

KEEBLE

This is a continuation of Mr. ~~Kebralls~~ tape No. 14 Grandview Grove, Northcote on the 29th June, 1982.

You are a house electrician. When did you take that on?

I took it on in about 1946 I think. After I came out of the RAF. Frank Jones I called him my second father because my father had gone on and one thing and another and Frank said he said listen mate he said no worries and he taught me

and just previous to me going there they used to get electricians there and if you knew anything about electricians they give you a licence you know what I mean but anyway I went down to Max and I was there for 5 years. I made a success of losing 2 bag aprons and Frank Jones from electrical department and Tarratt he was the bosses name and he said oh well you look like a hale strong, healthy boy so come down with us as labourer so I had 5 years as Max Robins electrical labourer. And of course it didn't count for anything but I left Max then and I went to the city and I went on electric lifts trying to learn something more you know and of course I picked up a bit of knowledge naturally through being down there as electrician and factory knowledge one thing and another generators and all that sort of thing. When I first went there it was just steam generators that sort of business. The time marched on the three phase came in and we only had single phase Used to generate your third phase up on McRobinsons building down there say the box factory when that was built but there we put a master motor up on the first floor and what they call a, far as I know a Farazana Its a name, electrical and it was a split phase and we phase 400 we put a rope around the pulley of this motor on the stairs and two of us would give a wheeeee and once it got to the the generators third shot the switch in boom and away you had your three phase.

Tell me a little bit about some of the work you did round in Northcote as an Electrician.

I'll tell you a funny incident, you said any instance this funny incident because it happens to all of us. It was, I was like living here too, I was living here at the time in Centre Court and a chap rang up, an Italian rang up one Saturday and he said he was in trouble. I said whats the trouble He said oh, can you help me out he said, he said we got no electricity he said and he had 3 kiddies and he said, he said he had no light, and he

it couldn't have been that long ago because he said we have no T.V. and I thought of the kids for T.V. Well anyway I said yes whereabouts is it. He said up in Station Street, not Station Street, St. Georges Road. It was about 2 houses this side of the S.T.C. Factory on the corner or Shaftesbury Parade you know that used to be a milk and about 2 houses this side double fronted brick place and a big hole in the lawn there and I said whats the trouble. He said Oh, he said I thought it was fire, they could see something reflecting off the grass, the lawn and he said it seems to be smoke. I said it couldn't have been smoke. No we rang up Gas Company, he said No not smoke. He said electrical. So anyway I rang the council, the Northcote Council, there is a man on standby at the time and I said to him about it. He said Jesus, God what do you think it would be. Oh, look I'm not a learner but I think it would be a bad earth up there. So anyway we met up there and I went through it. You could get under the house about 3 foot at the front, 3foot 6 at the front and I looked and the first thing you follow an earth. Well in those early years you were allowed to run an earth wire well, actually there was nothing to say you couldn't run the earth wire because you had to run your earth wire direct to earth so all right, so thats when we had the old hanker type fuses or the bar fuse switchboard and so anyway I presumed then that they had run the earth wire out to the tap, which was just on the side of the lawn out front. And I looked to find a bit of gutter and there was no earth for a start and Jeff was going under was all rusted off, there was no wire there and somebody had put some type of wire in fact it wasn't electrical wire, it might have been a bit of telephone wire, struck it in the ground. So I said oh, out. So he said to me, the guy, the electrician up there, he said to me he said Listen mate I can't leave it as it is. Couldn't tell you his name but still as usual the Council up there they have always been promoted, you know on tap, you know good crowd, so anyways I said to him, no thats rights, safe as Jim, what will we do. Look I said, if I can get a couple of power plugs going. I touched the fridge like that poooooo like that, so I said to the bloke, I did the test on him, its always been the policy of course. I've had my kicks off electricity don't you worry. A lot has been through my own neglect, you know. I mean the most obvious thing you don't think of but nevertheless that was one of the things there but the. As I say there is hardly a place in Northcote, in fact I was in business for from when I first started till about 46/7 I started, yes thats right, I was round there for a while and we came here in about 48 so it would be about 46/7 and I never advertised for a job. I never advertised for a job. As a matter of fact I smile to myself because a chap was down McRobinsons down there, worked down there and he worked in the bean department and he lived down here opposite the Board of Works down here, he lived in a house there and he was only a young fellow, he must have been, he must be an old

fellow now because he rings up about 4 or 5 years, no it wouldn't be that long  
3 years ago God Blimey Joe yes its me. God, I thought you were dead long  
ago. I said yes thanks so much No while there is life there is hope. So  
he said, I said who is this anyway. He said don't tell me you've forgotten  
me. Don't you remember our old he said down there, he said in the  
bean department at McRobinsons, God your going back now man. Yes whats your  
trouble. He said look he said remember you put a two-way switch in for me  
he said. He was the manager down on the 9th. Night Manager down there.  
He said why don't you advertise in the I said what for.

No worries pal and I think it was 3 pound a  
month or something and it went on and they sent their bill about 10 or 12  
pound this crowd and I said what for. I said I paid you 3 pounds per month  
yes but you never told us when to take it off. But nevertheless I got 2  
jobs while the damn thing was going on there.

Now before we were talking about the Thornbury picture theatre. They used  
to have an orchestra there.

Oh down in the pit.

Every night.

Oh yes there was only, there was a piano, I think there was a piano, a  
couple of violins and there might have been some other, what do they call these deep  
blooming things or something like that, and right and they go throwing from  
to tail and the piano would go plonk to get the tune then the lights  
would go down would go out, just out like that. Hurrah, there would be a  
scream and away they would go.

This was the silent film was it?

Yes.

So they had more than just the piano. I know they used to play the piano  
in the silent films but did they have the violins and a cello or something  
like that.

Yes. Thats right. Oh, Yes. They would all get the notes from the piano  
or vice versa. And Tom Micks would come through with rainbow trout. Or  
Keystone Comedies because  
used to call me Keystone and you would see them go like this. The writting

would be there on the bottom and there are looking at everybody like this you know Ohhhh you would hear a groan. Someone would say "Hope they don't get him" That was the Thornbury theatre and in later years it was a dance hall but nevertheless and opposite there there is Lang Terrys just before you got to Pender Street which comes through to High Street there was Lang Terrys. They were the, the wine, the wine saloon, and on the corner of Pender Street was Tadish's had that garage first, that tin garage. Tadish's had it and then the Junior boys bought it off them later, and then there was opposite there was only a couple of shops there mostly paddocks there but on the side on the same side there is, to Collins Street on the rise there there were three houses there but you had to walk up the steps. They have taken that out in later years. In between the time that I was in the bush and one thing another that was in those days and in fact a French woman lived in one house there. I knew her husband. But then it would come down a bit further and more paddocks practically all paddocks. Place of note. This is right say then we would come down there of course the cable tram would start up about 12 o'clock and run up till about 1.00 and of course in the meantime we would drop a, one of these big tins, if we didn't get a kerosene tin we would get one of these big golden syrup tins you know, treacle tins with the handle on the top with an A band down the side and away she would go.

What did you catch it on to the cable?

Yes, well you see the cables continuous came out and go straight down, down there and of course they just shunted back like to the terminus and start off again. Well all we did was drop the A band down, down the slot and where the grip used to go through, see and the grip was went down and just gripped on the cable see and when the cable when slap boom she just gripped and she say throw rop and I can never understand what they mean by throwing the rope but later years I find out . because you memorizing going hill, you throw the rope, if you didn't throw the rope, because once it never throw the rope we didn't know where we were going to go. If you forgot to throw the rope because you are going at the speed of the cable. What they used to do, they used to coast round the turn. You went round there with the cable running believe you me your likely to finish in the creek.

Was there opposite there there was paddocks and more paddocks there was only a house dotted here and there we got down there far away to Croxton Football Ground, The Northcote Football Ground of Northcote.

Did you ever belong to the Northcote Football Club, or do you know anything about it?

The Northcote Football Club actually in early years was the Rose of Northcote in the early years, very early years, but say when we were knocking around say it was the green and gold, you know, in fact when I was in Penders Grove we used to play football with the Penders Grove Prince of Wales, we would play football matches between Helen Street, Hotham Street, Preston, the Wales Street school and we used to play down here on the football ground. You know Northcote Football Ground. The goalposts were facing high street, naturally, and aim in a position now where the Tattsлото joint would be. The horse trotters just on the footpath of course was just along side the edge of it. The main gate is where the Northcote council sub-station is there in Kemp Street. They used to have a cinder track there earlier, they used to have a cinder track the same as they had down here when you would go down and sneak into the ponies down the Fitzroy race course which was down there in you know

St. Georges Road wasn't it.

Run from St. Georges Road, Shaftesbury Parade, which was opposite where say the STC were. Shaftesbury Parade run from there down to I wouldn't know the name if I was doing a house in the street. I don't know the street. But anyway Tannery Cleaners in the same street down the bottom end there at the time. That was the Football there, that was the race course, and they used to race on cinders there. down the top end of the gate or gates then they would just gate you. You walked in, you know one on either side there and the bookies are over on the left hand side. They had a stand over there and we never, we couldn't have enough, we would sneak in through the side through a loose See the tin along somewhere don't worry about that we would get in through there.

There wouldn't have been too many people on your young days that had motor cars then.

No. There were very few. As a matter of fact they were that few that we used as you said about how we used to fill in our time and later seen how we got down to the football grounds and stopped there for the moment. We used to say "Righto, odds or evens" There would be a motor car coming down the street. And we would bet on

Odds or evens. That wouldn't be very quick I suppose.

Oh, you have plenty of time. You had all the time in the world to get there if you know what I mean. I drove myself. I drove myself when I was 24. Grasshoppers Cheve. Only one spring and that was later years of course. But the, oh no the odds and evens

Were there lots of horses on the road? Horse Vehicles?

Well, there wasn't that many. You saw more up around say the junction up here was were they had the weighbridge. See the weighbridge at the hotel there in Dundas Street. The weighbridge there of course. You saw more there but you see other horses down but not on the road so much, you would see the milk carts and the bakers carts, McAlpines I think Bentons oh, but not horses, you know running wild. Dad, we lived up there, he had, he got a rubber tyre jinker, you know what I mean, he had a horse and that sort of thing like it used to run there in the paddock. He said to me one day, he said "That went for me" he said I said it did. He said down the back was a wild thing it was well bred pony mixture up or something yes so he picked up a 3 x 2 piece of 3 x 2s he built places in Thornbury and Northcote and hit it on the head see and knocked it out. He said "Go and get some water quick" I rush up, the taps half way down from the house because there is a long back there and came down and tipped it over the top of it and it got up again and went for him again. He got rid of it. Kurks ~~Bazarre~~ in Burke Street up on the hill there. That's one of the places you could get rid of them in those times. The horses you saw, a few horses of course down around the piggery down there and those places for pigs and as I say we used to go down there and get a sugar bag full to the top of pork bones. And they were pork bones. Many a time we used to bang these things on, in fact I made a sketch, I do a couple of sketches out there before my eyes went about 3 years ago, then I give it away of course, I had to, but we used to fill in our times there was cable trams, and odds and evens with the joints and then of course later we got on there a while they would come in, miniature golf came into the street, and the first pictures open air sort of pictures

Where do you remember the open air sort of picture theatres? Whereabouts were they?

Well, the first one I can ever remember was the first one I ever went into, actually. My mother used to take me, we would sit on the seats on the floor, there, where the Carter's Arms Hotel is on the corner of Seperation Street.

Seperation and High Streets?

Yes. The Carter's Arms. That originally, I can't remember what I noticed the name on but it was the Brick Carters Arms originally, see, but I think they cut it short to the Carters Arms.

And that's where the open air.....

Where that, the Carter's Arms takes up that space of, there was all peppercorn trees around there and the original hotel in the first was a tin place, it was pulled down, or burnt down and they used to have a little paddock at the back. Now in High Street, itself at the edge of where the Post Office takes up now, that would be where the tyre people are, you know the Mill, there is the tyres, they sell the tyres and there is the fish, well there was a gateway there, later it was Northcote identy two, it was a little wood yard in there, well that was where the first pictures, open air pictures was there.

That's the first one you can remember?

The only one I can remember was the first one. And what we did, the mother used to take us down there and I forget, half the time it used to be free, or sometimes you used to might have given him a penny or something like that for us to go in and sit on the seats. The chap at back, there would be silence there would be a big wide screen on the back fence which didn't go that far but still but, he was there and he would wind up this thing to see the pictures on the fence. And that was the first one to my knowledge .

Do you know of any other open air theatres in the district?

Yes. They had one, I'm not sure if it came before, or after. There was one on the Northcote Football Ground, there. That was after Northcote shifted from there and went down here, took the ground down over here, see.

Over where?

In Northcote Park, Northcote Park. They went from there. And we were always, as I say, the green and gold, because our colours up here was green with a great 4" sash over the shoulder. I don't know what the colours are, well they're still the same colours, where the sash is I don't know. That's we're brought up in see because we played Helen Street and as I say Ramsden Street and Hotham Street and all at their grounds like in fact Helen Street played down here at, on this park down here where the school is in St. Georges Road down there.

So when the open air picture theatre was at the Northcote Football Ground did you all go and sit on the ground there or what?

No, there was forms, there was forms there, put down there but I never went there that much because from there, being handier to us, and I don't know, it might have been that I went away, like I was in the bush again, but the Thornbury theatre on hot nights which are still there, the Thornbury theatre, they had an open air picture. That's the old Thornbury theatre. If you drive along behind that business college on the corner of Benjamin Street, I think it is Benjamin Street, there right against the terminus and I think that is, a business college there and there is the Thornbury theatre there, there and it's all taken up in shops now and that sort of thing and you look there, from the corner there, from the lane there, I've just walked there and there's stairs still coming out from the old theatre. They're still there.

And what was the open air part of that?

The open air part of that was, say about the width, wouldn't be, yes it might be almost the width of this house, a little bit more, could be a little bit more, because not everybody wanted to go outside there on a hot night.

So you could either sit inside or outside?

On hot nights you went outside and you saw it there.

You could see the same screen as the people who were inside the theatre could you?

Yes. The picture, they had a, probably a invertable box or something, I can't remember now, because it was, say not before my time, because I've sat there and watched them, but how they got the pictures to them I can't just varify. But that was an open air, definately that one there.

And that was the three, I could ever remember. The first one was the Lyric and that as I say was, I used to be, what's the name trees,

Peppercorns?

Peppercorn trees around there and they ran a little carnival there and that was paddocks. That was a paddock there and as a matter of fact on the corner of, what's that street there, the first one down, its Robbs Parade, Yes, corner of Robbs Parade there, on this side there was an undertakers, where the sheep the shearing sheds, they sheared you, they're still shearing you today. But that was there on the corner there and on the corner where the ANZ bank is now that was, just can't think of his name, Saddlers, there were saddles there. If you wanted horse collars or straps or anything like that you wanted to buy and the horse for cleaning and the sulky leathers and that sort of thing there was on the corner. A bit further up, the, if you leave the Football Ground and you come down, and boy I know so well, because one night there was Sid Rainbow, Don Mann and myself and on Sunday night we would go for a walk down the Chickamore, see we used to prop on the corner of Clarendon Street and High Street and this side was a news agents. And I've got an idea it was Harmans I'm not sure about it though, I've got an idea it was Harmans newsagents there. We used to stop there and one night, and of course this was later when I knocked around, I'd come back from the bush and hale and hearty as the saying is, we got into a blue up at the Thornbury theatre because there was a couple of us swearing in the seat in front of me, swearing, and I was with a girl friend, you know what I mean, which I went to school with, once and picked here up in later years, we were probably about 16 or 17, I think when I left the farm to come back to Melbourne and anyway, then the blue, come on I'll do you now, I said, and when they mob around me, I'll see you round, like that so there used to be a book, you would pick up the book you want in the corner there, opposite Raleigh Street, the seller used to sell meat in there, I don't know if they still sell it, that used to be the books there and you could pick up books there and just on the other side of Raleigh Street was the Chinaman's there. You used to have to come down, perhaps Sunday mornings or that, rush down for dad, to the Chinaman there, with a picket fence, just a little house, brown house, picket fence and we would go in there and get dads collars and front of his shirts or his shirts were ironed you know.

Oh, there was a Chinese laundry there, in the house?

Jimmy, I think it was Jimmy Wan or something. It was a funny name because No it wasn't Jimmy Wan because we used his picket fence a couple of times because one of these chaps who used to be with me, Sid Rainbow, he had a

cartlege which used to slip out of his leg and of course we didn't know what it was and oh we had to get it in we got his foot up, between the pickets and we pulled it, slipped the cartlege in again. See I remember the chows, or the Chinaman because and many a time passed going down to the dance, you would have these whatnots and then they would come down a bit lower there, oh, this paddock there so I said to Sid and Don I said "Hello, it could be a blue, might be a blue on" I said. We had better wait and see so we hung around for about half an hour, and nothing happened so we decided to move on, when we moved on they moved with us on the other side of the road. There was a few who walked behind us. When we got to the hotel, I said "Now, listen, we had better let them get us, not on the paddock, right so when you left the hotel you walked down to say opposite, where whats a name timber yards were there and there was a front there, a double fronted house there with a picket fence and just in the paddock on its own, I think their names were Shweppes.

Shweppes, Shwebbs. Yes, I've heard about them.

I think so it was no effort to them, because as far as I've seen in life I've been through what I've gone through in life, the escapes I've had were less deathly escapes and everything and the good lord has still got me although I just can't walk as well, but anyway, so there is a chap, oh, I'd say his name of arguement sake was Stewy and Gaffy were in the Northcote, Northcote Imps they were.

The Northcote Imps? Was this your gangs name?

That wasn't our gang.

That was the other gang.

That was the Northcote gang. The Northcote Imps. I said "wait till we get to this house, we've got a chance" but they got us before, boom. So just the edge of the place, it was and I got one here, under the chin and I turned around and I was pretty active in those days in the bush and that sort of thing and I turned around and I hit this bloke, he went down. Another bloke hit me and I went straight through the fence. We wore hats in those days. Went straight through the fence. I went down to the ground and I said to them before "If you see daylight, go." Soon as I hit the ground, I up and over the fence, up Dennis Street and of course the, they were talking to the tram sheds all that part there was taken up with the old cables, you know the low cables were all rolled in that

paddock there. Then Munroes Timber Yard, there that of course, and that was a picket fence down there and the gates were down this end then next to Munroe was the wheel wrights, Fellows, yes Fellows. They used to be what you called the wheel wrights. You used to leave the bakers carts there, milk carts and they would re-do the wheels and everything like that in fact later Jimmy Power later he was racing, later years, Jimmy my mate was pulled out after Munroes went down, well then on that space then was the, what's its name, the oh, named after a Mouries joint, Griff McGreen. Used to be Griff McGreens, nice home it was. Along side of that, of course then the miniature golf came in, there was about three to my knowledge in High Street, miniature golf were there. When after Griff McGreen went out that sort of thing and Jimmy, they pulled that down, and of course, I think the motor people, the what a names took that then. Jimmy went around there to the garage at the end of the tram line, the train line come out at the brick hills and he built a new factory there. He had that built and I wired that for him and when the place I know and he said from memory he got 30,000 pound or something for that to pull out. God, I said you should too. Oh, he was in raptures. Poor devil, he only lived about 5 or 6 years after that. That was Jimmy Power but then, as I say, from the joint there, of course, that came up into really RSL is. The Hall there and then there