it and I was starting work on Monday and would be taking my things on Saturday. The next day I told the ganger I would be leaving him on Saturday and could I get paid. He asked me where I was going and I told him I was a bricklayer but had never got a start in this country, but was starting on Monday with Jack Farnsworth at Tronsons boot factory. He took it in good part and said he knew Jack well. He hoped I would get on and said if you are ever in want of a job with pick and shovel, and I have an opening, I'll be glad to have you again. That sounds like blowing my own trumpet, but it happened just like I said.

The next day Jim and I were working together and he said he was going to try and board somewhere, as he didn't like the idea of batching by himself. After knock off time we went to Steve Bakers place, the man who grew vegetables and sold rum. He said he would speak to his wife about it. Jim told he where he was working and after a bit of a conference between him and his wife, they agreed to board and lodge him and do his washing for 15/- a week, and we could put our tent and cooking things in a shed till such time as we might need them.

Jim told him he would come on Saturday afternoon. At midday on Saturday the boss paid me off and after dinner we took our things to the shed and then Jim helped me with my swag and tools to Red Hill

We saw Farnsworth who introduced me to his wife. He showed me my room and Jim left saying he would see me on the following Saturday. I don't know whether it was a good or bad thing for us with no cooking or meals and no washing. That was a thing I detested. We had plenty of spare time now. I got on alright at bricklaying. My fingers were a bit tender for a while.

On the Saturday Jim came to see me. We went out to Johnny Bennet's pub and found out there was wrestling going on in the hall behind the pub. We went in as it was free. Most of the miners on the field were Cousen Jacks or Cornishmen and the wrestling was Cousen Jack style. Most of it was done for love or for drinks. Sometimes one man would fancy he could throw another and would challenge him to a match, best 2 out of 3 falls. Johnny Bennet who was a Cousen Jack, always refereed and to show how well he was liked, there was never any arguments about his decisions. The wrestlers only wore pants and a loose canvas jacket - no boots. Two or three times a year Johnny would get up a tournament with prizes for the best three.

There was also a skittle alley that was well patronised and outside the building was an iron quoit pitch and that was our chief attraction. For a long time we spent Saturday afternoon there and gradually we began to play. I used to practice at night and Sunday in Farnsworth yard with iron horse-shoes, and after a while I became fairly good at it.

Most of the games were just played for drinks. There was some betting on the games by onlookers. Most Saturday nights we went up Mary Street to listen to the band for a while, then go to Newman's tobacconist shop where there was a large room generally full of men playing cards. There was no charge but the recognised rule was to buy your tobacco there. Some did and some didn't. I did but Jim didn't. He would not take it on again as the saying is what one never had one never misses.

After 7 or 8 weeks we finished the factory and a bit before that Joe Jew had the contract for the first hospital. The Maryborough-Gympie railway being nearly finished, there were a considerable amount of accidents between the miners and the railway. Farnsworth being the only bricky there, he had the job to build the chimneys and we went there from Tronsons.

Before we finished them Farnsworth got the job to build in a Cornish boiler and a 60 ft. chimney stack at No. 1 North Phoenix. Bill Smythe was manager, and afterwards a Member of Parliament for Gympie. That was about the time Andy Fisher came to Gympie and worked in various mines, much later to become Prime Minister of the Federal Government.

Well, Farnsworth started to put in the foundations and left me to finish the hospital job. Shortly afterwards I had them finished and then joined Farnsworth. He started me on the stack while he worked on the boiler. There was only room for one man on the stack as it was only 4 ft. inside where I worked and all the material was pulled up with a jenny. He had finished the boiler when I was 3 parts up with the chimney so he left me to it while he went to the Gympie mill to build some retorts for smelting the gold.

The Gympie mill was the only crushing plant on the field at the time. Later the Phoenix Prospecting claim had their own crusher as they had struck a heavy body of stone that was payable when it hadn't to be carted. At that time Tozer, one of Gympie's lawyers, (he too later became a Member of the Brisbane Parliament) made an arrangement with the directors of the mill to treat all their tailing on a percentage basis and Farnsworth of course got the brickwork and concrete

and got it under way by the time I finished the stack, when I joined him. But after working a week with him, he got a stack and boiler to build for the Glanmire at the Monkland, so he packed me off to that while he remained at Tozers cyanide plant which was a fairly big job.

And so it went on. Farnsworth reckoned I had brought him luck. A fortnight after I had been at the Glanmire brought the 24th May, the second anniversary of my landing, nearly half the 5 years gone, and a long way off making my fortune.

In the meantime I had become friendly with Charley Budley the brickmaker, the only one in Gympie at the time. Anyone wanting bricks had to get them from him as the cartage from Maryborough was prohibitive.

For some time past I had been getting dis-satisfied living with Farnsworth as his wife was starting to drink pretty heavily and there were almost continual rows between them. The remedy was taken out of my hands as I will show.

In Appalonian Vale two brothers named Peter and George Duckworth lived. They had made a bit of a pile and had retired. They were friends of Farnsworth in the old country and were both ex bricklayers. They owned a freehold property of 5 acres near the cemetery and as there was good brick clay on it, they decided to open a brickyard in opposition to old Dick Dudley and his son Charley.

As Farnsworth had been getting a lot of work and there was a good prospect of more, so they went into partnership with Farnsworth. He told me they would be able to do without me and it was going to be a poor look out for the Dudleys as the three partners would produce their own bricks.

Now across the gulley behind Dr. Ryans place in the Vale was a fair amount of open ground with 3 or 4 houses scattered about. There was Jack Roberts the blacksmith at the Glanmire who afterwards made his pile in the Wilmot, Mick Keenan a miner whose wife had a couple of cows and sold milk, Bill O'Deane a miner in the Caledonian, and a few others.

I decided I would build me a little humpy and batch in preference to going to a boarding house, and I could live cheaper. So I arranged with Farnsworth to stay a few days while I put up a humpy. I took out a Miners Right and pegged out a residence area alongside a two-roomed paling humpy occupied by a man named Saunders and his wife.

I borrowed a saw and got some palings and built me a nice little hut about 10 x 8 with nice room for a bunk and boxes for table and chairs and a little bit of roof over a fire-place, built with rocks out of a mine.

Before this happened, I forgot to mention before, Farnsworth and I had built a couple of chimneys at the railway station, and when I built my hut the trains had just started to run.

It only took me 2 or 3 days to run up the shack and on the Saturday I went and saw Jim. He came and had a look at it and said he wished I had made it a bit Bigger as he would like to join me. He said he was full up where he was. Steve Baker and his wife had been appointed Warder and Matron of the new hospital and had let his place to a couple who had agreed to continue boarding Jim. The tucker was pretty rough, worse than when we batched and his clothes were not half washed.

I said I could easily extend it. He said he would try it for another week or two. I had to buy me firewood but there was plenty of water in the gully between Dr. Ryan and myself. Instead of visiting the quoits, Jim and myself got all my gear from Farnsworth and got settled down.

On Sunday Charley Dudley came to me and suggested I should start in opposition to Farnsworth and Co. and he would supply me with any material like lime, sand and bricks, and I could pay when I was paid.

The following week I got a couple of chimneys to build and made about the same wages as I had been getting. I didn't know what price Farnsworth had been charging for building a chimney but found out I had built mine for a couple of pounds less than he charged. Charley said they won't have things all their own way now, and get whatever they like to ask.

During that week I had been having a yarn with Saunders my neighbour, and he told me he would like to sell his hut if he could, as he and his wife had a job offered them as a married couple on a dairy farm on the Bootharaba Road. I asked him what he wanted for it. I might state it was pretty roughly built and the roof wanted a bit of repair.

But there was a nice garden with sweet spuds and other vegetables growing. There was no floor, only earth, and the fence was just saplings and boughs. A drapers case lined with zinc for a water tank, half a dozen fowls who roosted in some wattle trees, a pig sty with a couple of pigs, and he wanted ten pounds for the lot. There was no furniture of course because he had none, only a few boxes. There was also a wooden chimney of a sort lined with stones and mud.

On the Saturday I told Jim and he went and had a look and told Saunders he would have it. He gave him a pound deposit and said he would take possession on the following Saturday.

Before I go any further I would like to say the road over the river was just about finished and Ned Baker the ganger had taken a bit of a liking to Jim. He offered him the job to drive a horse and dray on the road work in the town. He had two horses and drays working for him and the stables were between Findleys pub and the semetary and only 300 or 400 yards from my hut, so it would be nice and handy for him.

On the following Saturday at midday he asked the boss if he could have the horse and dray for an hour to shift his things. Jim and the other driver arranged to do out the stables and feed and water the horses on alternate Sundays so that would give them every other Sunday free.

Well he took possession of his new home on Saturday afternoon and I gave him a hand to get fixed up and he had his meals with me until he could get his own rations. The next week I did nothing, then I suggested we live together again as it was foolish for us both to be getting separate meals and living so close. He agreed and I offered to pay half of the ten pounds but he said he would rather keep it for himself, but we would go 50-50 in the upkeep. I told him to get a Miners Right or someone might jump it.

The next week I did nothing. Things seemed to be slackening off in the building line. I heard Farnsworth & Co. were building chimneys and under-ground tank at the new railway hotel. The owner was a Mrs. Dawson, a widow, who 12 months later married George Duckworth.

I was thinking of pulling down my hut and building a fowl house for Jim, and other repairs with the material. One morning before I pulled it down I saw half a dozen men mooching about my hut, so I got into conversation with them. It appeared they were directors and manager of a new company styled N.4 North Phoenix, the lease of which was granted the week before. They were deciding on a spot to sink the shaft and asked me who owned the hut. I told them I did. They wanted to sink a shaft near it and they would require it.

As I had built it before they got the lease, I was entitled to compensation and told them so, and of course they knew I was right. They asked me what I wanted and I said you can have it for what it cost me, three pounds. They said right so Jim had to do without his fowl house.

Next day the manager, George Brown, came with a lot of gear and a couple of men to make preparations for a start and who should the two men be but old mates Bill Sullivan and Mick Shannon from the road party. At lunch time we had a yarn and I told them I had done nothing for three weeks.

They introduced Brown the manager, and he said as soon as they had fixed up the brace they would be starting two shifts and I could have a job if I liked. (I'll just briefly explain what a brace is. It is a framework built of logs and sawn timber about 16 feet high and 6 x 3 the size of the shaft with a platform on the top to carry a windlass, and to land the buckets of mullock. The higher they built the brace the more room there was to tip the mullock.) I said I had never done any mining when Mick said he'd take me on for a mate and soon make a miner of me. Brown who was an old workmate of Micks said alright give me a trial.

My old hut they had bought was turned into a black smith shop. There were three men required for each shift while they were sinking, two below and blacksmith on top who is kept pretty busy sharpening the drills. The wages were 8/4 a shift and when we got into wet ground it would be 10/-. .

The first week I was day shift starting at 7, crib at 12, and then at 4. The other shift would relieve us, which gave me plenty of time to get the rations in and prepare tea. Jim would be home about 6.

The first week was a bit difficult for me as it was all hammer and drill work. One would turn the drill while the other was striking it with a 7 lb. hammer. Many a time the first day or two I would miss the drill and take a lump of skin off Micks hand. After a few days I could strike the drill blindfold. Mick was a sport. Never said a word when he got a clout but probably he thought a lot.

45 years later while I was living in Melbourne I got a Gympie paper sent by one of my nephews and saw the same George Brown was still manager of the No. 4 North Phoenix. The manager was always day shift, preparing the timber for the shaft

The shafts at all the mines were close timbered. We used to timber every 20 or 30 feet depending on the nature of the ground. Some of the ground was so hard it was possible to sink 100 feet or more without timbering, but it was never done. We always timbered every 40 feet no matter how hard the ground was because when firing the shots at the bottom of the shaft, some of the rock might fly up the shaft and lodge on some projecting ledge and get knocked off by the bucket going up and down. When two men were working in a 6 x 3 space, one of them was sure to be hit. The walls were well examined for loose stone every time we went up or down.

I worked there till we were down 150 feet as they could not go any deeper with only a windlass for hauling, so we were paid off. A man named Rankin who used to put up the poppit legs at the various mines got the contract to put up a whim. It would take too long to explain what a whim was, so anyone who doesn't know will have to guess at it.

One day I asked our milkwoman Mrs. Keenan if she knew of a woman who would do our washing. She introduced me to a neighbour named Mrs. Rasmussen who said she would be glad to.

After I was paid off I had a few days looking around when Charley Dudley said he was going to build himself a little two roomed cottage for himself, as he was leaving his parents place. He had a good stack of brick on hand and it would use a few of them up. He asked me to build it for him which I did. I tuck pointed the front, the first tuckpointing that had been done on Gympie.

After that I built a chimney for Ben Bennetts who lived close by. He was an underground boss in the Smithfield mine at the one mile. He was also one of the best cousin Jack wrestlers that used to visit Johnny Bennets wrestling saloon. Later he became manager of the Wilmot and being a big shareholder, when they struck rich gold he made a big pile and I think went back to Cornwall.

Anyway, after building his chimney we became very friendly and a few weeks later when I was doing nothing he told me there was an opening at the Smithfield and I could get a start

They were down about 800 feet and still sinking, but I only stayed there a fortnight as it was too wet. The water was pouring down on one the whole shift. When we came up to crib we had to take everything off and put on dry cloths for the rest of the shift. The only place you could dry them off was on top of the boiler, and they got filthy and so did you. There were no conveniences to have a bath. The only way to clean oneself was to go to the river and when you went on the the next shift you couldn't find your clothes as the other shifts threw them on one side so they could dry their own.

There was a man named Couldey who ran the mail from Brisbane to Gympie and a couple of years before my time he had his own weight in gold as his share after one crushing, he being one of the biggest shareholders. They had struck a very rich patch for that particular crushing. I can't vouch for the truth of it but it was common talk.

Also there was talk of a lucky digger who had gold horse-shoes made for his horse, and that the lucky ones just threw their money about anyhow. I am not guaranteeing it but lots of different people told me the same thing, so there was probably some truth in it.

It was about that time that Jim and I speculated in a saddle horse. The stockmen on a nearby station ran in the brumbys or wild horses and broke them in, brought them to the sale-yards, and sold them for what they could get. I got a chesnut for which I paid 30/- and Jim got one for a pound. There wasn't a buck in them. You would think they were broken in for years. I think we paid somewhere about 4 pounds each for a second-hand saddle and bridle.

Charley Dudley had a paddock joining his brickyard which was at the bottom end of the cemetery and facing the road running from Nashs Bridge up by the gasworks past the railway station to the one mile, where we could keep our horses through the week. On Sunday afternoons we would go for a ride to different parts round the town till we gradually were able to sit up straight and ride fairly well for novices. After a while we joined other young fellows who went kangarooing. They would go tearing through the bush over logs on anything that was in the way, but we weren't class enough for jumping logs, so we stuck to the road or tracks.

It was about that time that Ben Bennetts used to come down to our place on the Saturday afternoon or evening when he wasn't working and give us lessons in wrestling. After being thrown over the fence 2 or 3 times, we decided that draughts or cards were more in our line than wrestling. Anyway, it was a lot more fun looking at other fellows being thrown about than doing the flying mare yourself.

I did a bit of brickwork now and then but didn't average more than tucker. Then I got a job on the Cootharaba Road sinking a prospecting shaft on a lease called the North Smithfield. There was only one shift and only 3 men; two below (myself one of them) and a blacksmith. The blacksmith on most mines was only a tool sharpener. I stayed there a couple of months till we got down 150 feet, then we couldn't go any deeper with a windlass, so work was stopped while a whim was being erected.

After I had known our washerwoman, Mrs. Rasmussen, a few weeks she invited me to tea one Sunday evening. When I went there I found a visitor who was introduced to me as Miss Sarah Doran. Mrs. Rasmussen, Delia they called her, was a cook 12 months before on Imbil station, and this Sarah Doran was housemaid there too, about 30 miles from Gympie. That is where they became friendly. Later Rasmussen (Neils was his name) got the sack from Imbil and he and his wife came to Gympie where he got a job in William Fergusons sawmill in Mary Street.

Before I go any further, Imbil station was owned by Mathew Mellor and John Elworthy. William Elworthy his brother managed it while John lived in Gympie and had the abbators on the Chatsworth Road and kept a couple of butcher shops, one in Mary Street and one at the Monkland. Mathew was president of the town council or what ever it was called, and also ran the cedar getters camp up the Mary valley.

Soon after the Rasmussens left Imbil, this Sarah Doran got a poisoned hand and had to go to Gympie where a doctor could attend her. While doing so she stayed with Delia and when she was alright instead of going back to Imbil, she got a job as general (I suppose that means doing everything) at John Elworthys in Wickam Street. I learnt all this while we were having tea.

I often met her at Delia's place after this, and got into the habit of seeing her home. Delia was always singing her good qualities to me and threw us together whenever possible.

There was a mining engineer on Gympie who was named Swaby, and he drew the plans and specifications of all mining plants erected on the field. Tenders were called for building in a Lancashire boiler and base for an iron chimney on the river bank near Normandy Bridge. I have quite forgotten the

name of the mine. It might come to me later. I put in a tender for it after Charley Dudley had promised to back me and got the job.

I expect Farnsworth & Co. were a bit sore as they hadn't done anything to speak of for some time. I had become friendly with their brickmaker, a man named Harry Mason, who told me their kiln was full of burnt brick and they couldn't start to set it again until it was emptied. They told me there was enough green bricks made to fill it so were idle until the kiln was emptied.

Just before I had finished the boiler at Normandy Bridge, Swaby the engineer called tenders for two Cornish boilers and a 60 foot circular track at the Wilmot. Through the Dudleys I got to know a man named Ted Nott, a new arrival on Gympie who was working in the Phoenix. He told me he was a bricky not long out from Brummigen. He told me he got the job at the Phoenix through his brother-in-law, a man named Cherry who was leading engineer at the Phoenix at the time.

So I suggested he and I should go in partners for the job as it was a fairly big one. He agreed so we went and saw Charley. He said he would see us through as far as the material was concerned so we tendered for it and to the surprise of everyone we got the job, much to the annoyance of Farnsworth and their brickmaker Mason.

George Duckworth had dissolved his partnership with his brother & Farnsworth as he was too busy pumping beer since he married the widow at the Railway Hotel. As far as I can remember, our tender was a little over 400 pounds. As the boilers would be coming up from Brisbane early in the New Year, and the site was already cleared, we could start excavating at once.

I don't know if I made it clear, but our contract did not include boilers and engines, only the brickwork and concreting. The labourer I had at the last job was available, but we wanted another, so I got a man named John Organ who worked with us right through and lived close to Rasmussens. As I will have to mention him a good bit, I think it just as well to say a few words about him.

John was a rough carpenter, a good bushman, and handy with tools. He and his father, Frank Organ, came from Creswick in Victoria and went to the Jimna diggings in Queensland at about the time I was in the Brisbane hospital. From Jimna, where they didn't do any good, they went across country to Imbil where they worked at fencing, putting up barns and stockyards. Before they worked on the station they tried their luck on the Imbil diggings. You could get gold anywhere on that alluvial diggings but not in payable quantities.

It was situated 2 miles from the station on the Imbil run to the great annoyance of the Elsworths. After it was deserted his cattle often fell down the holes although none of them were over 10 feet. When it first broke out it carried 100 men, none of whom made much more than tucker and some did not make that. So it soon petered out. The want of water was the trouble.

So the Organs went to work for Elworthy. Soon after that Delia who was the station cook got married to Rasmussen and a girl named Maggie Doran, (sister to Sarah who I was introduced to) took her place and 6 months later married John Organ. Doran

He put up a little 2 roomed hut for themselves near the station, but it was a hand to mouth existence for a married man. Some months later he had to fetch her down to Gympie as there was no houses to let. He had to put one up the cheapest way he could and that was with palings. He built close to Rasmussens and had just got settled and was looking for a job. Mrs. Rasmussen, or Delia as I will call her for the future, asked me if I knew of a job and it was at that time I was looking for another labourer, so we clicked. Between him and his wife Maggie, and Delia, I saw a lot of Sarah and began walking out with her.

Well, back to the work again. Everything went smoothly. We had a draw the 1st of every month of 75 per cent of work done. Swaby the engineer gave us a certificate for what he considered we were entitled to. We arranged to pay ourselves £3 a week and £2/10/- to each of the labourers and give the balance to Charley for the material.

Everything went well and we finished up 3 months after starting. We got a final certificate from the engineer, cashed it, squared up with Charley and had £35 each for ourselves, a very satisfactory bit of work. As there was not much doing, Jed Nott went back to the Phoenix.

A month before we finished, Maggie had a little daughter who they called Lottie; talk about the ups and downs of life - at the time I am writing this, that same baby is 58 years of age and is at present working at a woollen mill in Brisbane (she never married).

About the time we had finished, we tendered for a brick store in Mary Street for Ferguson Bros., but Farnsworth beat us for it to the great delight of their brickmaker, who had been idle a long time.

When I became friendly with Delia, Jim got the pip. I don't know if he was jealous or not, but he would barely speak and things began to get uncomfortable. As I had a fair bit of money saved, I thought I would alter things, so I proposed to Sarah and was accepted. I told Jim but he made no comment. As I was doing nothing at the time, I thought it was a good opportunity to build me a house. So I fenced in a quarter acre block next to Maggie and started to build.

As Jim refused to open his mouth, I decided I would put up one room to back in and it would later do for a kitchen. I got John Organ to give me a hand so I could get into it the following week. I built a brick chimney to it so it would be all the more comfortable, then went and gathered up my things. As we squared up the tucker bill every week, I asked him if I owed him anything. He said no and I cleared out as I had no work on hand. John had to look for other work. I started on the main house and got John to give me a day now and then.

Sarah and I decided to get married on April 10, Easter Morn 1882. We saw Father Horan and he told us Sarah would have to get the consent of Lukin the warden as she was only just turned 20 and had no guardian. So we went to see him and got his consent in about 2 minutes. About a fortnight before the wedding, she left John Elworthy and stayed with Delia to get some things together, as I was given to understand that women folk needed 3 or 4 of everything. It's just as well they get them then, as they never get 'em afterwards, not all at once. Marrie

Well, the ceremony duly came off and was kept up at Maggie's place. A few friends were present. The next day while Sarah was trying to straighten up the mess I made while packing, I wrote home and told them all about it. I suppose poor old Mother would be disappointed and think she would never see me again - she never did either.

We had a few days holiday. There was no such luxury as a honeymoon those days and the way we spent our holidays was this. The wife was fixing up a few things inside and now and then having a bit of a yarn with Maggie and Delia while I put up a bit of a fowl house as I was told we were going to keep fowls and made a start on a garden.

I was keeping in touch with Charley who was always on the lookout for customers for his bricks and I knew he would send them on to me. I also had an advertisement in the paper. A week after the wedding, I got a job privately to pave Dan Hendry's backyard. That took over 6,000 bricks. I took John Organ to labour for me. After that, I did nothing for a week or so, only finishing the garden and putting up a few shelves etc.

As John's father, Frank Organ was busy on Imbil, John joined him and left Maggie and the baby in Gympie. I built a two roomed place for a friend of mine who was going to be married. After that I did all sorts of jobs for the next three months or so.

I often ran across Jim Vickers, but he never answered when I spoke, so we soon became like strangers. One night when I got home, and what a treat it was to have tea ready and the wife waiting at the gate - a lot different to the old baching days when the first thing to be done was to get a fire going and boil the billy and perhaps fry a bit of meat, John Organ came in and said he had just come down from Imbil. He asked me what I had been doing and then said he had a proposition to make. He said Elworthy was going to build a new home- stead and as the price of sawn timber and carting it from Gympie was prohibitive, he proposed to get a pair of pit sawyers and saw it on the spot. He offered John the job to cut 30 thousand feet of different kinds of timber. He offered 12/- a hundred super and 1/- a hundred for felling and he would haul the logs with his team of bullocks to the pit at the station.

Sawyers had worked there a few years previously and their pit was still there. It only needed a few repairs. So John asked me to join him. His father didn't care to tackle it. Besides, he had just agreed to ringbark a thousand acres for Elworthy. I said I could manage ordinary bush work like felling and splitting, but had never tackled pit sawing before.

He said he had done a little and often watched them sawing at Jimna and other stations. He knew where he could buy a second hand sawyers kit for £3 and there was a humpy we could camp in quite close. After thinking it over and talking it over, I decided it would be better than working a week and idle a week the way I had been since I finished the Wilmot job. We made arrangements for one of us to go home every Saturday alternately and if the job was going alright, we would build two little houses on the Imbil diggings two miles from the station and shift up bodily and start a side line of a poultry farm as well, as there was an ideal spot on the old diggings for that.

In the meantime, Maggie would live with Sarah and let her own place for a small rent. It was easy to get a tenant as a lot of people were living in all sorts of shacks, some built of hessian and others of bits of tin and bark, just like the Chinese build and would rather pay 4 or 5 shillings a week for a comfortable place.

On the Monday I caught my horse; John also had a horse called Roany. We packed all our gear on them and started off to walk the 30 miles, leading the horses up Red Hill, down Mount Pleasant Road, across Normandy Bridge, past the Lagoon Pocket and the long flat (three miles across) past Browns pub and then just bush until we came to Bunya Creek and Chippendales farm and bush again till we reached Imbil just as it was getting dusk.

We unloaded our things and turned the horses out in the home paddock and then went to the station kitchen where I was made known to the staff. There was a married couple named Oliver Tinknell and his wife who was cook and had taken Maggie's place when she married John. Oliver was the ploughman. Another was Tom Bergin the stockman; Imbil Bill (that was the only name he was known by) the milker and general rouse-a-bout; Frank Organ bush worker (and John's father); Charley Lafong known as Dublin Charley who was ringing down Bolia way and had come up that day for rations and Maggie McCarthy house maid who afterwards married Tom Bergin.

As nearly all of them had known my wife in the past, it was a sort of passport for me. They gave us our tea and after a yarn about different things, we left for our hut. Frank had rigged up the bunks for us. We only had to spread our blankets and turn in. There was one improvement on the sugar mill days, we had a hurricane lamp instead of a slushy. When Frank was at the station there was a room set aside for him on the verandah of the homestead.

Being an educated man, he often stayed there to help Elworthy do his books and also take charge of the store when Elworthy went on one of his sprees so as he couldn't get at the rum and Frank would deal him out an allowance, gradually reducing it until he became normal again.

Oliver and his wife had a room joining the kitchen; Tom and Imbil Bill shared a room in the barn. There was a blacks' camp at the edge of the scrub about a quarter of a mile from the station. There were nine or ten blacks there with their gins and piccaninnies and when Elworthy was mustering or branding, he would get four or five of them to help him and Tom as they were good riders.

At that time there was what was known as the Vermin Act as the station owners and farmers complained about the dingoes and wallabies and kangaroos, so a price was fixed for their scalps and the station owner or manager was appointed agent in the district to collect the scalps and pay them and then burn them - no check on the number he burnt, just trusted to his honesty. The price paid was 4 pence for wallaby, 8 pence for kangaroos and 30/- for a dingo bitch or a pound for a dog. I don't know how the manager told the difference between a bitch and a dog's scalp, just guessed it I suppose.

At the blacks' camp there was always a pack of their mongrel dogs who hadn't a hair on them through sleeping in the hot ashes of the dying fire. They, the blacks would hunt wallabies all day and bring the scalp to the station and the manager would give them their value in flour, tobacco and rum. They had plenty of meat as they would throw the carcase on the fire after scalping it and when the gins thought it was burnt enough, would tear it into them and what they could not eat was thrown to their waiting dogs.

In the morning we had a talk to Elworthy. He agreed to supply us with what rations we required and deduct the cost from our cheque. For a start he told us he wanted all the frame work scantling of iron bark, the weather boards of cedar and flooring of beech. He gave us a list of the different sizes and lengths he wanted and the quantities of each size and we could fell the timber anywhere on the run.

We then rigged up our fire place and got a supply of rations, then took the crosscut saw and axes and picking out the straightest of the trees and not more than about 2 feet in diameter, started to fell our first tree with the saw - got 3 sixteen foot logs out of that one and spent the rest of the day and the next day getting iron bark logs. The bullocky snigged them to the pit and we made preparations to start, rolling the first log on to the pit and lined it out and started, John on the top and myself in the pit.

We worked hard that day and were making a regular hash of it. There were a lot of tricks about it that we knew nothing about, especially sharpening the saw as the teeth were hooked and needed a half round file. The next day we got on no better and after tea we had a confab as to what was the best to be done. We decided to go to town and see the old sawyer from whom we bought our outfit and offer him £3 to come up for a week and show us how to go on.

In the morning we caught our horses and started for town. There was another thing we wanted too, that was a fly to keep the sun off as the Summer was coming on and it was common to be 118 degrees in the shade. We arrived home in the afternoon to the surprise of our women folk and explained the reason to them, then we went off to see the old sawyer and he at once agreed. We said we would start back in the morning and as he had a horse, everything was jake.

That night we had a shake down on the kitchen floor, but we weren't fussy. After breakfast we went to Jimmy Woodrow's store and bought the fly, called for the old man who was ready and waiting and started off. We got to Imbil about 2, had lunch and then explained our difficulties. We made arrangements for him to doss with the stockman in the barn and he would tucker with us. Then we rigged up a framework to put the fly on.

As John was a far better hand at saw sharpening than I was, the old fellow put him in the way of it and like everything else, is quite easy when you know how. In the morning the old chap (I have forgotten his name) said the log we had been practicing on was no good and to roll it off and put another one on. He showed us an easier way to dog a log and to line it out. He asked me if I had a veil and said I would have to get one otherwise my eyes would be filled with sawdust as the man in the pit got it all. I got one from Mrs. Tinknell and then I could see what I was doing.

As time went on we got more expert and the main thing was to keep the saws in order. The old fellow showed John how to sharpen the saws when we started on the soft wood as the tooth was different from the hardwood having more hook on it.

That week-end neither of us went to town as we only came back on Wednesday. After dinner on Sunday, Tom Bergin asked us to go fishing with him. He said a large water hole up the creek a bit was full of mullet. He said he would show me how they caught fish on Imbil.

We called at the blacks' camp and got a couple of black boys to go with us and I was just wondering how he caught fish without rod or line or bait or anything. When we got to the waterhole, Tom took a plug of dynamite out of his pocket, a short bit of fuse with a cap on, shoved the cap into the dynamite, greased it well with some tallow lit it and threw it into the middle and in about half a minute it went off. A lot of water went up and the two blacks jumped in and started throwing the fish that were stunned on to the shore. We could see a lot of white bellies of the fish that were stunned. The blacks had to look lively or they would recover. We must have got nearly a hundred. Tom took a couple of dozen to Mrs. Tinknell. John and I took all we wanted and gave the rest to the blacks. Tom said it was illegal to shoot fish, but he said we often make our own laws up here.

In the front of the homestead there was a vegetable garden and orchard right down to the banks of a creek called Yabba Creek and in the dry season it was like the Mary, just a chain of water holes and a few billabongs on the low lying land. There was a ford near the station where one could cross to go over to the diggings except when it was running a banker. The Elworthys had an out-station called Kandanga ten or fifteen miles up the creek and beyond that again was Yabba Station owned by a family named Muir. On the opposite side of the Imbil run was Kenilworth run owned by Pat Lilliss. There was another station over towards the Brisbane road across the Mary from Imbil. I've forgotten the name of it, but it was owned by a man named Bonny, a brother of Blink Bonny the grandfather of Bert Hinkler the aviator.

There were no sheep stations around there, all cattle. While I am talking about stations, it was while I was working on Imbil that Campbell, the aboriginal bush ranger and ex-trooper, was raiding farms and out lying stations. The head trooper in Gympie was Tommy King and he and four or five black troopers from information received, caught Campbell and his gin between Kandanga and Yabba Station. The aboriginals were scared of him and put him away so it was said.

After working for four or five weeks, we decided we would build our houses and shift the families up. On a Sunday we went over to the diggings and surveyed a place for our little settlement. The diggings was flat open forest land of about one thousand acres with very high hills on three sides. The fourth side was a valley between the hills (or young mountain) leading to the station two miles away. There was a water course running through the centre called Breakneck Creek, quite dry in Summer with a gravelly bed where plenty of good water could be got by sinking a well four or five feet deep.

I got to the head of this creek somewhere up in the mountain, but it emptied into the Yabba near Imbil station. On one side of this creek was the diggings where scores of shafts had been sunk. The sides had caved in since the diggers had left, so that none of the holes was more than 6 or 8 feet deep. On the opposite side of the creek was a big grassy flat running up into the foothills with a native apple tree here and there, that I found out was the best firewood I had ever seen. Once the end of a tree got alight, it would burn right out leaving nothing but a white ash.

It was there we decided to build and later perhaps select our 640 acres. It was on the Imbil run but had not been selected although the Elworthys like other station owners had picked the eyes out of it. You could select 640 acres anywhere by paying a shilling an acre a year for 20 years (when it became your own) provided you carried out the labour conditions which were not very severe, just a bit of ring-barking, a bit of fencing and a hut. Elworthy had 5 or 6 of these selections, although no one could hold more than one. They used to have dummies such as their wives and children. They would put up a hut on each, let a contract of ringing or fencing and the man who got the job had to live on the spot and also to get his rations from the station where the boss could charge what he liked having no competition.

The men never had much money to draw when they finished. In fact, sometimes they were in debt although I must say Elworthy treated us very fair. Well that's the way the owners or lessees picked the eyes out of the station before the rest of the run was selected, which would happen before many years. In fact I read in a Gympie paper a couple of months ago (1940) that a township was on the diggings with a picture theatre and a railway station. My word, I would like to go back some day and have a look at it as my eldest daughter was the first white child to be born on the old Imbil diggings. That was in 1883, 57 years ago. There was a big patch of scrub land on one side of what I will call our selection and in it was plenty of cedar and Bunya pine.

Later we got a lot of cedar logs out of that scrub for our sawpit. The Bunya tree grew to a great size and is protected by the government for the use of the blacks. The cones that grow on the Bunya are shaped like a pineapple only 4 or 5 times larger and I suppose over a hundred nuts on one cone. The nuts are about the size of an almond only not so flat, more rounded and they are good to eat either raw or roasted or boiled and when they are ripe, the cones fall to the ground and break open.

When the ground is covered with the nuts, there might be anything up to a hundred cones on each tree, the blacks would gather them up and have a great feed and what they couldn't eat they would fill their dilly bags and weight them with stones and sink them in a water hole where they would remain quite good for a year. They were like bread to the blacks and was a nice change from yams. That is the reason one wasn't allowed to fell them on any crown lands although in the back blocks it was often done and the law would find it a bit difficult to locate the offender.

We agreed to build 2 two roomed houses for our families and a one roomed hut for Frank Organ. I will explain why Frank was going to join our little settlement. Up in the foot hills on the diggings side of the creek you could get the colour anywhere from the grass roots down to rock which varied from 2 - 10 feet in depth, but not payable without water. Frank had spent several days testing the ground and reckoned there was a fortune there if one could get a water supply.

So we had a talk about it before we decided to live there and this was the result. We would go up the creek about half a mile and build a dam and then cut a race from it, following the contours of the hills and as the creek rose very steeply going up the hills and taking a rough level, he found by cutting the race with just a slight fall, he could get the water well above where the ground had been tested. So instead of carrying or wheeling the dirt to the creek and cradling it, we would be able to sluice it.

Then one man could treat as much ground as fifty with a cradle and another thing, he would be within call of the women if any blacks or swaggies were prowling about. We would be a couple of miles away at the station. He was to live with John and Maggie, receive no wages till we started sluicing, then we were to share alike. Everything we got from the station was booked against our sawing account, so that was agreed to. As Frank and John and I would be 2 or 3 weeks building and settling our families on our selection, we made arrangements with Elworthy to suspend our sawing contract and Frank's ringing until we were roaming about that part of the run some time.

As he had often lost beasts down the holes, he said when we got settled, for every beast we got out he would pay us 10/- and while we were there, we got a good many out and the way we did it was this. We would start to dig a trench about 15 feet away from the hole starting from nothing and going with a deep slope down till we got near enough to break through with a pointed pole and break it down from the top and then look out for squalls as the beast would be wild and go up the incline and glare at us and sometimes go for us, but we always kept the hole between us. There was one occasion when a cow, in trying to rush us got too near the edge and down it went again. We always knew when a beast was down as it would be bellowing all night.

While we were building, we camped at the station hut and rode to and from the diggings night and morning. Andy Brown the mailman brought the mail from Gympie every Monday, stayed the night at the station and went back on Tuesday. His parents it was who ran the pub between the Lagoon Pocket and the Long Flat. He rode a flea bitten grey and led his packhorse which was a piebald. One night he told us that on his way up that day he called at a shanty to give them their mail. There were 3 or 4 bushmen lounging about the verandah about half sprung who knew Andy. One of them said "What colour do you call that horse". "That's a flea bitten grey" said Andy and pointing to the piebald "What bit that one".

As I was a bit handy with a concertina, we often had a bit of a jollification in the kitchen. Some times Mrs. Elworthy would come over from the house and join in and suggest after to Mrs. Tinknell to make a cup of tea for the boys. She was a good sort. The whole staff were a decent lot.

The first day we went over to start operations, we hobbled our horses and picked out a beautiful bunya tree and felled it. The track to Kenilworth station went through this flat, but we rarely saw anyone and if anyone did see us fell this bunya tree that was on crown lands and protected, they wouldn't put us away as they would be doing the same themselves and in the bush we were a law unto ourselves.

Where we fell it was about 100 yards from where we were going to build. We measured it when it was down. It was 4 feet in diameter at the butt and 120 feet to the first branch and it was 3 feet through there. We split slabs out of it 12 to 18 inches wide and nearly as smooth as if they had been planed. These slabs were used for the floor and after they had been laid, we went over it with an adze and german jack and it was almost as good as a tongued and grooved floor. We split studs, rafters, joists and palings all out of the one tree, enough to build the two houses and hut and there was enough left over for Frank to build a paling fence around the houses, for flowers and vegetables.

When we finished splitting, we got a couple of blacks over from the station to carry the stuff to the site while we started to build. Previous to this we gave Andy a lot of things to fetch us on his next trip, which was not to be had at the station, such as nails, hinges, window sashes etc. He was a very obliging chap, always bringing parcels for somebody and never charged anything. We got square with him anyway; as there was any amount of game such as scrub turkey, wild ducks and flock pigeon and some of us always managed to get some of those things for him to take home.

I must say a few words here about the flock pigeons. When the Moreton Bay figs were ripe, the pigeons would come in thousands to feed on them, completely covering the trees. It was common to get 6, 7 or 8 birds with one shot. John had a double barrelled gun and Frank had a snider rifle mainly for kangaroos and dingos. He always took it with him where he was fencing or ringing and often brought down one and that was worth 8 pence at the station and, as he said, 8 pence was 8 pence and helped to keep down his tucker bill (it helped a lot more when he got a dingo).

The pigeons were larger than the tame ones and lovely eating, far better than turkey or duck, although the turkey weren't bad. They were a bit heavier than a tame goose and they were plentiful, but I didn't care much for the ducks and they were plentiful in the swamps and billabongs.

We made good progress with the building and put up a wooden chimney to each and lined the fire places with stones out of the creek and bedded them in mud and now everything was ready to receive our family. John borrowed a dray and a couple of draught horses and we started off bright and early.

When we got to Bunya Creek, we called into Johnny Stevens' farm which joined Chippendales and borrowed a horse and spring cart from him to fetch the women and the Organ's baby, Lottie. We had made arrangements before through Tom Bergin to borrow it. Johnny Stevens was an old bachelor and lived on the farm with his aged mother who acted as midwife to the farmers' wives in the district. We got to town allright about dusk, watered and fed the horses, then had our tea.

The next day we got a few things we required and told the women to do the same in the drapery line as we would not be coming to town very often, made arrangements with an agent (I can't remember his name, he was a government bailiff as well) to let the house and collect the rent. I told him of a man I knew who wanted it and the keys would be left with Delia next door. During the afternoon we packed as much as possible to be ready for an early start next morning. We said good-bye to our neighbours and left about six the following morning. We arrived at the station about 6 pm and all hands and the cook came out to welcome us.

The only difficult parts on the road were the crossing places at Bunya and Yabba Creeks banks on both sides and about 2 feet of water in the creek, but a good hard gravelly bottom. Bunya Creek was the worst. The slopes to and from the creek were a bit greasy. After a lot of scratching and plunging and the horses going on their knees several times, we ultimately got on to solid ground to the great relief of the girls and to myself also, I don't mind telling you.

When we had finished our houses, I forgot to mention before, we had to fill in some of the holes on the diggings to make a track for the dray and cart. Before, there was only a sort of bridle path winding in and out between the holes; now we could drive right up to the door with all our possessions.

We got unloaded just at dusk and Frank had tea waiting for us. We put the horses in the garden for the night and started to unpack and put things in their proper places. In the morning we yoked up and tied our saddle horses behind. John unharnessed his team at the station and rode back to the diggings to help straighten things out while I drove on to Bunya Creek to deliver my turnout to Johnny Stevens and then rode back in time for dinner.

Although there were thousands of cattle on the station, Elworthy only made enough butter for themselves and visitors (sometimes she gave us a billy of milk to take home for the girls) who came up for shooting game. One of them was a Mr. Power the lawyer and a Mr. Wall a bank manager and other nobs in Gympie. I must mention here a little contretemps that occurred about this time.

Most of the visitors used to tip Maggie McCarthy the housemaid when they were leaving (it won't do any harm as all the actors are dead), but she had a great set on the bank manager Wall who gave her more trouble than all the rest and he never gave her a tip. On the Sunday night before he left, she got a big green bull frog out of the underground tank and put it between the sheets of his bed. At bedtime he went to bed and his bare feet touched the cold frog. Jumping out of bed, he called out excitedly to the boss who was in the next room, that there was a snake in his bed.

The boss came in with his riding whip and started belting the bed for all he was worth. "I think he ought to be settled by now," he said and started to carefully pull down the bed clothes. Then he saw not a snake, but a frog smashed to a pulp. Then the fun started.

Elworthy roared like a bull. His wife came in and had a look and then went to the girls' room and gave Maggie what for - a weeks notice also. In the morning she told Tom to whom she was engaged to be married. Then Tom went to the boss and gave him a weeks notice. That put the boss in a quandary as Tom was his right hand, because everything that was done on the station was first submitted to Tom. He was absolutely reliable and trustworthy and forgot more about the work on a station than Elworthy ever knew. There was great jubilation in the kitchen when the bull frog incident got known, as no one liked Wall and the girl enjoyed the joke as much as anyone and wasn't a bit put out by getting notice.

After the visitors had all gone, the boss and his wife (she disliked Wall as much as anyone on the quiet and wouldn't care if she never saw him again) must have had a long conference about it. In the end she gave the girl a good lecture about insulting her guest and withdrew her notice to quit. That was alright, but would Tom withdraw HIS notice, that was what was tickling the staff. However, to cut a long story short, he did and everything was O.K. except for the boss who went on the booze for a fortnight and Mrs. Elworthy had to send over to the diggings for Frank to come over and take charge of the rum.

Everything was in good shape now. We sunk a well in the creek where we always had a plentiful supply of good water. As the girls were a bit scared of snakes and there were plenty of them, we used to fill their tubs and tins in the morning before we left when Frank was away. While on the subject of snakes, one Sunday morning I went up the creek with John's gun to get a few pigeons for dinner and I almost stepped on a big carpet snake coiled up on the dry bed of the creek. I pointed the gun at him only about six feet off and blew his head clean off.

There was a big lump in the middle of him where he had apparently swallowed a wallaby or something. A bit further on I got 4 or 5 pigeons and then went home. I told John and Frank about the snake and, as it was only a quarter of a mile away, we went back and straightened him out and measured him - 18 feet in length he was. Frank opened him and sure enough, it was a young wallaby. He had swallowed it whole and had not started to digest it.

They skinned it and took it home. Afterwards Frank cured the skin and made three belts out of it, one each.

Every morning going to work, we put a cross line with a dozen hooks attached, across a big water hole in Yabba Creek near where we crossed to the station and coming home at night had a look to see if we had any luck. As there were plenty of fish in all the water holes, mostly cod, mullet and cat fish which had no scales but had to be skinned like an eel but very nice eating, it was rarely we went home without some fish, sometimes only enough for the girls and sometimes enough for breakfast for all of us.

We bought a dozen hens from Mrs. Elworthy and as some were broody, got Andy Brown to bring us a couple of sittings from his mother who had some good fowls. We fed them on bunya nuts of which we could get plenty and let them roam the flat, there being plenty of grasshoppers and grass seed for them. They liked the bunya nuts. We just cracked them with a hammer and the fowls did the rest. We had no fowl houses, just let them roost in the trees after making a rough ladder for them and John made nests along by the fence out of long grass like a miniature kaffers hut.

I might mention now that we never got a poultry farm as we intended as the snakes or goanas were too much for us. We lost all the sittings and never got any eggs. So after a few weeks, we ate the hens as they brought the goanas and snakes a bit too close to be comfortable. Nearly every morning there would be a snake in the sawpit. They couldn't climb out as there was too much sawdust about and they couldn't get a grip.

One night I went to John's house to have a game of cards (he taught me to play cribbage). Our houses were only thirty feet apart and when I went out, Sarah locked the door as she was a bit nervous by herself. There were a few blacks camped not far away. She started to mix the bread for baking the following day. We hadn't been playing more than twenty minutes when we heard her calling out. We ran over and found the door locked and she couldn't get to unlock it so we broke the door down and saw Sarah on the opposite side of the room staring towards the fire place. We looked and saw a black snake about five feet long slowly wriggling to the fire place. We soon settled his hash. Frank hearing us bursting in the door, came over with Maggie and then Sarah told us the snake fell off the wall plate on to her back as she was stooping over the tub mixing the dough.

After that, there was a good search made every night before turning in. The first time one of us went to town we decided to get a dog to let the girls know when anything undesirable was about. It was a bit lonely for them when we were away all day and Frank was up the creek on his dam and race although he was within coo-ee of them and came home to lunch.

Everything was going smoothly now and we were making enough to live on and a little bit over. So Christmas came. I shot a turkey for our Christmas dinner and we all had it together that day. Elworthy gave us a bottle of rum and as John or I didn't like it and Frank did, well Frank wasn't very much annoyed by having to drink it himself.

On Christmas evening, Mr. and Mrs. Tinknell came over to tea and we had an open air concert afterwards with me presiding at the concertina. And so finished an enjoyable evening.

We worked on New Years Day, as a holiday only meant lounging about or to go shooting or fishing and we had plenty of that on Sunday. Nothing out of the ordinary happened for the next three months and then Elworthy wanted us to fence in a cultivation paddock of 20 acres. So the three of us tackled it and left our own work stand over.

Frank dug the post holes while John and I split the posts - no rails as it was to be wire. Soon after we finished, there was a flood and for three weeks we couldn't cross the Yabba as it was running a banker. We had plenty of rations excepting meat, so we had to manage on turkey and pigeons and they are lovely for a change, but after three weeks, we were very glad to have a bit of beef and didn't bother about any game for a long time.

The worst part of the flood to us was it broke Frank's dam and the rain on the hills filled up Frank's race. When it dried up, the sides of the race caved in and it all had to be done again.

While Breakneck Creek was running, we did a bit of fossicking but didn't do much good. We got a few specks, the largest half dirt, so when the creek dried up, we gave Frank a hand to rebuild his dam and started to cut a new race and as soon as the Yabba Creek was fordable we started on the sawing again, as we had been eating our heads off the past three weeks, but nothing coming in.

We had a good run of fine weather after that and things were going along fine, when Sarah took sick. This was in June. She was getting worse, so I got Mrs. Elworthy and Mrs. Tinknell to come over. They advised me to get a doctor. Of course that meant going to Gympie. So I started off at daylight the next morning, got to Gympie about 11 am and went to Dr. Benson on Caledonian Hill. I was told he was away and not expected back till the next day and might not be able to come then.

I then went to Dr. Ryan in Appalonian Vale and he couldn't possibly come. Then I went to Dr. Mac something (can't think of his name) on Red Hill. He said he would come but couldn't leave until 4 o'clock and his fee would be ten guineas. I couldn't wait to argue as I was glad to get him. That was between 1 and 2. I took the poor old Neddy to Johnny Bennett's stable, got a good feed for him and then had one myself.

As I had a couple of hours to wait, I went to see Delia and to have a look at our houses. I told Delia what brought me down and then went to see the Agent to collect the rent. He gave me 5 pounds and said he deducted his commission of 20 per cent and the 5 pounds was the balance owing to me at that date.

I then went to Ferguson Bros. store and got a few things for the girls that couldn't be got at the station and was making my way to the doctor when I ran into Steve Baker the warder at the hospital. He asked me why I didn't go to see Jim before he died. I told him I had been up at Imbil the past nine months and that was the first I heard of it. He then told me Jim was taken to the hospital six months ago and three weeks after he died from Typhoid fever. He took in another mate when I left him and left the house to him and his money and horse he said the hospital was to have as he had no relations.

As the time was getting on, I left him and went and saddled the horse and got to the doctor on the tick of four. Ten minutes later he strapped his gear on his horse and off we went. As it was a cold night, he frequently took a pull at his flask and never asked me if I had a mouth. I would have refused anyhow as I disliked spirits, but it just showed what a hog he was.

We arrived at the diggings about 10 pm and Sarah seemed to be worse. The doctor and Maggie spent a long time with her, then came out to the fire and said she was comfortable and would soon be right. Johnny made us some coffee and we had a bit to eat, at least I did. I suppose the doctor couldn't stomach our homely fare and his whisky flask was getting low.

We made him as comfortable as possible in front of the fire and he said John and Maggie could go to bed as he would look after Sarah. I sat on a stool in front of the fire too and kept it going all night, between whiles going to see Sarah who appeared to be sleeping. At daylight Maggie came over to get our breakfast, but the doctor wouldn't have anything to eat, just a drink of tea. He looked as pleased as a bear, all the whisky gone I suppose.

He said Sarah would soon be right and I would have to go back with him to get some medicine and we would start at once. That was 8 o'clock. John said he would go as I was pretty tired and my nedly was pretty well knocked up while his horse was fresh. He would call at the station and get a cheque from Elworthy for the 10 guineas and pay the doctor. I think he got the wind up during the night as the dingoes were howling pretty near. We were accustomed to it at night time. We rarely heard them in the daytime and very seldom saw them. John said he saw a pack of 8 or 9 one day. I saw only odd ones. The most I saw was three together.

John arrived back from Gympie about 9 pm and Maggie gave Sarah her first dose. I don't know what was the matter with her; the doctor didn't or wouldn't tell me. I do not think it was serious as she mended rapidly and in a weeks time she was her self again.

That cheque was the first we had received from Elworthy and the next time John had to go to the town he was to get a cheque for a like amount, then we would be square again. That's what he did about a month later and it gave him an opportunity of collecting his rent which Delia had been getting for him.

And so the time went on until the end of September when Frank gave up the race cutting as a failure owing to the cattle roaming about and breaking in the sides of the trench, making it in such a state that, if it did rain, it wouldn't carry any water. So he started working for Elworthy again repairing the stockyard fences and other work about the station. Tom loaned him a horse to ride to and fro to the diggings and the rations Elworthy allowed him he pooled with ours as he would continue eating with Maggie.

One day we went home and found Sarah in bed and feeling pretty sick. Maggie asked me to go over for Mrs. Elworthy. Tom and I caught a horse for her and she stayed there all that night. About 8 o'clock that night, she told me to go to Bunya Creek for Mrs. Stevens. Arrangements had been made with her some months ago to attend Sarah. So off I went hell for leather. I called in at the station to tell them the missus was staying at the diggings all night. I got to Steven's place about half past nine and found them all in bed (there was no wireless in those days). The dogs and I woke them up. I told Johnny what the matter was and he said his mother was not able to ride a horse and I could have his spring cart, but the horse was in the bush paddock and could not be caught in the dark. So I would have to wait until daylight.

I rode back home the ten miles as I couldn't wait at Steven's place being too anxious. Sarah was getting worse and I was that figgety I couldn't rest. About 4 am I went off again and took John's horse to give him a spell. The Stevens were just getting up when I got there as day was breaking. We went to catch the horse while Mrs. Steven got the breakfast.

It was a draught horse (the horse I had before, he had loaned to Chippendales) and it wasn't possible to get him out of a walk. We got away soon after 6 am and it was 10 before we reached the diggings and I was pretty well knocked up through flogging him all the way. I doubt if a red hot iron would make him trot.

About a half hour after we arrived, Maggie came out and told me I had a daughter and they were both doing well. I just felt like going to sleep. She gave me a cup of tea and made me lie down on Frank's bunk for a while and was soon fast asleep. I was woken at 1 o'clock and told that Mrs. Stevens was not too satisfied and I might have to go for a doctor and to be ready. I saddled my horse which had had a good spell and a half hour later was told to get going.

I did the 30 miles in 4 hours. Doctor Benson said he would come in an hour as he had to visit a patient out at the Chatsworth. So I sat on the verandah to wait his convenience feeling very tired and the poor old neddy was tied up to the fence with his head hanging down nearly all out. So I led him to Johnny Bennett's to give him a drink and a feed, but he was too tired to eat.

I was wondering what I would do if he knocked up on me. I led him back after a while and sat waiting for the doctor, when who should come in the gate but John. My heart was in my mouth and I couldn't speak fearing he had had news. But he didn't, just gave a grin and said everything was O.K. and not to bring the doctor. He told me to go and get something to eat and put the horse up at the pub and have a rest for a couple of hours, the horse needed it if I didn't. He would get away back and I could come later and let the horse take it easy. And off he went.

I waited until the doctor came and told him the news. He said he was glad as it was very inconvenient to leave Gympie for so long. Then I went and had my tea at Dan O'Neill's Tattersalls Hotel. After that I went and told Delia all about it and had a yarn - about Mrs. Elworthy mostly. Delia reckoned she knew more about the business than Mrs. Stevens, having 6 or 7 children of her own and Mrs. Stevens was getting old (80 years at that time).

Well I said I wouldn't forget Mrs. Elworthy for a long time as she was most kind in staying with us during that trying time.

About 8 pm I left Delia and saddled the horse and headed for home, but I couldn't get him out of a walk. We were nearly 12 hours doing the 30 miles and got home in time for breakfast. I found everything all right, so put the horse in the paddock and then turned in and slept the clock round.

As Mrs. Stevens was staying with us a fortnight, John took the horse and cart back to Bunya Creek as Stevens might want it before the fortnight was up. When Mrs. Stevens' time was up, I rode down to Stevens' place to get the horse and cart to take her home as Sarah and our baby Nellie were quite strong again. I left my horse with Stevens until I brought his mother back. He didn't give me the draught horse this time, but his regular spring cart horse which could get over the ground when it liked.

As our contract with Elworthy would soon be finished, I asked for the loan of a turnout later on to take the girls down to Gympie. As the poultry farming and the gold sluicing business was a failure, we had decided to return to Gympie and chance getting a job as there wasn't much more than tucker in fencing or ringing for Elworthy and there was no other kind of work available.

Three or four weeks later we finished up and squared up everything with Elworthy and found out we had very little to come. We asked him for the loan of his dray and a couple of horses to take our things to town. He said O.K. We had previously sent word to my agent and Delia to give the tenants a couple of weeks notice and the probable day we would arrive. I went and got the horse and cart the evening before we left and as before, left my neddy with Stevens until I brought the cart back.

That evening we packed all we could do without and turned in early so as to get an early start in the morning. We left our sawing outfit with Frank who was staying on at the diggings and left about 6 am. I went on ahead with the girls and baby and a few things in the cart and got to Gympie at midday. John arrived with the furniture about 4 o'clock. We had lunch at Delia's place and I unyoked the horse and had a look at our houses. They were in fairly good order. Not much damage had been done, a few bob would fix it up.

I forgot to say, before I unyoked, I went to the store and got a bag of chaff for the horses as there was no grazing in our little allotments.

John duly arrived about 4 and got unloaded. I left John to sort the things out and put them in the houses while I went to the store for some things. I borrowed some wood from Delia and built a fire in both houses and started to fix things up while the girls were getting the tea. After tea when everything was O.K., Delia and her husband Neil came in and had a yarn and told John there was an old friend of his from Jimna living quite close. It appears he arrived in Gympie with his wife and two children just after Jim Vickers died and bought the place from Jim's mate. His name was George Whittington. John couldn't wait until morning and went right away to see him (only about 100 yards away). He brought him over and introduced him to me and the girls.

He told us he stayed at Jimna for a year or more after John and his father had left, then went to Kilkivan diggings. He did no good there, so shifted to Gympie and was at present feeding the battery at the Gympie Mill until something better turned up. Then John had to tell him what he and his father had been doing.

In the morning we yoked up and returned to Imbil, going across the Long Flat. John was sitting on the shafts of the dray and I was following in the spring cart, when the wheel of the dray went over a stump and threw John off and the horses bolted. It took me all my time to hold my horse as he wanted to join in the race. John wasn't hurt and he jumped into the cart and we gave chase. After crossing the Flat (about 3 miles) there was a steep pinch and on the top was Brown's pub.

Andy was on the road holding the horses who had had enough and were all of a lather. There wasn't much damage done, only a broken trace chain. Andy was in the road and saw them coming and just before they came to the hill, the leader went one side of the big tree and the shafter the other. That's how the chain got broken. Andy soon fixed that with a split link. Most of the bush pubs and farms had a sort of forge to do any small repairs. We were lucky it was no worse.

We arrived at Bunya Creek soon after dinner time. John continued on his way while I unyoked at Steven's place and caught my saddle horse and went after John. I caught up to him about 5 miles on and we both reached Imbil about 5 pm where we unharnessed the horses. We never said anything to Elworthy about the accident.

John got his horse "Roany"(something to say about her later) and went to the diggings for the night. He left early the following morning for Gympie and arrived home all right. The next morning he had a look round for some work. Things did not look too promising, so he spent a couple of days fixing up the garden which had been neglected.

After being idle for a couple of weeks, John decided to go back to Imbil to work with his father. They got a job to split a lot of fencing stuff for Elworthy who could always find work for them, but it was hard lines for John who had two homes to keep. He couldn't take Maggie back until February as she was expecting to be laid up early in the New Year.

It was about this time that Maria Doran the wife's youngest sister came to live with us as she was out of a job, her employer having moved to Noosa. As I will be referring to different members of the Doran family occasionally, I would like to give a brief account of them just to give people an idea of what the old pioneers went through.

In 1854, a Michael Doran and his wife left Cork for Brisbane and, being a tailor, he soon got a job. After a while, the pay not being too high, he began to look for something else and during that year his first child arrived who they called Billy. A little later he answered the Government's application for police troopers. He was ultimately accepted and after some months training, was sent to Maryborough. He stayed in the force for a number of years and during that time they had four other children, Maggie born 1857, Johnny 1860, Sarah 1862 and Maria 1864.

Soon after Maria was born he left the police and took up a selection near Maryborough, built himself a slab hut of three rooms with a bark roof. While he was doing that and a bit of clearing and fencing, his family remained in Maryborough where Billy, Maggie, Johnny and Sarah went to the catholic school. An old Frenchman was schoolmaster - I've forgotten his name.

They remained there for a couple of years, the father visiting them every week. He gradually got a crop in and some grass growing. Then he got some cows and other stock and took the family out to the farm. As there was no money coming in, they had to be very careful of their savings, but it didn't cost them much to live as beef was only twopence a pound, sugar twopence and a sack of flour weighing 200 pounds was £1. All I am saying about the Doran family is what the different members have told me, as I knew nothing of the Dorans until I met Sarah.

In 1871 when the oldest boy Billy was 14 and the youngest Maria was 7, there came a big flood which gradually rose to the house. Then all the furniture was floating and the water still rising. The whole family was forced to the roof just at dusk and it was raining all the time. There the poor things had to remain all night shivering.

In the morning the water was nearly up to the eaves and seemed stationary. All the time they were dreading the collapse of the house. However, soon after daylight, they saw a boat coming towards them with a policeman in charge. They were quickly taken off to a neighbouring farm which was out of reach of the flood and were given hot drinks and a change of clothes (which taxed the givers) and then a hot feed and then bed for mother and the children.

In a few days the flood had fallen so much that it allowed the Dorans to go to a friend's place in the town in their own clothes, but everything else including all the stock was lost. The mother and children didn't suffer any ill effects after their drenching, but the father got a heavy cold and had to keep in bed. After a few days, as the father got worse, they sent for a doctor, but he gradually got worse. The doctor said pneumonia set in and three weeks after the flood he died and there was the poor mother and five little children and all they had in the world was what they stood up in and £5.

A storekeeper by the name of Bright agreed to advance £50 for a transfer of all interest in the farm. As it was quite hopeless for the mother to carry it on, she accepted. He also offered a home and a few shillings a week to Billy to help him in the store. They had a few good friends made when the father was in the police, who rallied round after the funeral. They took a little house and the friends gave them bedding and a few other bits of furniture and for chairs they used boxes.

Then the mother tried to get some sort of work sewing (she was a tailoress before marriage) or washing to try and eke out the bit of money she had left, which was not very much after the funeral expenses were paid. Shortly after this Maggie got a job as nurse girl on the Kilkivan station through the parish priest. She was to receive no wages, only to be fed and clothed. At this time she would be about 14. The station owner and his wife were Scotch people and they had only one child. So it looked like an easy job for Maggie and they would teach her to wait at table and other light jobs about the house.

So the time went on and after 12 months of a struggle, the mother came to the end of her resources. The Scotch lady who had learnt all about Maggie's family, lost her cook and offered the job to Mrs. Doran to provide food and clothing to her and her three children, but no wages. Johnny, who was now 12 was to make himself useful such as bringing in the cows and learning to milk etc. which conditions Mrs. Doran accepted. A buggy and horses were sent to Maryborough for them.

Billy, who was now 18, was getting 15/- a week and his keep, so he was able to give his mother a little help. One day the stockmen on Kilkivan ran in some brumbies, among them a little roan foal which they gave to Johnny who made a great pet of it, always handling it until it got to following him about.

After 2 or 3 years, the station owner died and his wife sold the station and went back to Scotland. As the new owner brought with him a married couple, he gave Mrs. Doran and her family a weeks notice. As there was a bit of a boom in Gympie just then, she decided to go there. In the meantime, Maggie got a job as housemaid at the boarding house on Kilkivan diggings at a wage of 6/- a week. So she could only give her mother half of it and Billy was sending half of his 15/-, so the mother and her three children packed all their belongings on "Roany" and started off on foot for Gympie. I don't know the distance, but it was about 40 miles and I don't know how long it took them, but eventually they arrived in Gympie and went to an old friend's place on Red Hill by the name of Mrs. Mortimer whose husband was a miner in the Hilton and knew Mick Doran in Maryborough when he was a trooper. So they unloaded Roany the horse and Mrs. Mortimer took him to a bit of a paddock behind the One Mile cricket ground owned by a dairyman named Ashworth.

Then it was decided for them to stay with the Mortimers for a few days while they were deciding what to do. They found a two roomed place near the Hilton for 2/- a week and furnished it with boxes and slept on the floor as they had their own blankets, relics of the Maryborough flood. The day after moving in, Mr. Mortimer got Johnny a job as Whim Boy on one of the Hilton mines and the wages of a Whim Boy were 15/- a week. So that was a great relief to the poor mother. With the little help from Billy and Maggie, they wouldn't starve.

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A few days later she got work from Cullinanes Store in Mary Street to make men's shirts and was paid the magnificent price of 2/6 a dozen and as she had no machine and had to make them by hand, there was no danger of her getting independant. Sarah 14 and Maria 12 were a good help to the mother in sewing on buttons and taking the finished work to the store and getting more work as well as doing most of the housework, thus allowing the mother to keep the needle going. Some days she made 5 or 6 complete shirts. At 2¹/₂d. a shirt, it meant 1/3 a day. It was hard lines, but they managed to exist.

Later when Mr. Mortimer was on night shift, he and another man named Johnny Burns got some saplings and made a couple of rough bedsteads. With some chaff bags the mother made some mattresses and filled them with dry grass and that was all serene.

One good thing, those days were not like the present, with the Tax Man coming nearly every week bothering people. The whole time I was in Gympie, I never paid a tax of any sort. It's amusing sometimes to hear people talking about the high wages people are getting now (1940). Working people are struggling just the same. It doesn't matter whether a man gets 5 pounds a day or 5 shillings, it's what it buys that matters.

The working class never gets any forrader at the present time; one pays 25/- rent for a 4 or 5 roomed house against 3 or 4 shillings, tobacco 5/- a lb. now 15/-, meat 2d. now 1/- or more, sugar 2d. now 4d., bread 6d. a 4 lb loaf now 1/- and so on - to mention a few of the taxes we didn't have to pay in those days; Federal taxes, State taxes, Un-employment taxes, Sales taxes, sewerage taxes, water taxes, light taxes, municipal taxes, loan taxes for roads (new) making and a host of others. If it goes on at the same rate, before very long the Government and other bodies will collar the lot and will become like Russia, just draw rations and you don't need money then. Well I don't suppose I'll be here when that happens, so won't harp on it.

Well, things didn't alter much the following nine months and then the mother died, just wore right out and having a long rest. The Mortimers took the children and Billy and Maggie were sent for and arrived in time for the funeral. After that a meeting was held at the Mortimers to decide what was to be done. Father Horan was present and at his suggestion, Sarah and Maria were to live with the Sisters of St. Joseph who had a convent and school at the Monkland.

Billy and Maggie were self supporting and were to give what they could spare to the Sisters and Johnny would live with the Mortimers. His wage of 15/- would pay his board of 12/- and leave him 3/- to clothe himself. The blankets and clothing were given to the convent and anything else that was in the home the Mortimers took, as there was nothing of any use to the children.

During the next three years the only alteration in the family was Billy left the store at Maryborough and went to a station out west somewhere and with others took on droving and went overland with a mob of fat cattle to Adelaide and later took on stock riding.

Maggie left Kilkivan and went as cook to Mrs. Elworthy at Imbil where she remained until she married John Organ. At that time the Sisters of Mercy had a convent built also a High School near the Catholic Church, so the Sisters of St. Joseph had to leave Gympie and had to find a home for the 5 or 6 orphan children that they had been caring for. Through Maggie, Sarah got a house maids job at Imbil, so the two sisters were together again.

Father Horan got Maria into a home as nurse girl in Shannon Street with people the name of Young. A little later, Johnny went with a bullock driver and his team to Gayndah, afterwards to become a stock rider on a station up Winton way and being a light weight, rode in a lot of country races.

All the time the younger girls were at the convent, Billy and Maggie never forgot to send their little bit to the Sisters of St. Joseph's. And now we'll leave the Doran family until each one crops up in the course of my recollections.

At the time Maria came to live with us (I should say with Maggie as she was alone with her little girl and was glad of Maria's company while John was working at Imbil) there was a monumental mason named Fred Deane who had started a business of stone cutting, principally cemetery work near Nash's Bridge. In talking to him one day, he offered me a job with him, he to remain cutting headstones and kerbing and I to do the fixing in the cemetery and to quarry the free stone for him. The quarry he had opened up himself had some splendid stone in it and most suitable for head stones, window and door sills and grindstones.

He had one order completed ready for fixing. We got it carted there and instead of using bricks for foundations, I got a load of rubble from the mines and built a rubble foundation to receive the dressed stone which came a lot cheaper than brick, as the stone could be had for the carting. When I finished I put a day or two in with him sharpening his chisels and punches. He had a little forge in the shed. I could sharpen the tools all right, but the tempering was a bit tricky. After he showed me how, I soon got fairly good at it.

On the Monday morning he and I and old Dick Dudley with his horse and dray went out to the quarry which was a bit past the race course on the Widgee Road and he gave me my first lesson in quarrying freestone which was quite simple when you knew how. We had a contract with Tronson the boot manufacturer to build a high retaining rubble wall at the back of his factory with a flight of freestone steps in the centre so he could get up to his house, which was on rising ground at the back of the factory and after a rain the soil would wash down and make it all slush at the back door of the factory. It was also difficult to walk up the hill to his house, so this rubble retaining wall and steps would stop all that.

As I was fairly good at rubble work, it was right into my hands. There were 18 steps to be worked so Fred would be fairly busy for a few months and so would I as he had a couple of cemetery jobs to do also.

After the first day of quarrying, we loaded up a couple of the rough stones. In the rough they would weigh nearly half a ton each. The next morning Fred stopped in the shed dressing stone while Dick and I went out to the quarry. We got on all right as Dick understood the game. When we had quarried a couple of stones, we would rough dress them with a spawling hammer to somewhere near the right size to make them lighter for carting.

After about a week, we had enough carted to do the job with a couple to spare. Before Fred started on the steps, he said he would finish the cemetery jobs as they were ordered before Tronson's and in the meantime I would get going with the rubble as it was slow work, not like bricks.

I had a walk round the mines to see where the best stone was for the job. As it was 60 feet long by 12 feet high, it would take 40 or 50 loads of stone. I got some from the New Zealand behind Johnny Bennett's pub and some from one of the Lady Mary's which was of a slatey nature and then got to work.

After a fortnight I had to go and do a cemetery job and after another fortnight he had the second job done and then I fixed that. Then he got going on the steps and I stopped on the job until it was finished, after plenty of growling on Tronson's part about the slowness of it. As there was no time limit specified, Fred didn't lose any sleep over it. The job paid us both very well

Fred had only one marble job while I was with him and like the red and grey granite which was a prohibitive price and only the rich people could afford it as granite and marble had to be got from Brisbane by boat to Maryborough, then carted to the train and then carried to the shed and when finished, carted to the cemetery.

Fred had two or three more little jobs and then there was a frost. He didn't do a tap for three months and got starved out as he could not turn his hand to anything else and finally went back to Brisbane I suppose, as I never heard of him again.

In the meantime, Maggie had another daughter who was named Kily and a month after she went back to the Imbil diggings where John and his father were jolly glad to have her as it would finish their baching. I let their house to a man I knew for a couple of bob a week, more to care for it than anything and to save it being jumped which was common in those days if you left it unoccupied for any length of time. It was quite legal, the jumping I mean, although it caused plenty of fights and law cases.

When Maggie left, Maria came to live with us for a while. Later Maggie got a bad attack of asthma and John came down to take Maria back with him to help Maggie and the children. He had borrowed Mrs. Elworthy's side saddle and horse for her.

Soon after this, Billy appeared suddenly from the Never Never and stayed with us while he had a look round. He didn't know his sisters were married until the Mortimers told him as he had gone there to find out their address. He was riding and leading a pack horse. He stayed with us for two or three weeks and then went to Imbil to see Maggie and Maria and stayed with them for a time. Then he took a stockriding job at Yabba.

George Whittington who bought Jim Vickers' place, used to come over at nights to have a game of cards and sometimes I would go to his place. He had left the Gympie Mill where he had been feeding the stamper and was working in the Caledonian. After a few months he was appointed boss of the shift.

Since the stoneyard was closed down, I had built a few chimneys and underground tanks and another cottage for Charley Dudley whose brickyards and joining paddock were freehold, so he told me, and later on he would build another one to let or sell.

I was not doing too well, just earning enough to keep out of debt. I don't think Farnsworth and Peter Duckworth were doing much. They had 50 or 60 thousand bricks on hand and their brickmaker Harry Mason had left and gone back to Brisbane.

On New Year's Day I went to the races on the Widgee Road - that was in '84 or '85. There was no grandstand and the course was a rough track cleared, but no fence with two or four booths and in one was a team of boxers who travelled the country giving exhibitions of boxing. It was that day I saw Paddy Slavin who was offering a pound to anyone who could stand up to him for a couple of rounds. I never saw anyone earn the pound.

Early that year there was a company forming to work the No. 9 South Lady Mary which had been abandoned some 2 or 3 years before. There had been a lot of work done, but not much gold got. There was a meeting called at Pollocks office, the mining Secretary and Broker to get it going. The shares were to be had by paying the first call of one and a half pence. I attended the meeting and applied for 1200 shares which were allotted to me. The proposed new company consisted of 50,000 shares and at that meeting, only about half of them were disposed of. However, during the following week they were all applied for. Another meeting was called to appoint directors and a manager.

The existing mine had a whim on it in good order with an underlie shaft of 600 ft deep. The workings were full of water and about 100 feet up the shaft, so it would take a fair time to bail it out. That had to be done before work could be started. The directors were appointed and George Whittington was to be manager.

There were horses to be bought and rope and buckers, a stable and blacksmiths shop to be built, also an office and store. It was a couple of weeks before they started bailing and they had it all out in four weeks. The manager and some of the directors went down to examine the shaft and workings and found everything in fair order and they soon got going.

After three months I had paid three one and a half penny calls and it was beginning to be a drag on me. I told George I might have to give it up as I was not working. He said I could start with him and I did so. The shares at this time were not worth anything. One day about six weeks after I had been there, George told me to put a primer into the reef. We used to do that occasionally to test the stone. Well, this day I fired the shot in the reef and after waiting a while to let the smoke get away, there was a vein of solid gold in the plumbags on the hanging wall.

There was a ladder-way between the skids, we had to walk up and down as you couldn't ride on the bucket in an underlie shaft. I picked up a few bits of gold that my shot had blown out and went as hard as I could up the ladder to tell George. Where this gold was struck was at the 500 feet level. He asked me if any of the men down below knew about it and I said no, only he and I knew. He said, "We'll go down and have a look". After taking a bit of the loose quarts out, he said not to say anything about it for a day or two, that there was a chance for him and I to make a bit out of this. He said there were two or three thousand forfeited shares in the company and anyone could get them by paying the last one and a half pence call and suggested that I should get them in my name and we would divide them between us. After the transfer he would report to the directors that we had struck it and get them down to examine it and in the meantime for me to work in the stopes until they came down to inspect. When they came I could be busy gadding the quartz out, picking up all I could that had been blown out by my shot.

I told him that it looked too much like a swindle and I would not have anything to do with defrauding the company. He called me all the darn fools imaginable and tried hard to persuade me, but I wouldn't have it. He couldn't ask anyone else and he couldn't do it himself as he was afraid I would put his pot on. So the only thing left for him to do was to report it which he did right away and after the directors had been down and seen it and shaken hands with George, he put another man from a crosscut to work with me.

He told us not to shoot any of the reef, but to work it out with hammer and gad and picks, as shooting would scatter that vein all over the place. The directors took some of the quartz with them to get it assayed and heard later that it would go 6 oz. to the ton independent of the vein of solid gold in the plumbags.

Of course the news soon got round and there was a rush by the previous owners to buy their forfeited shares back, but it was too late, as they were to be divided pro rata with the existing share holders. That gave me 60 more shares and these were soon quoted at five shillings a share. Then I began to shake hands with myself and Sarah was smiling all over her face. We were being congratulated by all of our friends.

Well that was in '85 and this is 1940. I am writing and this is the first time I have mentioned that shady business of George's. He and I suppose all the other shareholders are dead and gone now so it won't hurt anyone. By what I read in the papers, they are growing bananas there now.

The first crushing we had of 50 tons and a 6 penny dividend was declared. That gave me about £30. I began to think about promising my mother that I would make my fortune in 5 years and make her happy ever after - was likely to come true, a little late perhaps, but a year or so is nothing, it's the result that counts.

After the result of the first crushing was known, the shares went up to 6,7,8,9,10 shillings a share and later to £1. Sarah begged me to sell half my holdings at least to make sure of something, but I kept refusing, firmly convinced I would make my fortune at last. I often felt like kicking myself after; however we got another crushing out, but nothing like the first. The directors decided not to declare a dividend, but to keep it for working expenses and down went the shares to 10 shillings and no buyers. That rich vein suddenly cut out. The next crushing only paid expenses of carting and crushing.

Although there was a coolness between George and me, we were both convinced it would come again, but it never did, not in my time. To sum it up, after working it for 3 or 4 months, I had to forfeit my shares as most of the other shareholders did, as they were all working miners and couldn't stand the drain of those one and a half penny calls every month. So the company was wound up and the assets just about balanced the liabilities. The lease was forfeited and the mine closed down. It was never opened again in my time. And so ended the No. 9 South Lady Mary.

Soon after Maria went to Imbil, Billy Doran left Yabba Station and came to Gympie and was living with us. A few months before the Lady Mary closed down, I got him a job with me at the Lady Mary and we worked on opposite shifts, so there was always one of us home. When the mine closed down, Billy said he was going prospecting out Glastonbury way.

He got his horses out of Dudley's paddock and a months rations from Jimmy Woodrow and off he went. Soon after, who should turn up but Johnny Doran from the North. When he reached Imbil he stayed the night there. It was customary in those times for a traveller to get a shake down and a bit of rations on any of the stations. If he had money on him he would pay for the rations. After a bit of talk with Tom Bergin, he was asked if he was any relation to Billy and then it all came out about Maggie being married and living at the diggings.

In the morning he went to see Maggie and stayed a few days with her and got all the news as he had not heard anything about his people for the past 5 or 6 years. He said he was tired of stock riding and was going to have a spell at something else in Gympie. He also said he had a comfortable cheque and so he ought as he neither drank, smoked or gambled. And then he came to us.

After looking round for a week or two he bought two draught horses and a dray and started carting quartz from the mines to the crusher or carting wood to the mines and any other carting he could get. He was kept fairly busy and was quite satisfied.

One night Billy came tearing in quite excited and said he had struck something good. He asked me to go out with him. As I was doing nothing at the time, I went after getting a supply of rations. As Johnny was staying with us, Sarah wouldn't be lonely. We got out there early and unloaded our horses at Billy's hut. Then he put the horses in Teddy Bets' paddock which was near (this Teddy Bets kept a shanty a few miles out of Glastonbury). Then we went and had a look at Billy's El Dorado. I didn't think much of it, but you never know your luck in gold mining. He had done a good bit of work and found a reef, but it's easy to find a reef, the thing to find is a gold bearing one.

Anyway, we worked away at it for a fortnight and it was hard slogging with a hammer and gad. We had no shooting stuff or drills for boring. Every night we would spend 2 or 3 hours dollying quartz taken from different parts of the reef, but never got the colour. It might carry gold if one could have sunk deep enough and that isn't a poor man's job as it would mean putting up a plant and employing labour and that's a job for a company.

As I said, we worked away for a couple of weeks and I got full up as we were eating our heads off and nothing coming in. We got our horses and Billy said he would stick to it a bit longer, but would come into town with me and get some more rations. He stayed that night with us, Sarah making him a shake down in the front room as Johnny had the stretcher in the kitchen. In the morning he went off and a few days later Maria came down from Imbil as Maggie was all right again.

Maria wanted to get a job as she wanted things and had no money. Neither John Organ or myself could give her any. In the meantime, until I could put up a lean-to, I dossed on the floor and Maria slept with Sarah. After putting up the shed just large enough to hold a couple of bunks, Johnny dossed in it while I had the stretcher in the kitchen. A week or so later Maria got a job as general with a Mrs. Bytheway whose husband had a little drapery store in Mary Street. Then through Charley Dudley I got a job to build a couple of chimneys, a bakers oven and underground tank on a station off the Brisbane Road called Bollier about 40 miles out and was about 4 weeks doing it.

When I came home I found Billy had given up the prospecting and was working under-ground at the Helen Harkins mine and both brothers were sleeping in our lean-to.

After the closing down of the Lady Mary, George Whittington the manager sold his house that was near us and rented a farm out beyond the Chatsworth. I never saw him again. He never was the same to us after I refused to join him in that swindle with the Lady Mary shares.

As I was doing nothing, I put in a few days before Christmas in the bush cutting firewood for myself and got Johnny to cart it for me. So the firewood problem was solved for the next six months. On Boxing Day sports were held in the One Mile cricket ground and a cricket match between Gympie and the Monkland was held in the Gympie ground out near Walkers Pocket. The crack cricketer for Gympie was a man named Jim Chapple. I think he was editor of the Gympie Times or a sharebroker, I quite forget which and another good player was a one armed man named Bill Stitt. It was marvellous to see him flogging the bowling with his one arm.

A Mr. Power the lawyer was another good man. Anyhow, Gympie had a one innings victory over Monkland.

On New Years Day races were held and a man named Tom O'Brien a cockey and a brother of the Bill O'Brien who gave me the sack after one days work, had a horse called Bally that won the Gympie Cup. Johnny Doran went mad over this horse and reckoned he would win everything he started in at the country meetings all over Queensland. So to be brief, he gave his two horses and dray and fifty pounds for Bally and a week later he said goodbye to us. Riding his own saddle horse and leading Bally, he made tracks for Maryborough where he took ship for Rockhampton. Two days after leaving Bundaberg where the ship called in, Bally died and was thrown overboard. There's luck for you. As the saying is, now you got it and now you ain't. Anyway, Johnny continued on his way and eventually went stockriding up Aramac way. After 12 months of that he got married and tendered for running a horse mail from Aramac to some place I've forgotten where and did all right.

Later he got another contract to run a mail by coach and could carry passengers also and he did well. To finish with Johnny, he ultimately got a small sheep run not far from Aramac and settled his wife and family on it. (I think he had five daughters and one son). He continued with the mails and just when the family was self supporting, Johnny died and later the family split up. I don't know where they are now as I have not heard of them for years. Exit Johnny Doran.

Between working a few days now and again, I was gradually getting into debt with the store, Johnny Woodrow, Alf Wire the butcher and Maurice Quinland the baker. We owed nothing to Mrs. Keenan the milk woman. As I earned a little I would pay a bit off, but couldn't over take it. So things went on until June. Then I got a letter from my brother Fred in Melbourne. This was the brother who took 500 pounds from New Zealand that I mentioned before I left England. It won't be out of place here to explain how he got to Melbourne. Fred

After I left home he bought a business in a village a few miles out of Woking and it was the only business in that village. It consisted of a store, blacksmith shop and a beer house. The difference between a beer house and a public house or as they are called now-a-days hotels, was in the one you could only sell beer, but in the public house you could sell beer and wines and spirits. By the letter I received from home, he was making a good living.

Every night the yokels and old cronies of the place would come in to yarn and have some beer and it was astonishing how long a pint of beer would last them (it was only 2 pence a pint). Fred had to be in attendance of course and he gradually got to like the beer too much. He stuck it for a couple of years or so till his wife who was no fool, persuaded him to sell out. He did so satisfactorily, then he shifted to Slough and after a while got a contract to make a couple of miles of iron hurdles for Windsor Park. So he rented a blacksmith's shop and got going at it besides other work that came along. He was doing all right and best of all was getting the taste of beer out of his mouth. Then one day he saw an ad. in the paper - a partner wanted with a few hundred pounds in an old established boiler making factory in some part of London. So after a bit of a conference between him and his wife, he wrote and said he would go up and inspect and if everything was O.K. would take it on as soon as he finished the contract with the hurdles.

He did so and moved up to London and paid his money over and started operations. It wasn't long however, before things began to slump and some of his partner's creditors came down on Fred. The upshot was, he lost every bean he had. That is the sort of thing that happens when you are your own lawyer. As the South Australian Government was broadcasting leaflets in England for emigrants, he and his wife and four children left London for Adelaide to begin all over again. Adelaide

As he was told by the agents in London that there was a big demand for blacksmiths, it was a bit of a shock to him to find that the only job he could get was harvesting up country. Having a wife and children depending on him he had to do something. After the harvest was over, he went back to Adelaide. While he was there doing anything he could get, our sister Polly emigrated to Adelaide and stayed with Fred for a while until she got a job as a domestic. Polly

Just about that time they started to build the first cable tram in Bridge Road in Melbourne and Princes Bridge was also building and a lot of other work going on, so Fred shifted over to Melbourne and immediately got a job at his trade making iron yokes for the cable tunnel in Bridge Road Richmond. He worked there until it was finished. Then he got a job with Garnsworthy and Smith to build some elevators. They had the contract from the Melbourne Harbour Trust to unload the silt from barges filled by the dredges which were deepening the river and then spread it on Fishermen's Bend. Melb

While he was there, his wife had twins and a fortnight after, died. So he got Polly to come over and look after his home as his oldest girl was only about 12. It was at this time I received his letter. Among other things, he mentioned that the building trade was brisk in Melbourne and that I ought to go over. After talking it over with Sarah, I decided to go as the way things were, we were getting no forrader, but going back. I think it was in July 1886 that I went. The boat only stayed the night in Brisbane so I had no chance of going to see if my old landlord was still running the boarding house in Margaret Street.

twins di
Polly +

July 18

I had to change boats at Sydney. On the way down to Melbourne, Green Cape was pointed out to me where the Lyee Moon was wrecked a short time before. I arrived in Melbourne about mid-day and walked out to Richmond with my carpet bag along the new tram track to Burnley Street where my brother was living. I knocked on the door and Polly opened it. I said "Hellow Polly how are you". "It's Arthur" she said and between laughing and crying, she took me in and told me everything. She was only eighteen then and left London two years before that. The three oldest children were at school. There were two others at home besides the twins. When they came home from school, they were told I was Uncle Arthur.

arriv

Freddy the eldest boy was twelve and he said he remembered me at home. He was born in New Zealand and was only about five when I left Staines. About 6 o'clock Fred came in and got a bit of a shock when he saw me. He didn't know me at first as I had whiskers and was clean shaven when last I saw him. Of course he had a lot to tell me and I had a lot to tell him. We sat up late that night talking. He said to get up early the next morning and get the Age Newspaper as that was the paper everyone got who wanted a job as they specialized in situations wanted and vacant.

We rose at five the next morning and had breakfast. We left together, me to get an "Age" and Fred to go to work. He had to leave early as he had a long way to go to work at Fishermens Bend (the rifle butts are there now). I went back home and had a look at the paper. There were a lot of bricklayers wanted, one at a villa just started in Barkers Road, Hawthorne opposite where the tram sheds are now. At that time it was called Money Millers paddock. On the opposite corner to the Bee Hive Hotel there is now a chemists shop, at that time it was a brick yard owned by a man named Smart. There was a deep clay hole there, then afterwards filled in and built on.

I asked Polly to cut me a bit of lunch, made a note of several places where bricklayers were wanted, and stuck a trowel in my belt. If I got a start right away I could borrow the other tools I wanted just for the day. First place I made for was Barkers Road villa. I got there at 7:30. The only bricklayer on the job was just starting work. I asked him if he was the boss and told him I wanted a job. He said "Right start at once". I told him I had brought only a trowel on the off chance of getting a start. He said I could borrow what I wanted of his and could bring my own in the morning.

There's luck for you, working on a building and 24 hours previously steaming up the Bay with my first sight of Melbourne. The contractors for this building were Herd and Lothian of Burwood Road Hawthorne and the boss brickey was named Bill Carter of Auburn Road. After working a couple of weeks (the wages were 10/- a day), I was sent to Bristow's Ironmongers Shop in Burwood Road to reset a kitchen range. I am mentioning this as a strange coincidence.

While I was working away at the range, Mrs. Bristow came in now and again to tell me what trouble she had with her cooking. I told her it would be all right when it was finished. In talking with her I casually mentioned that I had only just come from Queensland. She asked me what part. I told her Gympie and she asked me if I knew anyone of the name of Frank Organ. I told her that I ought to as his son John and I married two sisters. She did get a surprise and wanted to know all about them.

She said Frank was her brother. Of course there was a good lot of yarning after that which caused a slump in the work, but I squared that by working late to finish as Carter told me it was only a days work.

That same Mrs. Bristow had a daughter married to a man named Menzies whose son eventually became Prime Minister of the Federal Government.

Menzies

I worked away for a few more weeks and could see there was plenty of work in the building trade. It was just before the land boom. In talking it over with my brother and sister, I decided to write to Sarah and tell her and to see if there was a chance of selling our house.

I got word back saying there was no buyer. After making a lot of enquiries from agents and others, the only thing to do then was to go over myself which I did after telling Bill Carter what I was doing. I was sure of a job.

There was a little three roomed house empty next to Fred in Farmer Street, the rent being 6/- a week. I secured the house by paying a fortnights rent in advance and off I went. I arrived home about a week later when we had a bit of a jollification as we were all glad to see one another again as that was the longest separation we had up to that date. The next day I had a good look round, for a prospective buyer. I asked Charley Dudley if he would buy it, but he said times were too hard.

After a few days I went and explained everything to Jimmy Woodrow to whom I owed 35 pounds. After thinking it over he said he would have a look at it. He did so and Billy who was still working in the Ellen Harkins mine, told him if he bought it he (Billy) would rent it off him and give 5/- a week for it. I think that and the prospect of getting his bill paid influenced him. He asked me if we were taking any of the furniture with us. I said no, it would be sold just as it stood as we could get what little we wanted in Melbourne for less than it would cost for carting and packing and rail and boat freight, as it would have to be unloaded at Sydney and transferred to a Melbourne boat as there was no ship going right through to Melbourne from Queensland ports.

Then Woodrow offered to give me 65 pounds for the lot. That was a heart break if you like, a quarter acre block with a paling fence all round, a lovely garden, a four roomed house furnished with a lot of fowls and furniture to go for 65 pounds, 30 pounds cash and a clean receipt for what I owed him. But I was determined I wouldn't miss the chance of plenty of work at my own trade with good wages down in Melbourne and Sarah was just as keen about it as I was as she hated to be in debt.

\$65 for house

The agreement was drawn up by Mr. Power the lawyer. I received the cheque, cashed it, paid Alf Wise the butcher and Quinlan the baker and packed our clothes ready to leave by train the following morning for Maryborough. Billy had a mate who was going to bach with him and that would halve the rent. The train left Gympie about 10 in the morning, so I went round to say goodbye to different ones. I forgot to mention before, but 12 months previously a Foresters Lodge was started and I was one of its first members. While I was going around saying goodbye, I called in to see the secretary of the Lodge, a man named Potter, to get my clearance to Court Robin Hood in Swan Street, Richmond.

bach

Forester h

Court Robin Hood
Swans

I had made enquiries about that while I was in Melbourne. In the morning we said goodbye to Billy and Maria and left Gympie for good. We arrived at Tiaro about 2 o'clock and the train would be waiting there for an hour to take in water or something. While we were waiting, Sarah suggested going to see an old friend of hers named Jacob Angel who kept a pub in Tiaro and who knew all the Doran family when they were living at Kilkivan.

As Tiaro was only a one horse town, it was not difficult to find him. He and his wife were greatly surprised to see Sarah and her husband and little Nellie. She was 3 years old at that time. The last time they saw Sarah was when she was about 12 years old. We got yarning that much that we nearly missed the train. We just got it by the skin of our teeth as the saying is and arrived in Maryborough at 5 pm. We went to a boarding house near the wharf to stay the night as the steamer left at 10 the following morning. "Burwah" was the name of the steamer.

Burwah

We got on board and picked our berth and put our luggage on it to secure it while we went on deck to see the last of Maryborough. It was very nice sitting on deck in the stern part and watching the shore going by; far better looking at the country this way than with a swag on your back like I had the last time I was in Maryborough. That was the time I saw a kanaka with only a pair of shorts on pushing a pram with a baby in it - anything for cheapness, it was enough to give the baby convulsions. I was told a couple of years before, that the sugar mills and plantation owners said Queensland was too hot for white men to grow sugar and persuaded the McIlwraith Government to start recruiting kanakas from Fiji and other South Sea Islands.

Kanaka

The reason of course was cheap labour as they only paid the kanakas about 3 pounds a year plus the cost of bringing them here and sending them home again after their 3 years service was up. A big difference to paying white men 15/- a week and rations. Of course the kanakas rations didn't cost half as much, as it was principally rice and sugar cane.

I worked on two plantations both cutting cane and working in the mill and all the employees were white excepting the coolie cook we had on the Logan River Mill. Of course it wasn't too hot for white men to build railways and buildings and roads. Swinging a pick or axe is jolly hard work compared to plantation work which is child's play in comparison. But the eye wash and tripe the employers put up was swallowed holus bolus by the Government. There was a plantation and sugar refinery near Maryborough employing over 100 kanakas. One of the officials of the company borrowed one of them for a nurse girl and rouse-a-bout at his home in the town. It was not too hot to have children, but too hot for a white girl to push a pram, cheap and nasty.

Well, I believe all the kanakas are gone now and their places taken by Southern Europeans principally Italians. The employers are always agitating for cheap labour and then when there's a war, they have to be interned at the country's expense. Now we will proceed with the Burweh.

As we left the river and were approaching the Bar, I was nursing Nellie and Sarah was sitting beside me. As we crossed the Bar, the steamer began to heave and roll and it wasn't long before I saw Nellie getting a greeny yellowy look about the gills. When all of a sudden, up she comes and that opened the ball, for all the women and children that were with us got up and went below, Sarah included. In about an hour Nellie got all right and we were able to have a bit of tea.

Journey

I tried to persuade Sarah to have some tea, but she refused. She wasn't sick, but wanted to be, which is worse. As I am a good sailor, I was able to look after Sarah and Nellie, but I didn't go to bunk that night. The next day when we reached the Brisbane River and the boat was going smoothly, Sarah and the other passengers gradually made an appearance on deck and they soon bucked up and were able to eat some dinner. We, the steerage passengers all ate at one long table down below.

We stayed all night at Brisbane putting off and taking on cargo. I didn't go ashore as I thought it better for Sarah to be resting all she could as we might have some rough weather ahead of us. We left Brisbane about mid-day and had a pleasant trip down the river and across Moreton Bay. When we got to the open sea, it began to get rough and Sarah stuck to her bunk till we reached Sydney which was on Sunday morning.

Nellie had been fine all the way from Brisbane, but I had to have her in my arms all the time or else hold her in the bunk or else she might have been knocked about with tossing and pitching of the ship. We got all our gear in a cab and were driven to a boarding house for which the cabby was touting. We all enjoyed a good meal, the first decent one since leaving Maryborough. We just kept in our room all that day.

In the morning I went to the shipping to find out when the first boat was leaving for Melbourne. They told me the Corangamite was leaving on Tuesday morning, so booked our passage on it. I went back to the boarding house and stayed till lunch. Then I took Sarah and the baby to Circular Quay and around to the Gardens overlooking our harbour, but Sarah wasn't in the humour to wander around and we soon got tired of looking at the water and went home. On the way, we engaged a cabby to pick us up in the morning in time to board the Corangamite, then sent a wire to Fred giving him the name of the boat and probable time of arrival.

After tea we went to bed. Neither of us thought much of Sydney and would be glad when we reached Melbourne and got settled. We left Sydney at mid-day Tuesday and arrived in Melbourne Thursday afternoon, after a very rough passage. Off Wilson's Promitury especially, mountainous seas were running, far rougher than when I came out from home. I had to hang on with one hand and hold the baby at the same time, but we were not sick although poor Sarah was in a bad way and could take nothing. She improved rapidly once inside the Heads and when we got to the Yarra, was able to get about. It was an awful experience for the poor girl, just laying in her clothes the two days and nights heaving all the time and being sick occasionally. There was no stewardess carried in the steerage. We couldn't afford the cabin and in the steerage the women passengers helped one another.

Sarah was not able to help others as she couldn't get off her bunk the whole trip. Years after she would talk about that awful time and say "never no more".

Fred was on the wharf to meet us and in about an hour we were home where Polly had a meal waiting for us and after a hot bath and a general cleanup, we could talk about our trip. In the morning we were as fresh as paint and able to be a bit optimistic for the future.

As we had no furniture, we stayed with Fred and Polly for a couple of days while I was making arrangements with Nathan Bros. the furniture people in Swan Street, Richmond. With Fred guaranteeing us, there was no difficulty, only with the deposit. As we arrived in Melbourne with only £2/10/-, they accepted £1 deposit and we were to pay 10/- a week as we didn't get more than was absolutely necessary. We intended to get more things gradually as the money came in. That was a busy two days for us putting up beds and blinds and a host of other little things necessary in starting off scratch again.

I wrote to the Queensland folk telling them of our safe arrival and to the old folks at home who would be pleased to know that Polly and Fred and I were living next door to one another. The next important thing to do was to be working as all we had in the world was 30/- and Fred was not in a position to help.

So I trotted off to find Bill Carter who told me to look him up when I was settled. I found his place in Auburn Road, Hawthorne. His wife told me he was just starting a job in Princess Street, Kew for J.G. Munro contractor and Mayor of Hawthorne at the time. As there was no trams or buses at that time (and if there were, I had no money to spare for travelling) I footed it to Kew and found the job and was told to start in the morning. That was good news to take home.

That night I made enquiries about the Foresters Lodge, found the fortnightly meeting was on Monday night. I went to it and got my clearance accepted from Queensland, everything was O.K. I got going in the morning.

It was a fairly big place for a man named Stapley, afterwards prominent in the land boom. I was told the job would last three months. From there we went and built a chemist shop and residence at the corner of Church and Mason Streets, Lower Hawthorne. The contractors name was Merideth and Pittard.

Just before we finished the Kew job, my second daughter Edie was born. That was in November just before we finished the chemist shop. A contractor named Harry Wridgway had a contract to build five two storied houses in Marang Road near the Hawthorne station and asked Carter for a price per thousand to lay the bricks. He, Carter suggested to me to go partners and being agreeable, we went over the plans and offered to do the work for a pound a thousand which Wridgway accepted.

As everything was ready for a start, Carter and a labourer went to get going at it leaving another brickie and labourer and myself to finish the chemist's shop which we did about a week later. At the bottom end of Mason Street there was a big clay hole where a man named Brookes had carried on a brick works which was closed at this time. Years after, the Hawthorne council acquired it and made a fine recreation reserve and gardens. As soon as we finished the shop, we joined Carter in Marang Road. I think we finished that terrace of houses about April '87, that would be about the start of the land boom.

I forgot to mention before, but shortly before Edie was born, one of Fred's twins died. That left him with five children. About the time I finished in Marang Road, Fred got married again and shifted to Footscray to be nearer his work. Polly, who was not friendly with the new wife, left Melbourne and went back to Adelaide and soon after that she got married to a man named Jack Anderson, a compositor in one of Adelaide's papers. By him she reared a large family of five boys and two girls. Three of the boys served in the war in 1914, two in the Army and one in the Navy.

I'm getting a bit ahead of myself. When Fred shifted to Footscray, I shifted to Hawthorne near to Bill Carter in Auburn Road, in a cottage opposite Judge Chomleys. It was pulled down years ago and shops erected there. Harry Wridgway had another job and offered it to us on the same terms which we accepted.

It was to build the Prince Patrick Hotel and three shops adjoining at the corner of Simpsons Road (Now Victoria Street) and Rokeby Street.

While we were working in Simpsons Road, Sarah and the two children got the measles. I got a young woman Mrs. Carter recommended by the name of Lizzie Nesbit whose home was in Malmsbury Street just at the back of Carter's to come and look after them. As I was a member of the Foresters in Richmond, I didn't see the force of being in a lodge and paying a doctor too, I asked the secretary, Mr. Ball, if I could get on a Hawthorne doctors' list. He said "certainly" and gave me a letter of introduction to one in Burwood Road. It happened to be the same doctor that had been attending Sarah and the children, a Dr. Mac something, I have forgotten his name.

One night I went and saw him and gave him the secretary's letter. He hummed and har'd and at last told me to strip off while he examined me (at that time I was 25 years old). After he had put his stethoscope on and used his trumpet and pinched and punched me, he asked if I smoked. When I said I did, he said to take his advice and knock it off or I wouldn't live to see 30. Well, as I am now 78 and still smoking, it looks as though he had made a bloomer. I came to the conclusion that, owing to the wife and children being a bit sickly at the time, he was scared he would lose a cash customer. Anyhow he did, for I never had him again and his attitude didn't cause him to rise any in my estimation. But I don't suppose that would have caused him to lose any sleep.

Lower Hawthorne

Edie born

Marang Road

Mason Street

one of Fred's

Polly married

Arthur to A
Judge Ch

corner Simpsons Road (Now
Rokeby Street)

Simpsons
Malmsbury

Hawthorne's
Burwood Road

Arthur 20y / 4

As I now had to pay for medical attention, I resigned from the Foresters. When I told the meeting the cause of the resignation, they said the doctor was within his rights in refusing to accept me when I didn't pass his test. That was the end of me in a Benefit Society.

As soon as the family got well again, I shifted to a house in Victoria Road belonging to people named Allen who had a brickyard in Victoria Road not far from Auburn Road. I believe it is now a Municipal Gardens. Not a bad idea making gardens out of an old clay hole.

It was while living there the land boom was reaching its peak. It was at that time also that the Sir John O'Shannasey Estate was cut up for sale by auction. It was a large block of land, bounded on the West by Burke Road, on the North by Canterbury Road, on the South by the Camberwell Railway line and East by other property near the outer circle line at East Camberwell. There was a large residence in the centre with a tower. The auction sales of land were usually held on a Saturday afternoon in nearly all the suburbs and used to draw a large crowd as the auctioneer would erect a large marquee and provide plenty of food and beer. As only 10% of the crowd were possible buyers, the other 90% were mostly hummers after the beer.

Land at that time was sold and resold often and at increased prices every time. I will leave the boom for a while and get back to work.

When we were about three parts through with the Prince Patrick job, we got another from Seecull and Abbot contractors for a pair of two storied villas in Simpson Street near the Wellington Parade, East Melbourne. I went and got it going, leaving Carter to finish the hotel. We then got a few villas near Hawksburn Station for Wridgway. At that time we had ten bricklayers and five labourers working for us, so Carter, leaving two bricklayers and a labourer to finish the hotel, went to Hawksburn and as it was not for me to go, I went to the hotel now and then to have an eye on things.

As we had given a price to the contractors named Sydnay Smith, an ex-architect, for a terrace of four two storied houses in Gipps Street, East Melbourne before we got the Hawksburn villas, he sent us a letter to say we had the job and to start it as soon as possible. Well now, we had our hands full properly. As the hotel was just about finished, I took the man from there and got going to Gipps Street, leaving a couple of my best men to finish Seecull's job. As we were only getting a pound a thousand to lay the bricks and could only draw 80% of work done, it caused us a good deal of trouble to meet the wages bill. We could make it pay while we were both on the one job, but when such a lot of work fell to us and we had to depend on others and in our case the old saying was true, that when the cats away the mice will play. Consequently we were losing money and decided not to take any more work until we had cleaned up what we had.

After a while, the other jobs being completed, Carter and two or three of the best men we had, joined me in Gipps Street and one Saturday morning a couple of brickeys were working on the front pediment, the rest of us on other parts of the building, a strong northerly was blowing and all of a sudden the pediment blew down taking the two brickeys with it. They were knocked about a good bit and it was lucky they were not killed. We got them to the hospital and paid them their wages for the few weeks they were laid up. The following week we rebuilt it and finished the job. As Carter nor I had been taking any money home for 3 or 4 weeks, we agreed to give up piece work and work for wages.

Soon after that, G.G. Munro, contractors for whom we had worked before, were building six brick villas in Victoria Road, Auburn for a syndicate of which he was a director. He wanted Carter and I to take it piecework so we rose our price to 30/- a thousand. He said it was too high and as he couldn't get anyone else to take it, decided to do it day work with Carter as foreman. Brickeys wages were then 10/- a day, so I started with them on wages.

stopped fore

Victoria Rd /

now Municipal

Land boom p

Burke Rd /

Camberwell

Simpson St

Wellington Rd

Hawksburn

Gipps St, East

too much w
losing money

pediment blow

began working

10/- a day

Some years previous to this, Bill Carter had bought a tumble down house of three rooms lined with canvas and paper from a building society at a low price - I think of about £200 on the time payment system. His re-payments were only 8/- a week and while living there he added a room now and then. It was on a 60 ft. block of land in Auburn Road and facing straight up Victoria Road. At the time, we were working on Munro's villas and he had only 12 months to go before it was cleared. One day Munro said to Carter that he, the syndicate, would give Carter £35 a foot for his 60 foot block. We found out later that another syndicate had offered Munro's crowd £40 a foot for it thinking it belonged to Munro's crowd and that accounted for Munro's offer.

Auburn R
Victoria

That sort of thing was common in those days. Anyway, Carter accepted it and got the money and left Munro's job. He bought some land in Lingwell Road and started speculating building and drinking before finishing with Carter. I may say the big price he got was his ruin as during the next 12 months his wife had died and he had lost all his money. Through the 12 months boozing he wasn't half the man he used to be. But before this happened, while we were working for Munro, one night Harry Wridgway came to my place and said he had a sixty roomed hotel to build in Warragul and was going to do it daywork. He offered me 13/- a day to be his foreman bricklayer and it only took me half a minute to accept. I went up for a couple of weeks and then shifted the family up there where we were renting a cottage in Albert Street. I never saw the Carters again, but heard all about them a few years later as I will explain when I get to it.

Lingwell R

Albert St, W

I forgot to mention one or two things that I remember. The first was the Kelly Gang who were at their peak in 1881 or 1882 and they were the talk of the country. It was generally admitted they were not as blood thirsty as other bushrangers like Gardiner and Captain Moonlight. At the time, I was told, there was a great argument between a Sydney and a Melbourne lady as to which was the best all round Colony, Victoria or New South Wales.

The Sydney lady said "Look at our harbour".

"We could buy a dozen of them in Hobsons Bay" said the Melbourne girl.

"What about our police, the finest body of men in the world" said the Sydney lass.

"Pooh" said the other "we've got the finest bushrangers in the world". A good job for the Melbourne girl. There was no Harbour Bridge at that time.

Another thing that happened in Melbourne in '84 or '85, I think it was Davy Mitchell, Melba's father, had the contract to build the Equitable at the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets. When near the top, the crane which was lifting a large block of granite off a truck in Collins Street, along with the boiler, toppled over into Collins Street and killed two or three persons.

In that same year I think, a thief tried to rob the Union Bank in Collins Street. The manager grabbed his revolver and ran to the door and fired at the thief, but missed him and hit and killed a Mrs. Ravenscourt who was passing at the time. She was the wife of George Ravenscourt the architect. Those incidents happened before I came to Melbourne.

Bank Mgr sh
Mrs Ravens

Another thing I remember about Davy Mitchell - soon after I came to Melbourne there was a bit of a quiet time between jobs and Davy who had a cement works at the time in Burnley Street, Richmond, advertised for a bricklayer. I went after it and being the first there he gave me the job. I asked what wages he paid and he said all he could afford was 5/- a day. As the usual wage was 10/- a day, I told him to keep it and left.

Davy Mith
Burnley St,

He was a wealthy man at that time. I think a lot of people made their wealth by giving starvation wages. As there was no Wages Boards at the time, employers offered what they liked and were always ready to take advantage of people's necessities. Now we will go back to Warragul.

back to Warragul

When we started Mrs. Roden's railway hotel, a Mr. Sargeant M.L.C. had a sawmill in South Warragul where the hospital was afterwards built. Then there was the Condon family who had horse teams and did carting and clearing and road making. Tom was the head of the firm. Then there was Bill whose house caught fire one night and burned his wife and three children to death; another brother Jim who was always ready for an argument or a fight. Another brother who I did not know started a biscuit factory in Abbotsford (the Phoenix).

Mrs Roden
Mr Sargeant
Condon

Biscuit Factory

After we got the foundations, there was a great ceremony in laying the foundation stone. The celebrant was a Mr. Davy O'Connor, a brother of Mrs. Roden the licensee. I think that most of the population was present - a big crowd anyway, because I suppose, it was to be the biggest building there (and incidentally a fair amount of free beer). I had the privilege of lowering the stone into position and Davy tapped it with my trowel and declared it well and truly laid. Then they adjourned for speech making and refreshments.

Davy O'Connor

As soon as they had gone inside, Harry Wridgway with them, I found out an error had been made with the lines causing the stone to be three inches too far out on the footpath. I went to the bar and beckoned Harry out and told him. After a look, he found I was right. He got the foreman carpenter and told him to give me a hand to shift it while he went inside and kept the local aristocracy talking. We told the few people that were hanging about that there was a barrel of beer in the backyard for those that couldn't get inside. Then there was a wild rush for it and that left us free to shift it without anyone knowing. So where ignorance is bliss etc. etc.

foundation stone

The architect of this job was George Ravenscourt who I have mentioned before, and whose wife was accidentally shot in Collins Street. The Clerk of Works was an old bricklayer named John Watson who didn't give us any trouble. Everything was in full swing now. I had 8 or 9 bricklayers and some labourers.

John Watson

When we reached the first floor, a big fire broke out. As there was no water to speak of, it just had to burn out. About a hundred yards below us was a two storied brick Bank. That stopped the fire from spreading that way and the brick wall of our hotel stopped it from spreading up the street. Only for that, the whole street would have gone. A big store owned by Jimmy Biram joined us on the one side and if that had gone, all Queen Street would.

Jimmy Biram
Queen St

Harry had nearly all his timber for the job stacked in the back yard of the pub, but we saved that with wet blankets commandeered from Biram's Store. After a lot of work with blankets, there were about 12 shops burnt down and the Oriental Hotel owned by a Mr. Kennedy. He put up a temporary bar and called tenders for an hotel on a larger scale than Mrs. Roden's. Harry tendered for it, but a firm named Miller Bros. got it. It was never finished in my time as, by the time the roof was on, the land boom burst and the Banks closed. From then on, things were only middling.

Mr Kennedy

After the fire, the Shire Council laid a three inch water main along Queen Street and Smith Street with fire plugs here and there for the hydrants. Arrangements were made with the Railway Department to supply water from one of their overhead tanks that fed the engines, the water being pumped up into the tank from the swamp which was close to the south side of the line.

The water in the Main was only to be used for fire as every place in the township had to depend on tanks for their domestic supply. I know the house I rented in Albert Street was only just finished and there was no rain for three months, so we had to bring water. Our milkman during the day was busy carting water from the swamp to any one in need of it. He had two 50 quart milk cans in his cart and charged 1/- a can. I know we had to get a can a day until the rain came. I don't think we had to buy any more water while we were in Warragul.

After the fire, the country Fire Brigade Board, after being provided by the Shire Council, formed a volunteer Fire Brigade of which I became a member. There was a peice of vacant land between the railway station and Queen Street (I believe it belonged to the Railways) on which the Board erected a small fire station and lookout tower with fire bell and all.

I believe there was a small amount allowed yearly for the upkeep, but the firemen were all volunteers and received nothing for their services. They were given a uniform of a coat and cap. We had to provide our own trousers. Our Captain was Teddy Fowler whose parents kept the Railway Refreshment Rooms. We used to practice two nights a week on this vacant land as it was close to the three inch Main where we could fix the hydrant. The Board also supplied us with a fire engine that took eight men on each side to work the pump. It was no use anywhere, only where there was a good supply of water as the water was run into a canvas trough and a four inch rubber suction hose attached to the engine. It took all the strength of sixteen men to throw a jet of water fifty feet from the nozzle. It made me smile when I watched the Metropolitan Brigade at a fire in Melbourne the other day, comparing its efficiency with the old time rule of thumb methods. Talk about the dark town fire brigade. I think the artist who drew those pictures, must have been watching us. Anyway we were just as serious and determined as they are today.

About the time we finished the brickwork at the hotel, Harry got the contract to build the Catholic Presbytery at the top end of Queen Street near the butter factory. The Bishop of Sale laid the foundation stone and it was a bit more successful than the hotel ceremony. I know there was a deep hole cut in the stone, in which the Bishop placed the current coins in use at that time and the Warragul Guardian and other papers which I sealed up with cement under the Bishop's supervision.

For the 12 months or so Wridgway was in Warragul, he boarded with us and as I had made full time, I had been able to save a bit. After Wridgway had left Warragul, I had the chance of buying a four roomed house in Kent Street for 350 pounds on terms through an agent named Charley Round on a 50 pounds deposit and 10 shillings a week. As I intended to stay in Warragul as there seemed to be a good opening for a bricklayer and not much competition, we decided to risk it, though it took all my saving to pay the deposit and the place would become my own in 12 years and the repayments were only the same as the rent I had been paying.

At that time, the railway line to South Neerim was being built and a man named Hart had the contract to build the engine sheds at Warragul and I got a job on it. After that was finished, I started for Jimmy Biram the storekeeper who also had a chemist shop next door to Rodens Railway Hotel. He had a chemist working for him named Iliffe who was buying the business off Biram provided he built a new brick shop and residence. That was the job I started on.

The only bricklayer in Warragul before my time was a man named Joe Lunt who was foreman brickey for Biram and as this Joe Lunt knew absolutely nothing about plans and as I did, we worked very well together. There was another brickey brough up from Melbourne to work on the Orient Hotel for Miller Bros. whose name was Harry Rogers.

As money was not too plentiful with the licensee, the work went on very slow with only one bricklayer. While I was working for Biram, the Fire Brigade decided to have a brass band. Different people in the town provided the funds to buy the instruments and the members of the Brigade paid so much a week (I forget how much) to pay the bandmaster for two nights a week. His name was White. He played the clarinet. He was a little old man (not a member of the brigade) about five feet high with long scraggy ginger whiskers. Our tame humorist described them as like a cricket match - eleven each side. However, he was an enthusiast at his job and soon got us into shape. It wasn't long before we were playing in Queen Street on Saturday nights.

brass band

I was in the band and had to baritone, but was not too clever with it. This was in 1890. In July of that year Sarah had a son we named Willie. A Dr. Wickens and a Mrs. Moule were in attendance and everything went O.K.

1890
Willie

We had just about finished Biram's chemist shop when the Shire Council called tenders for a Shire Hall at the corner of Queen Street and a road going over the line to South Warragul. A man named Fred Preston got the contract, I forget how much. He lived at Drouin and had a brickyard at Longwarry. He supplied the bricks for all the work done in Warragul except the engine sheds. The Railways people sent the bricks from Melbourne for that.

Fred Preston

Preston gave me the job to look after the brickwork for him and brought a couple of brickeys up from Melbourne to work with me. Joe Lunt didn't care about working for wages, so he stuck to building chimneys for the cockies around the district. I had two labourers with me, a Ted Pettit and Jack Elliot and the two carpenters were Bob Kent and Jack McLeish. The Clerk of Works was Joe Hadlow Snt. When we were up a bit above the first floor, Preston got into financial difficulties and made arrangements with a Geelong contractor named Golland to finish the job.

Joe Lunt

Ted Pettit
Jack Elliot
Joe Hadlow

At that time, the president of the Council was a Mr. Anderson, a storekeeper in Auburn Street and the Town Clerk was John Picken. Davy O'Connor, Mrs. Roden's brother that laid the foundation stone of her pub, was a councillor and others that I don't remember. I've even forgotten the name of the Shire Engineer.

Anderson
Picken
O'Connor

There were only five pubs in Warragul and all in Queen Street at the bottom and at the corner of Mason Street was the Commercial then the Orient, then the Railway, then the Royal at the corner of Queen and Smith Streets and the last one the Club run by a Danny Lyons. They all had livery stables. At Mrs. Roden's, her son Bill ran it. Her next eldest son George did not do anything, but he afterwards became secretary of the Racing Club and a few years later shot himself and made a good job of it. Then the next son Jack helped his mother to run the pub. Years after he became a solicitor practising in Essendon.

Mason Street

Danny Lyons

There were two younger children, a boy and a girl, staying at the hotel was a young man named Arthur Rice a law student in Gray & Friend's office who afterwards became a noted lawyer in Sale. I should have mentioned this before, but soon after their hotel was finished, Mrs. Roden married a bank clerk named Staveley and I don't know how true it is, but it was reported at the time that the boys gave Staveley the father of a hiding when they came back from their honeymoon.

Arthur Rice

Staveley

At the back of the Railway Hotel was a large hall used nearly every night for roller skating which was all the rage just then. It was in that hall I heard the Chaffey brothers lecturing about Mildura and the irrigation system they would introduce and selling 10 acre blocks. I have forgotten the price.

Chaffey
Mildura

While I am talking about people, I might mention Jim Connors the Registrar. He was a member of our Brigade. Then there was the Rev. Henry Howard, the Wesleyan Minister who afterwards got a call from New York, U.S.A. and became a famous preacher.

I have noticed that those ministers who get a call, it's mostly for a larger salary. I heard a story the other day about a new Wesleyan minister who was appointed to a bush town in Gippsland. The first week he went around finding out the names of members of his flock. One house he called at and asked the lady if her husband was a Wesleyan. "No sir" she replied "he's a plumber".

After I finished the Shire Hall the Gas Works people called tenders for a brick gas tank to hold the new gasometer they were installing. As there was only Joe Lunt and I in Warragul at the time, we joined forces and put in a tender, instead of tendering against one another and we got the job and did fairly well out of it. After that we built a bakers oven for Blundell the baker, then a thirty thousand gallon tank for Robinson at the lemonade factory right behind where the picture theatre is now. At the time there was a three cornered block of land where the theatre is now between Anderson and Smith Streets owned by Jimmy Biram and used as a timber yard managed by a Mr. Meikle.

A little later Biram built a market building at the back of his store and behind the shops fronting Smith Street. A Mr. Whitton the house and land agent was the auctioneer. I have to say a few words about the manager of the Gas Works whose name was George Meredith. He lived in a cottage on the property and had a lovely garden. He was manager stoker at the retorts, did all the work about the place, arranged about the delivery of the coal and selling the coke, reading the meters, making out the bills and collecting and banking the money. In fact he did everything connected with the gas and repairs to house and fencing etc. The only thing he didn't do was to light and put the street lamps or do any of the connection. The Company which was in Melbourne sent men up to do that, but all the houses and a few of the smaller shops used kerosene or candles.

It was only the big shops and hotels and a few big boarding houses that used gas. George, who was a Lancashire man, had been in the gas making business all his life and was specially imported to take charge of the Warragul gas works.

Well, after he had done all the things I have mentioned, he was told he could do what he liked with the rest of his time. Generous of the Company, wasn't it.

On the South Side of the railway across the swamp near where the hospital was afterwards built, a man named Webb had an apiary with from 90 to 100 hives and was doing well. He had all the latest appliances for extracting the honey. After he had been at it a few years, a disease got into the hives and killed every one. He was so disgusted, he sold his house and cleared out. I never saw him again.

Before that happened, I will just mention my experience in bee keeping. One morning in going to work, just outside our front gate was a big stump (and there was plenty of them about as Kent Street wasn't formed at the time and there were only 4 or 5 houses in it) with a swarm of bees hanging to it. I went inside to get a box (I remember it was a gin case) and a table cloth and knocked the whole swarm into the box and put the table cloth over it. I told Sarah to give an eye to it now and then. When I came home at night, they were still there and making themselves at home, so I fixed up a stand and when it got dark, I brought the box in and turned it upside down on the stand, after cutting a small opening on the edge and trusted to luck.

Anderson
Mr Meikle

Mr Whitt
Geo. Meredith

Mr Webb

Kent St

bees

In the morning they were all as busy as bees and were quite at home, but it doesn't always do to trust to luck or chance. I knew a man in Richmond who wanted a shave badly and he wanted a pot just as bad and he only had sixpence. He couldn't decide what to have, so he left it to chance and tossed for it - heads a pot, tails a shave. It came down and rolled down a grating. So he got neither. But to go back to the bees.

About nine months later I asked Mrs. Britton our next door neighbour who was a farmers daughter, if she knew anything about robbing bees. She said they used to turn the box upside down when it was dark and have another box the same size out on top of it and then knock the box with the bees in it and they would crawl out of their hive up into the empty box. So I sat down and started to tap with the stick. After about twenty minutes, I lifted the top box a little to have a look and there were about three crawling up. I put the box back and got another stick and gave it a go with both hands for nearly half an hour. I then had another look and there wasn't even a dozen moved up altogether. So I said to Sarah who was holding the candle that this style of robbing bees was a failure. I told her I was going to do the same as is done in the bush when robbing a hive in a tree, that is dig it out with a knife and a spoon. So I got a big dish and a carving knife and sent Sarah inside so she wouldn't get stung, put the candle stick on a chair (good job it was a calm night) and took the top box off. I ran the knife round the edge and scooped up comb and bees and honey which I put in the tub and got plenty of bites in the process. Every time I was stung I put up a hand to brush the bees off and when I got it all out, the box and myself were covered with bees and honey. I was a mess, honey and bees in my hair and whiskers. The stinging part of it didn't hurt much more than a mosquito bite.

Mrs Britton

Anyhow I got the hive back into position and took the tub into the shed. In the morning all the bees in the tub that were able to fly, went back to the hive and before night they were busy working again. Robbing bees ain't what it's cracked up to be. It took me 2 or 3 hours in a hot bath to get anyway clean. The next day Sarah put on a veil and a pair of socks on her hands and strained and bottled the honey and threw the refuse down the yard. She never got a sting. When it was all over she reckoned she had between 40 and 50 pounds of honey. There must have been nearly 100 pounds in that hive for more than half of it was wasted. A few weeks later I sold the hive to Jacobs the policeman for 10 bob and glad to get rid of it. The wife and I decided that the next time we wanted honey, we would buy it by the pound. Jacobs was well satisfied with his purchase as the next year it swarmed twice and he saved them both.

sold hive to

I think it was the summer of 1890 or 1891 that the bush fires were raging around Warragul, Neerim, Jindivick and Buln Buln also known as Brandy Creek. A lot of people were out fighting the fires besides the brigade. We had to concentrate on the homesteads and fencing. Nearly all the cockys homes were either bark or packing roofs and a spark would lob on it and in a few minutes it was all over. The water had to be carried in buckets from the water hole sometimes 100 yards away from the house. One man would sit on the ridge of the house with a bucket of water and a pannikin and as soon as a spark lobbed on the roof, a little spiral of smoke would rise and then we would douse it with a pannikin of water before it got a hold. As soon as the bucket was empty another one would be passed up and so on. Other men were on different parts of the roof doing likewise. In that way we saved a lot of houses.

bush fire

Freddy Fowler, our Captain, was doing a lot of galloping from place to place gathering a few men here and there to go to another place that was in danger. Of course the water system didn't apply to the fencing; that had to be fought with beaters, but if a homestead was in danger anywhere we just had to let the fencing rip. A good job there wasn't much undergrowth. The bracken ferns were the worst and the timber wasn't very thick, but had been rung years before and was mostly dead.

When the north wind was raging, sparks would go from the tree tops for hundreds of yards before dropping and wherever they dropped on dry grass or ferns, it would go again like a game of leap frog only on a much larger scale. After three weeks of fire fighting I had to give it up as I was nearly blind with the smoke and it was 3 or 4 weeks after, before my eyes were right again. By that time all danger was over as there had been a change of wind with some rain.

It was soon after that that Fred Preston who had built the Shire Hall came to see me about a job in Drouin, he was architect for and supplying the bricks for. A publican named Dawes was building five two storied shops backing up to the railway and fronting the main street and he wanted a price. He already had a price from Joe Lunt, so I saw Joe and we agreed to join forces again and we got the job.

There were no trains suitable, so we walked the five miles night and morning while that job and other small ones lasted. After that, as there wasn't much doing, Joe got a selection at Jindivick and gave up bricklaying for farming. About three years later he sold out and went to Western Australia. On the first job he got there, he fell off the scaffold and broke his neck. I never heard of the family after that.

In 1892 Sarah had another daughter, who we named Teresa and nine months later she died with marasmus. It was that year I had word from the old country that my father had died. The only member of our family in England at the time was my sister Nellie who was married and lived at Brighton and my brother Charley who was in the Army.

It was soon after that my brother Sam sent for mother to go to him in Canada and, as I said before, that was the first time my mother was in a train when she went to London to board the ship for America. Poor mother, she had a hard life and I am glad to know that Sam made her life happy and easier to the end.

I think that was the year the land boom broke and all the Banks closed and you could not buy a job. All I could get was an occasional chimney or underground tank for the cockies for a radius of 20 miles around Warragul and, as money was scarce, the work had to be done very cheap. Anyhow, I managed to rub along until a village settlement was started at Jindivick. A reverend gentleman named Tucker started it to help those that were next door to starving in Melbourne. A farmer named Hanson at Jindivick gave 200 acres for the settlement nearly all stoney ridges and would not feed a goat. The settlers were nearly all in the building trade.

As soon as they got huts up, their families were brought from Melbourne. The church people and other charitable ones went round the district and collected food and clothes. If there was any work to be found, the members did it and the money went into the community pool. Anyone needing any brickwash carpentry or plastering to be done, it was given to members in the settlement. Consequently I never got a look in. This settlement was going to be self supporting in time, but how on earth they were to grow crops on that land, I don't know.

The place was known as the Tucker Village Settlement. There was a committee formed in Melbourne to find the most deserving cases to be sent up, but the beauty of the scheme was the fact they appointed a manager on a salary to show the settlers how to build huts and grow things and this manager was a "plasterer". So I never got another job at the trade while I lived in Warragul.

One thing I forgot to mention that happened about 12 months before the boom burst. It was New Years Eve and arrangements were made with the Fire Brigade Band to march round the township playing the Old Year out and the New Year in. We did so and finished up in front of Danny Lyons' Club Hotel. Nearly all the citizens followed us, also Sergeant Hillard and a couple of policemen.

Fred Preston

Joe Lunt

Teresa
d 9m
Henry G
Nellie
Charley
Sam/B

Rev. Tucker
farmer

Hillard

As it was after hours, Danny asked the sergeant if he could give the bandsmen some refreshments. He gave permission and saw to it that only bandsmen went in. We got into the billiards room and a fine supper was laid out on the billiards table and plenty to eat and drink. Amongst the drinks were a few bottles of Champagne. Our Captain, Teddy Fowler who was a cornet player passed round the Champagne. We all had about three helpings. I had never tasted it before and thought it was just like lemonade. Then we had some whiskey and we did full justice to the sandwiches till the tucker was all gone and only some beer left.

Champagne
Capt Te

I might say here that was the only time in my 78 years that I was the worse for drink. Not a very creditable thing to say, but I had to say it as it was part of my recollections and it doesn't seem so very awful now as it happened about 48 years ago. However, we got outside eventually and the crows and police were still waiting and, as all the bandsmen were tarred with the same brush, one couldn't laugh at another. It was only the crowd that laughed and Sergeant Hillard remarked that Danny had made a good job of it and bandmaster White said "For he's a jolly good fellow boys" and as he was playing the clarinet and had difficulty to find his mouth and some of us were sitting down on the footpath and others trying to hold one another up, the "For he's a jolly good fellow" piece was a dead failure (so I was told later) but we had a great ovation from the crowd. Then I remembered no more.

slightly dr

Sgt Hillard
Bandmaster

Between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning, I woke with a head in amongst a lot of Bathurst Burr in an unfenced paddock behind Ebelling the bakers. Ultimately I found my way home and the wife had not gone to bed. So when she saw the state I was in, she gave me the finest bit of chin music I ever had either before or after. It took her about an hour to pull the Bathurst Burr out of my hair and whiskers and she never stopped talking once and never repeated herself twice. She wound up by asking where my instrument was, but I didn't know and didn't care. All I wanted was to lie down and hold my head and keep saying to myself "neve no more". I am glad to say after 48 years, I never did.

I am
Bathurst
Ebelling

However, about dinner time on New Years Day, Harry Redmond showed up with the instrument. He said he found it in a paddock and wanted to know if it was mine. I told him it was and thanked him and the rest of the day I felt about the size of threepence. This Harry Redmond had a horse and spring dray and carted goods from the station to the different shop keepers and firewood to whoever wanted it. I suppose I deserved it, but the wife must have run out of talk, as she never opened her mouth for the rest of the day and I didn't know which was the worst, talking a lot or saying nothing.

N.Y. day
Harry

I often said to myself "Damn the champagne", but the subject was dropped and it was only now and then I got a reminder. I reckoned I had put my foot in it properly, but I had to resign from the band as the sight of the instrument used to stir up memories.

Damn the

Another rather humorous affair happened about 12 months before the Champagne supper. There is no harm in mentioning it here. I was always trying to draw something with pen and ink or pencil. I was very fond of it all my life and whenever I had a little time to spare, was always ready to do a bit of drawing. About the time I finished the Shire Hall, there was a man 'I've forgotten his name) started a school of design in the Atherneun two nights a week and only 10/- a quarter, so I thought I would join and get some tuition and see if I was any good.

Art Class

After 2 or 3 quarters, the school went bung for the want of pupils. Well after that, one Sunday morning I went up to the front room and drew a man on horseback playing polo.

About dinner time I had finished and took it out to the kitchen and showed it to the wife. She asked me where I got it and I told her I had done it up in the front room, I'd been at it all morning. She said it was fine and it was worth framing. I was beginning to get bigger round the chest while she was praising it, so I told her casual like, that "yes, I thought I'd make a frame for it" and then she said "It's a horse ain't it". I said "Yes, I forgot to write it down". So I wrote under it "This is a horse". "Now", I said, "no one will be worrying about what it is".

She commented that all the big pictures in the Art Gallery had it printed underneath what it was. I said "Yes, but I don't think I'll frame it after all, you can light the fire with it in the morning". I wasn't near as big around the chest as I had been and I never thought I could draw after that. It was too much like Mark Twain's drawing of a house. Underneath he wrote "This is a house". Oh well, it's good for us I suppose to get the conceit taken out of us.

Soon after the Tucker settlement at Jindivick was established, a party of six townspeople including Teddy Fowler and his father of the Refreshment Rooms for the Railways, Harris the tailor, Kennedy the publican, Jimmy Biram and Iliffe the chemist formed a syndicate to prospect a likely place on the Warrego River at South Neerim and Bob Kent and I were engaged to do the prospecting at one pound a week and rations plus a one eighth share in the Company.

After a week or two at work, we located a large reef at the butcrop on the side of a steep hill and about 50 feet above the level of the river. We estimated the reef would be 80 feet thick. It was a lovely soft white quartz, just the sort of stone that would be called gold bearing in Gympie. Our tent and tools and tucker had to be taken from Neerim station on a pack horse as it was impossible for a dray as the country was too rough. We wrote the Company giving particulars and asked them to send us a dolly to test the stone. They did better than that, for three of them came up bringing the dolly with them.

They were very much taken up with the prospect and after a lot of talk about putting up a mill, as there was enough power in the swiftly running river to drive a 100 head battery and they reckoned 4 or 5 dwts to the ton would pay dividends as there was such an immense body of stone and could be quarried instead of mined. Also the crushing could be done so cheaply with the water wheel. Fowler said he was delighted with the show and was sorry he didn't fetch a bottle of whiskey to celebrate. If he had done so, I might have had a different story to tell.

Before we came up we had made arrangements for them to pay our pound a week to our wives as money was no use to us away in the bush. Before they left they decided to drive a tunnel along the foot wall side of the reef till we got a higher back. As the hill rose about one in one, we would soon get deeper from the surface by driving the tunnel in level. So we went into it with all our might and every day we would break into the reef and get a little stone out. After tea we would spend 2 or 3 hours dollying it and panning it off. The first week we didn't get a colour. Then we struck a few colours. That put great heart into us as the ground we were driving in was an easy sort of reef.

We were making fair progress, 4 or 5 feet a day. When the three members left us, we told them to send up a paddy barrow and hammers and gads as we only had picks and shovels and to see the man at South Neerim to pack them out to us. At that time South Neerim was the terminus of the railway. As there was not room in the face for two men to swing a pick, we took it in turns in the face while the other one wheeled out the dirt while he was resting. As the ground sloped away so quickly to the river, we had a good tip. Some of the syndicate came up every week.

Warrego
Prospect
Fowler
Harris
Kennedy
Biram
Iliffe
Gunter
Bob Kent

After about 4 weeks work we had driven in about 80 or 90 feet and only drove it large enough to wheel the barrow, so we wouldn't have too much ground to shift. We cut several leaders and got the colour in all of them. As we did not know whether the colours were in the stone or the casing, we kept it separate and found it was in the casing. The driving was getting slower and slower as the ground was becoming harder, till it got so hard that our tools would not let us get more than nine inches or a foot a shift. So the only thing to be done was to get hammers and drills and dynamite and that meant a forge to sharpen the drills, as the way we sharpened our picks by heating them in a fire and beating them out on a rock was too primitive for drills.

As things were going from bad to worse in town, no business being done, only on credit and very little money about, the syndicate decided they could not go to the extra expense of providing the shooting gear and proposed leaving it until things brightened up a bit. We were notified about it and told to get our gear packed to the railway and brought to town where it was stowed in Fowler's place till they were ready to carry on again which, I might say, was not in my time. Whether it was ever done, I doubt as some of the syndicate went bankrupt. Jimmy Biram was one whose successor was a firm named O'Neill who is still carrying on the business to this day 45 years after.

As we were paying 10/- a week rent and only a pound coming in, something had to be done and I didn't know what, as there wasn't a thing doing in Warragul. Bob Kent and I decided to foot it over to Koorumburra to see if we could get a start in the coal mines. We put up a bit of tucker and left one morning about six and went via Poowong and McDonalds track about 30 miles and got to the outskirts in the evening, too late to look for work that day and no money to put up in a boarding house. So we lit a fire and laid down beside it, after a bit to eat and a drink of water. We got a little sleep but woke up with the cold and the fire nearly out. We got some more wood and dozed again and kept that up all night.

Koorumb
via Poow
McDona

We spent the next day, after making a billy of tea, looking for work and found it was as bad as Warragul. We spent that night the same as the previous one. We bought a loaf of bread (we had tea and sugar) but no money for luxuries. The only difference to my first years in Queensland were, then I only had myself to think about, but now I had a wife and three children. It made me do a bit of thinking.

We started for home and met a farmer who when he heard we were going to Warragul, advised us to take another road as it was seven or eight miles shorter. Foolishly we took his advice and got bushed and ultimately arrived home about 8 pm. We must have walked over forty miles. The track we took going via Poowong was only thirty miles.

A man named Stead had some vacant land on the south side of the swamp near where the hospital was afterwards built and having some money that the banks hadn't closed on, decided to build six cottages. As labour and materials were very cheap, he called tenders for the carpenters and bricklaying work, labour only as he was providing all the material. The tradesmen at the Jindivick Settlement got the work as it was not costing them anything to live, being fed and clothed by the charitable people in the district and no rent to pay. They could do the work at half the price the local people could do it for.

Stead

If anyone wanted work done, they always called tenders for it. As there were five or six carpenters in the town and I was the only bricklayer, we would all tender for it, but it was only a waste of time as the settlement always got it. On one occasion a man working at the butter factory wanted a skillion roof put up and some other repairs to his house at the top end of Queen Street opposite the Catholic Church and called tenders for it through the local paper. One carpenter named Maurice Quinlan was determined to get it. So he wrote out his tender as follows.

Maurice

I the undersigned agree to do the work according to the plans and specifications for half a crown less than anyone else and he got the job, but only made two shillings a day at it. Well, that's the way things were at that time.

I know, I had to take on wood cutting. Harry Redmond the carter started to send fire wood down to Melbourne. He employed three or four cutters and I was one of them. We were paid 1/9 a ton at the stump for 2 feet billet wood. I wasn't a dunce with the axe, but I had to work hard for ten hours a day to cut two ton. That was 3/6 a day to keep a family on. Of course it was impossible to pay rent out of that, but I had to stick it as there was nothing else. I cut out a paddock at Bravington and then got into a paddock of Gibsons at South Warragul.

Harry stipulated where we had to cut as he wanted as short a haulage as possible. Consequently the places he picked had been culled over and over again. Had we been allowed to go a bit further out, we could have got into virgin country where we could cut half as much again, but I couldn't protest. The employers had the whip hand all right and used it too. All those sort of things didn't tend to make labour love capital.

Before the boom burst, Bill Miller of the firm of Miller Bros. bought a 20 acre orchard of Johnathan apples just below the cemetery on the Brandy Creek Road. They had a carpenter working for them on Kenneys Orient Pub, when things got very bad, this carpenter, Charlie Givvons had legacy left him by an aunt in England of two thousand pounds. So he bought the orchard off Bill Miller and thought he could make a living out of it. Well, when the fruit was ripe he picked 20 cases of the best he had and carted them to the railway and consigned them to an agent in Melbourne. A week or so later he got a bill for tenpence, as the proceeds from the sale of the apples didn't pay the freight and commission by tenpence. Needless to say Charlie never sent it. Anyone could go and get a sugar bag full for sixpence. I couldn't for we couldn't afford fruit cheap as it was.

There was a man named Guest, I believe he had a biscuit factory in Melbourne. He had an apple orchard about two miles out in South Warragul and it was let to a tenant who could not pay the rent and had to get out when the bad times came. As he could not get a tenant, he put a caretaker in. One Sunday morning, Ted Pettit and I went for a walk past this orchard and saw the caretaker leaning over the gate. As the ground was covered with apples, I asked him if I could have a few to take home to the children. He said No he wanted them for the pigs. As that was 47 years ago, I don't mind saying now that we went there that night with bags and took as many as we could carry and they were not windfalls either.

Those people who had money and wanted any work done were always ready to take advantage of peoples necessities. I reckon they always did and always will.

It was soon after our baby's death that Sarah took bad. I called in Dr. Wickens who said she had dyptheria and to isolate the children. Nellie was 10, Edie 7 and Willie between 2 and 3. I couldn't get a woman to come near the house as they dreaded dyptheria and there was no hospital or bush nurses those times. Nellie was a real little mother and washed and dressed the other two little ones and helped me in lots of ways as it took me all my time nearly to attend to the mother.

I had instructions from the doctor to poultice Sarah's throat every half hour and between those times to blow sulphur down her throat and then run down the street to get medicine and food. It meant going hard night and day. After a week of it I was dozing as I walked about frightened to sit down for fear of going to sleep.

Harry Red

Gibsons / St W

Bill Miller
Brandy Creek
Charlie Givv

Guest / biscu

Ted Pettit

Sarah got s
Dr Wickens

poultice &

The doctor saw I was getting beat and it was through him I got a bit of relief. He saw Sergeant Hillard's wife and she came to help me and I slept the round of the clock and felt good after it.

Then I went and saw Mrs. Moule the midwife. She lived by herself in a little cottage near the state school and after a lot of pleading on my part, she agreed to take the children for a few weeks as she had no other engagements on hand. So now I was set. As Mrs. Hillard went home to sleep, I was on duty all night. When Mrs. Hillard came in the morning, she made me go to bed and sleep during the day.

Sarah gradually improved and we were told to cut out the poulticing which was a great relief. Dr. Wickers had reported the case to the Government Medical Officer, Dr. Trumpy and he came and made an inspection and told me that before the children came back, all bedding that Sarah used and her night clothes would have to be burnt and the house fumigated. The instructions I got was to have hot coals on a shovel and sprinkle sulphur on it one room at a time.

Sarah soon began to pick up and it was not long before the doctor said I could start on the fumigating business. I had no money to buy a new mattress, so made one out of chaff bags stuffed with hay. Mrs Hillard gave us some bed clothes and other things she begged off some neighbours. I used to go up and see the children twice a day and poor Nellie was a real little mother the way she looked after the others. Mrs. Moules gave her great praise.

I'll never forget the kindness of the Hillard family. They had one daughter a State School teacher and she and her father did their own housework while the mother was helping us. After a few weeks I got the children home and between Nellie and her mother we managed to rub along and I could go to the wood chopping again and do the washing and scrubbing at night time under Sarah's supervision.

As our wood was nearly all gone, I cut a load and Harry Redmond said he would cart it home for me if I cut him a ton. I did that so we were set for firewood. Then Iliffe the chemist started worrying me for some money. I owed him three or four pounds and told him I had no money and didn't know when I would have. So he agreed to allow me 8/- a day off my bill if I worked in his garden one day a week and that is how I paid his bill. But it also meant I could only cut wood five days a week instead of six and as I said before that I could only earn 3/6 a day, all that was coming into the house was 17/6 a week for a family of five and Sarah just getting better from a sickness had to have some little extras.

Then Ebeling the baker wanted some repairs to his oven. That took me four days and I charged him 10/- a day while I was doing it and thought that would give me a bit of help, but was squashed when he said I owed him two pounds and that would square us. The only way that job helped me was I could get more credit from him.

Then a house agent from when I had bought the house had a few repairs to be done at one of his houses. That was a copper to build and a colonial oven to be taken out and reset for which I received one pound, but had to give him a receipt for twenty five shillings. That is the way that agent stung the owner for five bob. I couldn't protest as my repayments on the house were in arrears and he told me not to worry as he and the seller thought it would be better for me to remain in it as I would look after it, for if they put me out, the place would go to rack and ruin. Different houses in the town that were empty had doors taken off and cupboards and fencing broken down and all sorts of destruction done. I knew several people who were living rent free just to look after the place.

The way things were, we simply couldn't pay any rent. The agent was lenient with me because I had paid fifty pounds deposit and kept my repayments up before the smash came. Then I owed a couple of pounds to K. Tatterson the butcher and both he and the doctor wanted me to work off their bills. I had to refuse and then there was no more credit. Things were beginning to look only middling and caused me to scratch my head a lot that it's a wonder I am not bald headed.

I got a bit of a lift the next week or two and this is how it was. The local Board of Advice for the State School was allowed ten pounds a year to do any little repairs that was wanted and I was given the job. That was repairing brick drains and the asphalt yard and the fencing and a few other little jobs in the school which took the whole of the ten pounds for that year. I didn't get it all of course as the material cost four pounds. All the same, it was a great help and it was through Jim Connors the secretary and a member of the Fire Brigade that I got it. He was the Registrar and also Secretary of the cemetery.

At that time they had no regular gravedigger. When there was a burial Connors would pick up a man wherever he could to dig the grave and fill it in after. The fee for the job was 10/- and it was through him I dug four or five graves at different times and thank goodness I got cash for it at once and didn't have to work it off a bill.

Then a little later I had a job to do some small repairs at the Police Station and Lockup. The sergeant was allowed five pounds a year for little repairs. Of course he had to give the receipt for the work done and explain to the Inspector of Works when he made his annual visit. There was a bit of common sense in the way the Education and Public Works Departments did their business. Quite different to the way the Railway Department did theirs.

This is their method. At the waiting room at Warragul station, the hobbs in the fireplace were falling out. The station master sent word to town that they needed repairs. As it was such a small job, he asked would he get a local man to do it. They said no as it would necessitate them sending up an Inspector to see it was done properly. But they would send one of their own bricklayers up to do it. As there were only two trains each way a day, it meant leaving Melbourne by the 7 am, reaching Warragul 60 miles away at 10.30 am. This bricklayer was sent by this train and as it was usual for a labourer to attend a bricklayer, of course one came with him although there was only a couple of buckets of mortar to mix. They had the job finished in an hour and then had to wait till the 3.30 mixed train left, reaching Melbourne at 8 pm.

As the men were paid from the start of the train till they arrived back, that meant 13 hours each for them being a full day and five hours overtime. As a bricklayer's wages were 1/3 an hour and the labourers 9d., that meant 26/- for an hours work which could have been done for 1/6 had a local man done it, or less than that if they got a man from the Tucker Settlement. That is one small instance of why the Railways don't pay. That happened while I was living there.

After the little job at the Police Station, I went back to the wood cutting. It was a good thing living was cheap, otherwise we would be half starved. Bread was five pence a four pound loaf, sugar twopence. That was before the sugar combines operations. A side of mutton was two shillings, butter sixpence and eggs the same. So a little money went a long way.

One day I got a letter from Harry Wridgway, the contractor I first went to Warragul for, telling me he had a big alteration job in Wattle Road, Hawthorne, including a lot of drainage work and asking me to go and do it if I was not working. The wages would be only 8/- a day owing to the slump and he would board me at his place in St. Johns Avenue Camberwell without pay. Would I do it. I rather think so. After swinging the axe for months at 3/6 a day.

Wattle Rd, Hawthorne
St Johns Av, Camberwell

The next problem was the fare. So I went and saw Joe Lunt at Jindivick and explained the position to him. I asked him to lend me a couple of pounds for a month. He gave it to me willingly, so I was set. I left 30/- with Sarah to carry on until I could send some as I only wanted my fare down. I didn't half like leaving them, but couldn't help myself. After a month or so Sarah was able to pay Joe his two pounds and get a few things for herself and the children which were badly needed and also reduce the debt we owed Mrs. Moules for looking after the children during Sarah's illness. She charged us one pound a week for the three children and she had them four or five weeks. It began to look as if we would soon see that silver lining we read about.

I was with Harry for ten weeks. At that time the railway people started to build the Hawthorn to Kew line. That meant widening the bridges at Power Street and Elgin Street and extra platform walls at Hawthorn Station. I think the contractor's name was Slocum or some thing like that. I have forgotten. Anyway, the last day I was with Harry, I got off for an hour to go and see this Slocum fellow as he had just started the platform walls. I asked his foreman for a job and he said to start on the Monday. This was Wednesday. I thought my luck had turned considering there were hundreds of bricklayers idle in Melbourne and for me to go straight away and get it.

Railways built
Power St Br
Elgin St
Contractor

Well, it was up to me to have a bit of luck as I sure had a rough spin the past year or two. When I told Wridgway, he said I could stay with him if I liked and arrange with Mrs. Wridgway about the board money. As it was a long way to walk from St. Johns Avenue Camberwell to the Hawthorn Station, I thought I would get a place a bit nearer. So the next day I went and saw Mrs. Nesbitt in Malmsbury Street Auburn. It was her daughter Lizzie who looked after Sarah when she and the children had the measles. While I was living in Auburn, she said she would be glad to have me for 15/- a week.

So I went and squared up with Wridgway and took my dunnage and tools to the Nesbitts and got the afternoon train to Warragul. I spent a couple of days with the family and glad to find them all right. I put in Friday getting a good supply of firewood and had to leave them to catch the afternoon train on Saturday ready to start work on Monday as there were no trains on Sunday. So I got going again and after a weeks work found they were only paying 7/- a day. That meant I could only send 25/- a week home if there was no lost time through bad weather. Anyhowm it was better than wood cutting although it was pretty miserable for all of us, me wondering how they were faring at home and them the same about me.

I knew Nellie was a great help to her mother and able to go down the street to do the messages or to look after the little ones while the mother went to the post office to get the money I sent while I was with the Nesbitts. I made enquiries about Bill Carter, my one time partner who had three thousand pounds by selling his property in the land boom and found his wife had died soon after. Her married sister, a Mrs. Hester was looking after the children while Bill started speculating building. And between that and the booze, in two years he had not a penny. What became of them after, I don't know.

After working at the Railway for about three months, I got a telegram from a Mrs. Britton our next door neighbour to say come home at once my wife was ill. This was on a Saturday evening and no passenger trains till Monday morning. I made enquiries at the Station and learnt that a milk train left at midnight but didn't carry ordinary passengers, but would allow me to go by it by paying first class fare. I got home at 4 am Sunday morning and found a Mrs. Whittaker in charge and learnt I had another daughter. We were not expecting that for another month. As I was finishing up at the Railway in a fortnights time, I was reckoning on being home for the event, but somehow we miscalculated. But what was of most importance, I found that everything was O.K.

another da

As things were, it was impossible to work in Melbourne. So early in the week I went to town and collected my back pay and squared up with Mrs. Nesbitt, collected my gear and returned home the same day prepared to face the wood cutting again. During the time I was away, we managed to square up the doctor and butcher. I had already worked off the chemists bill and all we owed now was the baker and milkman and the repayments on the house. I was beginning to get a sort of don't care attitude and as I told Sarah, if we didn't pay them, the Lord would, so I sharpened the axe and saw Redmond who gave me a paddock to cut in South Warragul on the road to Bloomfield. The paddock was owned by a pig breeder named Tom O'Connor who like all the other cockies about, were glad to get his land cleared. After a month at it I got a bakers oven to build for Joe Winters in Drouin, then an underground tank for a cockie named Burgess at South Drouin, but managed to foot it home every night. It meant a long hard day, but it was a lot better than wood chopping.

It was about that time the sewerage scheme was started in Melbourne or rather at the outfall Werribee and I think that saved Victoria from bankruptcy.

When our baby Lottie was six months old, I got a letter from my brother Fred in Melbourne saying he was working for his old firm Garnsworthy and Smith who had the contract for the pumping station section at Spotswood. He had a hard time of it too, getting a job labouring now and again, but now he had a twelve months job ahead of him at his trade and according to him everything in the garden was lovely.

Lottie 6m

As there was a lot of brickwork and concreting to be done, Fred spoke to Garnsworthy about me and he said to fetch me down and I could have a job labouring until the brickwork was ready. This was in September 1894. On getting this news, I started to make arrangements to go. Neither of us liked the idea of parting, but something had to be done as 3/6 a day was semi starvation for six of us. I said I would go and see what it was like and if it looked like a long job, we would all leave Warragul for good and hope we would never see it again.

Sep 1894

So off I went and saw Garnsworthy who said if I was as good a man as my brother I'd do him. He said there would be over a years work and the brickwork would be ready in a month, when he proposed to give me 8/- a day. In the meantime, I could knock about at labouring for 6/- a day and to start in the morning.

I told Fred who was then living at Camberwell with his second wife's mother and said I could board with him until I got Sarah down. As I printed out after paying board and train fares, I wouldn't be able to send much money home out of six bob a day. There was a hut on the site and if I could get the lend of that, I would bach. Fred asked Garnsworthy if I could have it and he agreed. So I soon rigged up a bunk and bought a billy and frying pan.

There were plenty of empty kerosene tins about and I soon made myself comparatively comfortable as I had been used to roughing it in Neerim and Queensland. I had no fire to cook with, so I boiled the billy and fried a bit of meat on Fred's forge which was close by.

After a month I got going with the brickwork and a few days later a couple more brickeys started, one named Jack Beech with whom I became very friendly. As he was a married man with a family and had seen hard times, we decided to bach together so as he could save train fares. We worked together for years after that on different jobs. The hut was 10 x 12 so there was plenty of room for another bunk.

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This sewerage tunnel we worked in was nine feet internal diameter and situated on the Yarra bank seventy feet below high water mark. After a couple of weeks, there was enough ground excavated to put on extra shifts of bricklayers. There were two bricklayers in a shift. At the time there were three other brickies beside myself. Garnsworthy told us if we liked we could work twelve hour shifts, instead of him putting on more brickies to work three eight hour shifts as four could work two 12 hour shifts. As we were all getting a bob an hour, we all jumped at the chance of 84 hours a week including Sunday.

At a bob an hour, it would give us all a chance of paying off our arrears. As it was very wet underground, five minutes after you went below you were wet through and the only way you could dry your clothes was to throw them on one of the steam boilers. There were always four or five with steam up the whole week.

When our twelve hours off were due, we spent seven or eight sleeping and the other four in drying our clothes or cooking something to get ready for the next shift. It was hard going all the time, Sundays the same as any other day. But we were quite ready and willing to put up with any hardship or inconvenience just to handle that four guineas a week, after the gruelling time we had.

As the prospect of plenty of work ahead seemed assured, I decided it was time I got my family down from Warragul, when we could have a little home comforts. So I wrote to Sarah to get Harry Redmond to help her pack her things and consigned them to Yarraville Station. They were to follow them down and I would meet them at Princess Bridge Station, the terminus of the Gippsland lines at that time.

My next shift off, I rented a house at Yarraville in Blackwood Street, a 5 roomed house for 4/6 a week. I told Sarah in my letter to her to give the keys of our house to Charley Round, the agent I bought it off, and to tell him I surrendered it. I don't think I owed him anything although I had made no payments for 2 years, the \$50 deposit I had paid about squared us. I couldn't go up to superintend the removal myself. Had I done so I would have lost my job.

I made arrangements with Fred for my family to stay with him until I got the furniture in the house. That was only a matter of a couple of days and what a treat it was. To be all together again, and to have my food prepared and my wet clothes dried. It was the end of roughing it in that hut. As we were making good money, Jack Beech gave up batching too, as he could now afford to pay fares to where his family were living.

This was in 1894. The pumping station section I was working on was a tunnel about 200 yards long with 12 pumping wells, 6 on each side of the sewer and 12 feet below, so that all the sewage could flow along the tunnel and empty into the wells where the pumps lifted it up high enough to flow by gravitation out to the Werribee sewage farm.

On the north end of our section McCulloch and Duncan had the contract to join on to us and cross Stony Creek into Yarraville. Then a man named Wady had the next section to take towards Footscray, then Tommy Cochrane had the next section across the salt water river on to the swamp road.

Later other contractors had sections to all parts of the north side of the Yarra. On the south end of our

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section a contractor named Robb had joined on to us to cross under the Yarra.

I might explain, the contractors on each end of ours had to leave a bulkhead of ground between us until their section was completed, so that in case the river broke in on them, we would be safe. A very wise thing as it turned out.

Robb's section under the river had to be driven under compressed air, as the roof of the tunnel was very near the river bed. The next year at Easter time, I think it was 1895, this tunnel was nearing the centre of the river. One night a heavily laden ship came up the Yarra and ploughed a furrow in the bed of the river. It let the water into the tunnel and drowned 6 miners and a Mr Buchanan, the contractors engineer who was below at the time. It took some considerable time to get the men out, as divers had to be employed to fill the hole in the river bed with concrete before the water could be pumped out and the men reached. They were all got out on Good Friday morning and laid out in a row in a big shed. I think they were all married men with families who lived in the district. Thousands of people came and walked in single file by the bodies through the shed.

That was before the Compensation Act was in force. They were only receiving 7/- a day which barely kept them, nothing for carrying their lives in their hands every day. As most underground work is dangerous, its a burning shame that they are kept down to the lowest it is possible to give them. In all my experience I never knew of one voluntary offer of better conditions. Everything the worker gets has to be fought for. It doesn't seem to matter what hardships the worker has to put up with, all that matters is dividends and profits. Those capitalists don't risk their lives every day. I think its high time there was a more equal distribution of wealth, which could not be produced without labour.

Well, I feel a little better now that is off my chest. Well, things were going along all right. We were able to clear off any debts we had in Warragul, and to get on our feet again.

There was about 25 sub-inspectors and one head one named Bill Taylor. There were three 8-hour shifts of sub inspectors, 8 in each shift. One couldn't lay a brick without an inspector watching to see one didn't lay it the wrong way up. It was a common saying when two men met, instead of saying "Good-day" it was "Frogs up".

This Bill Taylor, commonly called the professor (when he couldn't hear), was an old Water Works man. The Board of Works took over from the Government, with several others, when they took over Melbourne's water supply. The same Bill was very strict. Everything had to be done according to cocker. Garnsworthy and Smith, the contractors, always had a supply of whiskey in their office, in fact most contractors did where inspectors were employed. It was a paying proposition in most cases, not because they were fond of inspectors, but to get concessions.

Although the professor, who was a Scotsman, was very fond of whiskey and often had as much as he could carry, they could never get any concessions out of him. He couldn't be bribed, no matter how much of Garnsworthy's whiskey he had. If one of his subs was seen coming out of Garnsworthy's office he got the Roit Act read over him.

In the end, I suppose the contractors thought it was a waste of good whiskey and must have stopped the supply

as the professor developed a vile temper. Nothing was ever right and he and Garnsworthy had a row every time they met because he got into the habit of condemning most of the material. As there was a Board's resident engineer named Dawson, he was very often appealed to to settle differences.

I heard that Bill complained to the Board about the unfairness of us bricklayers working 12 hours a day while hundreds were unemployed. This was only fair, but in those times it was every man for himself. However the Board decided that no one should work more than 8 hours a day on any of their contracts. Dawson the engineer was advised about it. He passed it on to the professor, who gladly passed it on to the contractors, and they had to pass it on to us. It was all the same to them, they only did it to give us a leg up. From then on we were on 8 hour shifts and it gave 3 or 4 more brickys a job.

After the accident to the river tunnel, Robb threw up the contract and the Board of Works confiscated all his plant and refused to accept his tender for any of their future contracts. They called tenders for the completion of the job and an engineer named Shaw, commonly called Humpy on account of him being a hunch-back, but he was a clever engineer who then had a sewer contract in Kerford Road Albert Park. He got the job and eventually completed it.

He, and his engineer named Dunlop and his foreman bricklayer named Stewart, nicknamed the Shag, were a fine trio. The Shag was the biggest bully I ever met and the other two considered workers were dirt. The slaves on the sugar plantations in America couldn't be treated worse than the men they employed. However they are all dead now, and can't do any more harm, and it never did them any good.

On the south side of the river Jimmy Moore of the South Melbourne Timber Yard had the contract