

Myfanwy Sullivan

Ipswich Choral Society Memories of Raceview

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Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan
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Track 01

Learning Music

I was about nine when I started to learn music. My aunt started to teach me before I went off to Western Australia [to stay with relatives]. I was put to a boarding school over there and had three different piano teachers in that 12 or 18 months I was there.

I was almost 12 when I came back to Ipswich and the first teacher I had after my return was Nancy Jones. She was just a new teacher, about 17 when I was 12. She was Nancy White then and lived on Warwick Road - I used to call there and have my lesson on the way to and from Central School - I went to Girls' Central when I came back although I lived at Raceview.

I was 13 when I first heard about the Eisteddfod and I entered for one held at the School of Arts, Blackstone. It was my first experience of eisteddfod, and I didn't follow eisteddfod work up at that time.

Early Choirs

First of all, there were Sunday School choirs for anniversaries and things like that. And the only other choirs I knew about at first were school choirs because I didn't grow up in the atmosphere of eisteddfods.

The first school choir I had anything to do with was the Silkstone State School. They had a very good choir

conductress Hazel Perry and they were doing very well, all trained up for the eisteddfod one year but she left to go and work a radio station in Brisbane.

Mr Lulham the headmaster couldn't find a [replacement] conductor. He tried everywhere and finally he asked me because he knew I was learning singing at that time. He also knew that I knew my music because I was playing piano for a little orchestra his wife played in.

He came to see me - I didn't think I had a hope but he pressurised me into it and finally I took it under the conditions that if we didn't do well, he'd never ask me again.

Well, we went in for the Ipswich Eisteddfod and we tied for first place with Thelma Larter (originally Thelma Marsh) who was conducting the Boys' Central.

And after that, of course, I couldn't get out of it. I had to keep on going and the next thing, the thing that really gave me a little bit of confidence, was an eisteddfod held in the Brisbane City Hall, I think it was a Queensland Eisteddfod. Linley Evans was the adjudicator and one of the set songs was one of his compositions, Australia Happy Isle it was, I always remember that, I was so pleased that I was going in under the composer.

Anyway, there were 12 choirs in for that item and we won it. Mrs Rhoda Cooney was our accompanist, and Linley



Myfanwy Sullivan (dark dress) and accompanist with the Silkstone State School choir.

Evans was so thrilled with the renditions of a lot of those choirs that he wanted to put them all on the stage together and have a massed choir at the City Hall. They allowed him to do that and when it came to the point of playing, he said "I'm going to take your pianist because you had the nearest to my interpretation and your pianist will more likely do what I want". So Rhoda had to sit there and play for Linley Evans with the winners and placegetters standing at the side. What a thrill.

When we came out, there was standing room only at the City Hall and we could hardly move with congratulations pouring all around. That really boosted my confidence quite a lot, before then I hadn't any.

I enjoyed it and they wouldn't let me go. Soon after that, Mr Lulham was transferred and Mr Kinne came and of course Mr Lulham had given Mr Kinne a glowing account of my ability which wasn't correct but Mr Kinne believed him and he wouldn't let me go.

I was there for two or three years but everything we went in for, we seemed to win - or a lot of things anyway, we were getting a name for being the hard ones to beat. I really did enjoy myself. I got into the swing of conducting and I loved it so much that when my mother became too ill to leave her in the daytime to conduct the choir and I had to give it up, I missed it terribly.

Track 02

Then I found out that there was a need in Ipswich for an intermediate choir, for the people after leaving school but

before being old enough to go into the Cambrians or the older choirs.

I had a talk with Lyla McGuire - I think she might have been conductress of the Cambrian Choir at the time. I asked her what she thought and she said "That would be a good idea because you could train them up and they could come into the bigger choirs when they leave because there weren't enough young ones coming in to the older choirs."

So with that, I wrote to a number of my former choristers from Silkstone and I had replies from 18 of them who wanted to start a choir so that was good enough for me, I fussed around and found a hall for them to practise in and on the 18th September 1950, we commenced our choir. And of course I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Our very first concert which we put on that year was in aid of the Conservatorium of Music - Sydney May was trying to get funds to start a school of music, he called it the School of Music Fund, and our concert was one of the fundraising concerts for that. Mostly the choir did concerts and eisteddfod work, nothing else really at first, we had two or three concerts a year plus entering always for the Queensland Eisteddfod.

At that time, the Cambrians were putting on Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and I was in one of them myself and I enjoyed it too. The Cambrians were a bit short of men and I got some of my young men to come and help with them and they got such a liking for it that they wanted me to then start with musicals.

We did this, and our first one was Our Miss Gibbs, the

second was the Merry Widow. I think the Merry Widow was about 1955 because George Hogg was in it and he was only about 19 or 20 and he was the lead in that for the first time. Everybody thought we had bitten off more than we could chew but it went over really well.

From there on we did at least one musical every year and some years, we put on a pantomime at the end of the year, as well as the eisteddfod work and there was always a concert before the Eisteddfod so it kept us very very busy - and we were busy like that for the whole 35 years that I conducted them. I retired from conducting in November 1985. So the choir was started just 44 years ago last Sunday, but I had charge of them only until 1985.

Then we had a conductor for the next 18 months but he became ill and couldn't carry on. Then we were eight months without a conductor and one of the choir members put on a little sort of concert called White Tie and Tails, it was just about the time [Fred Astaire] died. It is strange, we didn't know anything about that when we put it on at that time. After that I was very lucky. The mother of one of my pupils who was in the St Stephens Cathedral Choir in Brisbane, suggested that she should ask the conductor of their choir down there if he knew anybody that might help, she knew how desperate we were to get somebody to conduct. Michael Lynch was the name of the conductor and he said "Get the lady to ring me and have a talk with me and I'll see what I can work out" and so I had a talk with him and he said he was interested himself. He came up and he was wonderful. If the choir could have kept him, I think they would still have been going but in the

meantime, he was appointed to do every bit of music, not only the choir, everything connected with music, at the St Stephen's Cathedral. It was just the time they were doing the renovations and all sorts of things were on and he got so busy he eventually had to give it away.

In the time he was there, he put on I think two or three concerts and two musicals and it was only a couple of years at the most that we had him, he was wonderful. After that, we couldn't seem to find anybody. People started leaving and going to the other choirs.

When we started the choir, it was only to be an intermediate choir and the girls would start at the age of about 14 and stay only until they were 21. The boys would start as soon as their voices had settled down and stay up until the age of 25 and then they were expected to go and join either the Cambrians or Silkstone-Booval Choral Union.

I forgot to mention that when I was about 20, I was in Tom Bird's choir for a while. Thelma Larter, she was Thelma Marsh then, played for them and Mr Bird really needed bolstering up with members too, so some of our members did go there and some went to the Cambrians.

After we had been going for quite a while with all the musicals, the young folk got to like them so much they didn't want to leave and then they petitioned me. George Hogg was one of the most adamant that we should take away the name "Intermediate" and just leave it "Ipswich Choral Society" so we could have older people if we would like, but still with the accent on youth as it had been.



Myfanwy Sullivan and the Ipswich Intermediate Choral Society

Eventually our President, Mr Bill Johnson called a big general meeting. He was the man who started 4IP in Ipswich and he was also Patron of the Cambrians, so he was well up in the musical world. At the meeting, he put it to them and discussed it thoroughly, and he thought the same thing, that these young people had worked together so long, it was a pity to separate them because they were doing different sorts of things from the other choirs, so they allowed that to happen at that time, we became the Ipswich Choral Society.

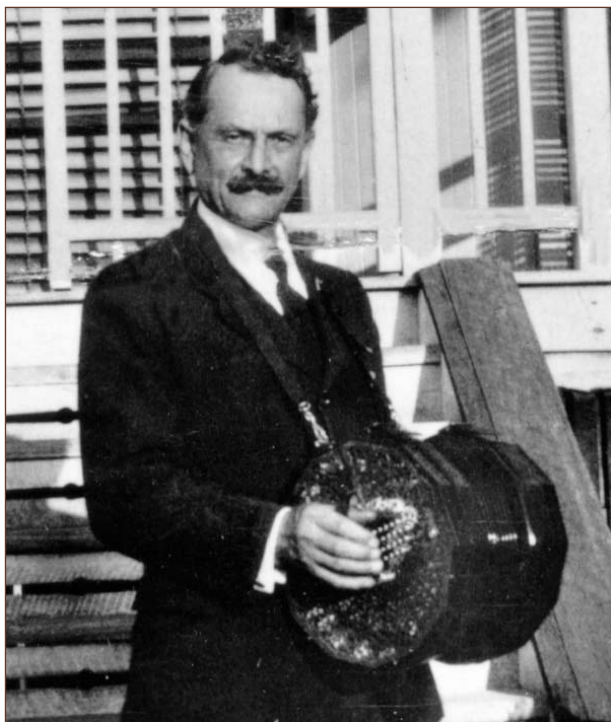
It wasn't very long after - it might have been a couple of years - that Mr Bird died and Thelma Larter conducted but it just seemed to dwindle, they weren't able to put on the plays and things and I think that's what held the young people in the other choirs.

The Silkstone choir was mainly a conservative sort of choir, they went in for eisteddfod work mostly with the odd concert, they didn't do plays. They practised where the Cambrians are now, at the National Hall. Strangely enough, the Cambrians have bought it, that's their hall.

Track 03

Orchestras

I was just an ordinary pianist, I suppose. After we left Raceview and came to North Ipswich, I couldn't go out to Nancy any more and she suggested her teacher who was Mrs Ponti, a lovely old French lady, really lovely person she was. Mrs Ponti did tell Mum when I left that she would rather lose a lot more of her pupils than me, she thought I was pretty good but we didn't think anything about it.



"My father played the English concertina"

The Ipswich City Orchestra finished up before I was old enough to go and see them, but I knew about it. Two of my uncles and my aunt played in that orchestra, so did Nancy Jones' father, he played the cello, Uncle Joe Wildey played the double bass, Uncle Roy played the violin. Through the orchestra, Uncle Roy met and later married the pianist who was Ena Trevaskes, she was a very good pianist, she was taught by Sydney May, the one who was trying to get the School of Music going.

The orchestra had classical concerts, very good work they did and they were conducted by a Mr Lingard. It did fizzle out, I suppose people got married and other things cropped up.

Nancy was the pianist for an orchestra which played for the silent movies, she was pianist at the Wintergarden Theatre when she was quite a young person, I think she was only a girl, she was playing for the orchestra at the Wintergarden Theatre and her father was playing in it and people with a couple of other instruments. It wasn't a full-blown orchestra but they always had orchestral music at the interval and at different times at the movies because they didn't have any sound in those days and the orchestra was a good starting and fill-in.

They also had one I think at Bossie Martoo's Olympia Theatre and I don't know whether they had an orchestra at the Parkside and the Lyric Theatre. There was also the Rialto at North Ipswich and the Alpha down at Booval. I know they had those lean-back canvas seats, you could lean right back in them.

When the talkies came in, the theatre orchestra finished, but later on again when the Little Theatre movement began here and they started putting plays on in the Town Hall, a Little Theatre Orchestra was formed to play at the beginning and in the interval, it was a very nice little orchestra and it went on for quite a few years.

The Art Society was formed somewhere around that era, and also the Business and Professional Women's Club and the Forum Club a little bit later again, there were a lots of things like that that were formed around that time and I was in most of them. Actually, I was an original member of both Art Society and Business and Professional Women's Club.

It just came to my mind that I didn't mention the Silkstone and District Male Voice Choir. That was I think a forerunner to the Apollo Club and also Tom Bird's Silkstone Booval Choral Union.

The Apollo Club was more or less a Silkstone/Blackstone affair. There were probably 12 or 16 people in the choir, all men They sang two-part to four-part songs, mostly part songs, classical style.

They used to go to entertainments. One time I remember I went to Southport with them. Car rides were not to be had very often in those days, there weren't many cars about, so it was a highlight in my experience - going to Southport in a car. And then they had a concert in the Pier Theatre - there was a theatre on the pier at Southport.



The information on this photo states that it is "The St David's Society, Blackstone, taken November 1926, the majority of which participated in a concert given over Radio 4QG on 3rd September 1926."

I went with them because my father played the English concertina and I used to go as his accompanist - as I did for 4IP about that time.

I think I was only about 13 or something like that, I'm 82 this year so you can work out what year it was. [about 1925]

There has always been a lot happening in Ipswich. People who think not much used to happen here don't look in the right places, we have always had lots of things happening in Ipswich - they are advertised but people don't read the advertisements properly.

I think from what I can gather, there was a lot happening well before I knew anything about it too. I was pianist for a little orchestra during the war years, we used to have to watch out for the blackouts, keep blinds down and everything. There were a couple of violinists, clarinetists and a couple of flautists and we used to practise in each other's houses and then once a month, we would have a party in one house or the other. The rest of our family would listen. That is how Mrs Lulham knew about me because she was violinist in our little orchestra. It was a lot of fun, I really enjoyed it but we had to curtail things during the rest of the war years. There were always things going on.

Track 04

Changing from pianist to singer/conductor

It started off when a couple of people heard me singing, very often at these parties we had with the orchestra, we'd have a sing around the piano and some of the people there, Mr Harry Parker in particular, he was a tailor in town here, he was a violinist, he said "You know, you

have a nice voice there, you should go and have some training."

I said "I think I'm too old", I was then over 30, and he said "Oh I don't think you are too old" so I thought I'll check up and see if Leonard Francis would think I was too old because he did teach in Ipswich, he was the conductor of the Cambrian Choir, he was a wonderful teacher and a wonderful conductor. He was the one that led the Cambrian Choir when they went down to Ballarat and had their wonderful wins that they still talk about.

I made an appointment and went to see him and he listened and he said "Have you ever had lessons before?" and I said No. "Well, he said you just have a naturally well-produced voice, you won't be hard to teach" and he said "You are never too old, I've often had people well over 50 to train as long as you haven't ruined your voice."

So he took me on as a pupil and I thought that was marvellous. because by the time I had my first lesson, I was all but 31 and from there, I got more and more interested in singing. I was teaching a couple of little children piano and the parents found that I was learning singing and got me to put them in for the eisteddfod.

My very first singing pupil was Pam Dobie, a lot of eisteddfod people in this region would remember Pam because she used to win quite a bit and then once she had a few wins, other people started coming and asking me to teach their children. It worked up from there.

In 1947, I won the Contralto Champion of Queensland. I won two or three championships at different eisteddfods but the Queensland one in 1947 was my first. Up until then, I didn't have a lot of confidence - and I didn't even have a lot after either!



Leonard Francis (kneeling) and the Ladies Chorus of the Cambrian Choir, Myfanwy Sullivan fifth from right, front row.

When I knew Leonard Francis, he was a pretty old man, it wasn't very long before he died really, but he was a bit sarcastic and he'd always try to make a joke of something and you didn't know always whether he was being sarcastic or whether he was really joking, it was a bit hard to tell sometimes. But he knew what he was talking about with the singing, he was very well-trained in all aspects of singing, particularly I think in oratorio from what I have heard, he was excellent in his oratorio work. And he would not stand for people in the choir who did not do what he wanted either.

He made me go to the Cambrian Choir, the next Eisteddfod after I went to him in October was at Easter in Ipswich, that was the eisteddfod he first made me go in and sing. He put me in for the Contralto Championship as well as the second grade and also said I had to join the choir. I was given no alternative, I had to. And from there on, I was in the Cambrian Choir, I spent 11 years going to Cambrian Choir and I would have been still going only my own choir became a bit too much to handle besides going to Cambrians.

Very often, the eisteddfod would come to Ipswich or Toowoomba or Brisbane, where we could get at it. We would even go up as far as Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Gympie. They were the special event of the year. We went by train mostly, if they were far away, but if they weren't too far, or once I got my own little Anglia car, I used to drive if it was only as far as Gympie or somewhere like that, drive up so I would have a car to get about in when I was there. That little Anglia took me to a lot of places.

The main choirs that competed were Toowoomba and the Cambrian and our choir was always one of them. We weren't always in the Chief Choral, only once or twice, we were mostly in the Second Choral because we were a

younger group and not as experienced. Then there was a choir from Maryborough and another from Rockhampton. There would have been at least five in the main events and sometimes if you were in a different town where you didn't go very often, they would probably get a choir up for that particular event.

Track 05

Ipswich was noted for its bands. We had the City Vice-Regal and Nancy Jones' father-in-law, Ray's father, was a big influence on the Vice-Regal. Also they had a Mr Kelly who conducted orchestras and bands. One time he conducted an orchestra and the combined choirs at the Wintergarden Theatre - I think it was a patriotic concert or something like that. He did the Messiah too - I was in one of them.

Another conductor for the Model Band was Mr Harper and then Jack Butt, he knew his instruments and he spent an awful lot of time and trouble training young bandmen. I think he had a junior band, I can't remember exactly. He used to sell raffle tickets to try to get money to buy instruments for the band.

I still have pupils now, five young girls and four adults who come not exactly every week but on a fairly regular basis just to more or less keep them in good order.

Many of my pupils have done well. I suppose the most prominent was George Hogg, Merrilyn Hicks has won championships I don't know how many times for her contralto, and then there's Ruth Gledson, she has won a lot of things, and Bernice Hicks and Jan Walker. Jean Weir used to do well, but she lives in Brisbane now and people don't hear much about her but she still keeps in



Civic Hall opening

touch with me. Collette Wakefield, she still comes to me, and Narelle Careless stills comes and sings duets with Collette, they have the most beautiful blend, they come regularly. And then Robyn Penny, she was Robyn Davidson, still comes and she is doing lovely work just for her own enjoyment, she doesn't like eisteddfods but she really sings beautifully for me here and loves it. I've got a pupil who is an ambulance man, being on shift work it's not as regular as it could be, but he is doing quite well.

I wonder who I'm missing out - I could be missing some really good ones because there were such a lot of good ones. I've loved all my teaching.

Civic Hall Opening

One of my memories is the opening of the Civic Hall in Ipswich. That was very interesting that night, there were three choirs Cambrians and George Hogg's Chorale and my Choral Society. Each had to provide 20 minutes program, Mr Whitlam [*the Prime Minister*] was coming up to open that, it was 1975 and because it was such a state occasion, that time I wore my BEM medal for the first and only time I've ever worn it.

It wasn't the BEM medal that did it but I had a terrible fall, hit my head on concrete pathway and had to go and have stitches on my way to the concert. I got there but I didn't conduct, I couldn't lift my right arm. Collette Wakeley was with me, I told her to try to get Nancy Jones or Madge Wilson to come because they were good sight readers and they could come and conduct but anyway, my deputy at that time was John Hicks. He was going to play for me and I said if they could come and conduct, he could play, or they could play and he could conduct.

Anyway, when I came back after Dr Mulhearn had taken me up to the hospital and stitched me up - I had seven stitches in my forehead - he brought me back and as I



Gough Whitlam opening the Civic Hall

came past the stage door somebody came out and told me they couldn't get either of those two people but they remembered that Del Madsen who was a choir member and has done a lot of conducting - that she had learned the piece and knew all about them so they asked her to conduct and John still played - that's how they did it.

I managed to get up into the back of the gallery part, right upstairs, without being seen too much and I sat up there and watched and listened. I was really proud of them, they did a jolly good job.

Also, a night I do remember the very first musical that

was produced in the Civic Hall was Pyjama Game by our choir so that's a couple of things I remember about the Civic Hall.

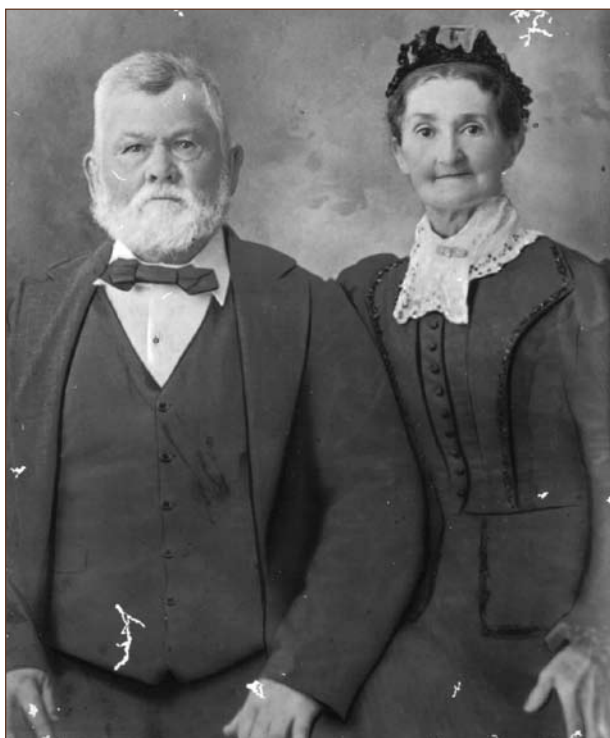
Track 06

Recollections of early Raceview

My great-grandfather Frank Porter - Francis Porter - and his wife both came out on a ship. They arrive in Ipswich in 1855. His wife was just an 18-year old girl then but they married in 1858, they had met on the ship. Their first home was out towards the Purga district, a place they call the Grampian Hills and my grandmother was born there in 1862. They had a pretty big family, I won't go into the rest of the family now.

Grandfather Porter used to do a bit of raising cattle I think it was, also some timber cutting, I don't know whether he had a timber mill, but he had something to do with timber milling as well as raising and selling cattle and something to do with a butcher's shop, I think he had some connection with that Mr Watson who had a butcher shop on the corner of Limestone and Waghorn streets.

The next generation was my grandmother's generation. Grandma was Mary-Anne Porter, she married William Wildey whose grandparents brought him and two sisters out here as orphans when they were quite young. When my grandfather was nine, he was minding sheep out in the Grampian Hills as a little bit towards earning a living. No education at all, they didn't have the money for education. Grandma did have quite a reasonable education and she was always wanting her family to be properly educated, but Grandfather Wildey had none at



Frank Porter and his wife

all, he couldn't read or write until he was 15. He thought it was time he started to learn to read and write so he started going to a night school in Ipswich then and all he learned was from there on.

He met and married Grandma when she was 23 and their first home after they were married was a little cottage in Whitehill Road on the Bullmore estate - he worked for the Bullmores as a gardener. [*Rockton in Rockton Street*]

And then after that, when Bullmores went away, he was employed as landscape gardener for Lewis Thomas at Blackstone - Brynhfryd and he stayed there for quite a number of years. They had a cottage on the property in which he and the family lived and some of the children were born there. My Mother was born in the Whitehill Road house, she also went to the Newtown School from there which was fairly handy. Some of their family went to Newtown and later on some went to Silkstone and some went to Blackstone [School] when they were living at Blackstone so the family has been educated all around the place.

In the early stages, I think a lot of the family had something to do with brick making and cotton growing, but it was mainly my grandfather. They lived on Station Road.

After a certain time, I don't know whether the Thomas were going abroad or something happened but they left the Blackstone house and they bought a house and 15 acres at the corner of what is now Wildey Street and Cascade Street, his name was William Wildey - Wildey Street was named after them. They bought this place with 15 acres there and they lived there until they were to old to stay any longer.

Even after the Thomas left, my grandfather used to go and do things at the Coffin Holes which was a water hole near the castle, he used to pump water up to help to run their lift, they had a water lift in the castle and Grandfather Wildey used to pump that water to do that. He often used to go down to the Coffin Holes and do jobs down there, even after he was sort of retired but he was sort of part-caretaker for the property and he went on doing that sort of things right until he was in his last age, when he was too old to do anything much.

In the treatise on Brynhfryd by Nerida Parry, my grandfather is in one of the pictures, so I've seen plenty of pictures of the garden but he didn't talk a lot about it. I do know they and magnolia trees either side of the front steps of the Castle because some of the pictures we've got when the trees were quite young and later on, they are great big trees, they were there quite a few years. Grandfather's sons Uncle Henry and Uncle Bill were grooms and they used to look after the horses for the Thomas's while they were living there. They were really friends of the Thomas, although they just worked for them they were very friendly and nice people.

They all went and lived at Raceview later. When they moved out there, Raceview didn't have many houses, it



Grandpa Wildey ploughing at the corner of Cascade and Wildey Streets, Raceview

was very scattered and people from as far down as near Swanbank and as far towards town as Whitehill Road, all used to send their children to the little old Raceview school, not the one that is there now. If you are going out towards Swanbank, the old Raceview school was a little to the south-east of the turnoff to Swanbank, in a paddock there.

My father was on the school committee and they began to realise that most of the people attending that school were from nearer to town, nearer to Ipswich than that place and there was quite a bit of agitation to have the school shifted and they did arrange for the government to have the school put where it is now, that was while my father was on the committee.

I think that school would have been shifted somewhere about when I was 11 years old and I was born in 1912.

We lived on the corner of Cemetery and Whitehill Road and we used to walk from there right away down, cutting across paddocks and everything, right away down to that place near Swanbank to school every day, there and back. On the way home, we often called in at Grandma's half-way house and she would have - you could smell it before you got there - bread just baked taken out of the oven, lovely crusty home made bread. She made her own butter because they always had a cow so we had homemade crusted bread and homemade butter and a nice little drink of water on the way home from school as a pick-me-up. I didn't know much about Ipswich then because I hardly ever went there. I just lived at Raceview and everything revolved around school and church.

There was only one church there at that time, the Congregational up on the hill just on Wildey Street. My Grandfather and Grandmother were mainstays of the church - we all went there for Sunday School, Grandfather planted a lot of the trees that are growing there. My father planted the some of the trees that are still there at the

present Raceview School. Actually the big mango tree that is in that yard at the corner of Cemetery and Whitehill Road now is one that my father planted when I was about four and it's still there. I lived there most of that time.

The church was the only place where you'd have social life. Sunday School, they had little concerts and picnics and get-together and all that sort of thing.

A lot of people would have little musical evenings in their homes and have a sing around the piano, that was the sort of social life we had when I was growing up and even though she was poor, Grandma always managed to buy herself a piano somehow or another and have most of her children taught a little bit of either piano or violin.

The family were very musical as I did tell you before, all in the City Orchestra, but besides that, Auntie Edie played the violin a bit and she had a lovely contralto voice - she died this year aged 99. She used to love singing and when she was 17, she was in the Cambrian Choir, at that age.

Sometimes a few of them would get together and walk into town to the Methodist Church in town where they used to have a sort of gymnastic club or something, they used to do a bit of gymnasium work.

Track 07

As far as I was concerned, I was away for nearly two years in Western Australia without the family, that is a different story but I won't go into that now. When I came back I had been at a girls' boarding school and Mum and Dad didn't want to send me to a mixed school so that's why I didn't go back to Raceview, I went to Girls' Central.

I used to walk up Whitehill Road from the corner and across what is now the Limestone Park - they used to call it the Horse Park in those days - and across Queens

Park to the Girls' Central School which was on the corner of Milford Street and Brisbane Road. Then later on we went to live in North Ipswich and later on I went to Girls' Grammar School.

When we lived at North Ipswich, we were well into church life, concerts and things like that. I had a very strict father and if we were in anything, Mum or Dad had to be there to supervise us, children growing up these days wouldn't know what that was like. But it did limit what you could do as far as social living was concerned and mostly it was school, schoolwork and church things, very little else until I was growing up.

Well that was when I started being interested in a few other things like concerts and singing at parties and things like that - and that was what really got me into doing the sorts of things that eventually got me my BEM because I was always organising pr programs for different charities. And I don't know why I should have got a BEM but I did and I really put it down to that, that they maybe thought I did good work organising things for charity. [*BEM – Order of the British Empire Medal, awarded prior to introduction of the Australian honours system. Mrs Sullivan received her honour in 1972.*]

When I was at Grammar School, that was when the terrible Depression was on. My whole interest in life was to become a school teacher, and of course that was one reason I was at Grammar School, I wanted to do my Junior and go and do my teacher training but unfortunately, the Depression became so bad people were getting retrenched.

My father was a clerk in the Carriage Foreman's office at the Railway Workshops. He had a good job fairly reasonably paid job, but during the Depression everybody was retrenched to a degree. Instead of working 10 days a fortnight, they were put onto seven days a fortnight and with a growing family, that was very hard, they couldn't afford to keep me at Grammar. I had to leave.

It nearly broke my heart because I knew I couldn't go on to do my Junior so I decided I would probably try and take up nursing. I went and had my medical, my sister went at the same time, she got on and they told me my veins were such that I'd be having ulcers and I'd never stand up to it. They were pretty right because I've got ulcers now. But I did other things, whatever I could manage to find to do, but it was very heartbreaking for somebody who had an ambition all the time to do that one thing and couldn't go through with it through circumstance. I just had to get myself a job and carry on like that.

Marjorie Connolly (Marjorie Thorn) she and I both applied for a job in a silk store. There were 48 applicants for that job, they wanted two people, she and I were chosen but that shows you how bad the situation was. I think it was worse than it is now because people didn't have the dole to the same degree and if they were getting dole say in Ipswich, specially young men, they weren't given another lot of dole until they got to another town, they had to go to a second town and try their luck getting a job before they could get another lot of dole. and It was very hard on them sometimes, they didn't have money for train fares, they used to pick up rides any way they could get to the next town, it was very hard for them.



Myfanwy Sullivan as a young girl

The way things were with me, where I worked, the award said they were supposed to pay male wages to any girls working in silk stores and places like that but unfortunately, they couldn't afford to do it so they used to give me the female wages but to keep our jobs, we had to sign for male wages. You didn't get anything like enough to keep you but it was a help to Mum but that's how it was those days, really bad. So I know a little bit about hard times.

I was married at 23, that was 1935. The War was 1939, I had been married a few years when the war came along.

Norman Hart & Myfanwy Sullivan

Memories of Booval Early days of radio

Date of interview: 1994

Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan

Interview available on CD

Track 08: Norm Hart

Booval

Mother and father left England in 1883 and it took them six months to come to Australia on an old sailing ship. When they arrived, they lived at Redbank for a little while and Mother used to walk with two children twice a week from Redbank to Ipswich to get provisions.

Very often, Mother used to leave Lil, that was the eldest one, leave her with some black people at Dinmore. They used to live opposite the railway station in the bush and Lil used to stay there with them all day and play with the kids. As a consequence of that, my Mother would never ever let you talk about black people, she had a lot of time for them.

When I was a little boy, we used to call all that area from Fox Street “Dickie Watson’s Hill” because a fellow called Watson used to have a big estate there. The home is still there. My father told me that there used to be all cotton growing from there until Bundamba Creek.

Mother had nine children, Father worked in the mines for several years. He actually left England as a professional gardener but he got a little bit of gardening out here but he decided to go into the mines, then he was in the railway for the latter part of his years.

But when we were kids running around here, there were only three buildings between Bundamba Creek and the Ulster Hotel.

My family lived then at Waghorn Street in Ipswich. A

couple of children were born there, then they built a home in Booval in 1910, I was born in Booval Street, 100 yards from where I’m living now more or less.

As a boy, I first started at the old Newtown School and I can remember I was only there for 18 months and then the Silkstone School was being built and when the Silkstone School was built, the whole school marched from Newtown to the Silkstone School. I can just vaguely remember that but we marched the whole way.

I used to walk to school of course to Newtown and one thing I can remember my mother used to say in season, she would say “Bring me some buttercups tonight” and I would walk through Cameron’s Park and I would gather buttercups, the park was yellow in season.

And on other occasions she would say to me, “Go and pick me some flowers,” and believe it or not, I used to get them in the gutter down Brisbane Road as far down as Station Rd, they were growing in the gutter, little purple long flowers.

Where Woolworth’s is now, on the corner of Station Rd and Brisbane Rd, there was one house and that was old Mr Reid lived there. And then further up Station Road, there were other houses, there was Erskine’s shop, and there was a Mrs Williams lived there and a Mrs Wraite lived up that street, of course they were all removed when Woolworths bought the property.



Tamar Cottage Booval, about 1950

And then there was an iceworks there. On Station Rd and Brisbane Rd, on the western corner, there was a co-operative store built there, the West Moreton Co-Operative Society. When I left school, I worked there when I was 14.

I had worked there for 12 months and the secretary came out to me one morning and said "By the way, you're wanted in the manager's office". I thought here I'm getting the sack for sure but I went in and he said to me "The Board of Directors and myself, we have been very satisfied with your work over the last 12 months and we decided to give you an increase in your pay." I got an extra shilling! So I got 10/- a week instead of 9/-. That was my first wage.

I did sit for the Railway exam as I wanted to be an electrician and I passed that OK and the fellow that sat with me was Roy Edwards [who later founded the electrical firm R.T. Edwards]. Roy also passed but anyway, my father said to me "What do you want to do, do you want to go into the railway or stop where you are?", and I said "Stop where I am, I'm getting 10/- a week".

So that was it and I often wonder now what would have happened to my life if I had gone there, I might have had a different life entirely. It just shows you the way it went, but anyway, I've been quite happy, I've led a good happy life and an honest life, that's the main thing.

There were no musicians in my family, I learned the piano for 2½ years, got a couple of good passes and then of course I annoyed my Mother so much that she took me away and now I'm sorry.

We used to go to dances with young people down at the National Hall Booval. They used to be good and some of those young girls of that day, I still meet them today and they are real old ladies now.

We used to have Congregational Sunday School picnics,

we used to met in that park near the gully, near the Bodega Restaurant.

Someone said to me the other day "What religion are you?" I said, "Well I was christened in the Church of England, and I went to the Congregational Sunday School and I was married in a Methodist and now I go to the Church of Christ so you can make up your mind about that."

When we were kids, here were two big waterholes where Woolworths is now. One of the waterholes was a little bit west of where the Pizza Hut is now, it was just in there, and there was an old wooden bridge over the road and we used to catch crawfish there when we were kids, take a billy down, boil the water out of the pool, it was that clean, and we'd take half a loaf of bread and we'd have our dinner there with our crawfish.

And of course there was a football field on there ground too as well, that was the Booval Stars and I played football on that, and now to see it today it's amazing.

Track 09 - Norm Hart and Myfanwy Sullivan

Myfanwy: My first close experience of radio was when the St David's Society of Blackstone went to 4QG Brisbane to have a concert to celebrate St David's Day when I was 13 years old. My father played an English concertina and I went down with them to play his accompaniments. That was on 4QG and actually they had just shifted into that building, they had just started up not very long before. After that, they liked Dad's item so much that they looked for us to come back every two months, we provided a little program for them for some years.

Norm: I had my own private radio. I was granted the licence in 27th April 1931 and then after a number of

years, I applied to the Department and they allowed me to transmit on Sunday morning on 200 metres. We did this for a short time and then we had to cease operation because they notified us that 4BH and some of the B-class stations would be transmitting for two-hour periods on a Sunday morning and that meant we had to go off the air.

But the original broadcaster for Ipswich was Percy Woods, he was 4PW and Perce did broadcast for quite number of years on 200 metres. Also there was another gentleman 4PK Stan Mackintosh, he was at Woodend, he was also on of a Sunday morning, so there was quite a few of us on.

We had records, a little bit of talking but mostly records. One gentleman who used to do the announcing for me was Terry Forsythe, he was on 4IP at one time and he eventually got onto 4BH as an announcer. He got his start with me.

He had a lovely voice, and I didn't have a very good voice really for programming but he did and he used to announce.

I've got records at home now and I've got reports from New Zealand of my transmission of a Sunday and people used to write in and used to want certain records played.

Interviewer: *Did you have local people singing or playing on your radio?*

Norm: No I didn't.

Myfanwy: But Perce Woods did. One Sunday morning at the Central Hotel in their lounge, he broadcast from there. I know he had Vera McCleary singing and Ted Sydes singing and my Dad was there with his concertina while I was playing, so that's how I know about it. It was quite a little concert.

Interviewer: *Where did he normally broadcast from?*

Myfanwy: I think his home wasn't it?

Norm: No, well he did have an amateur station at home but on a Sunday morning, I think he was on top of Cribb and Foote's at one period, remember that big water tower or the lift tower, they used to broadcast from there. He had his aerials across from there, and then he shifted, I think, to the old Flour Mill.

Myfanwy: And that's where Mr Bill Johnson started 4IP.

Interviewer: *Did you ever sing or play over 4IP?*

Myfanwy: Oh lots of times, not singing, my pupils used to sing, they had a morning program on Saturday morning. Rene Nisbet used to play and different pupils from the eisteddfod and all that sort of thing, they used to come in. I remember listening to Jan Walker singing when she was 10 years old, (she was Janice Bowles in those days)

Interviewer: *What era was this? You said you started in 1931?*



4IP studio, in the Old Flour Mill

Norm: April 1931, then when we weren't allowed on the broadcast band of course, we had to move down to the higher frequencies like 40 metres, 80 metres. From then on, we just worked all around the world.

Myfanwy: But in Morse Code

Norm: And speech too. I spoke to a Canadian the other night on speech too, he was in Toronto. We don't do it all in Morse Code but I do admit I do a lot in Morse code. I have worked every state in America and every city in Japan, spoken to them and the Continent and I've also spoken to the Antarctic.

Interviewer: *So you've had your radio from 1931 right up to now?*

Norm: From 1931 to the present day.

Myfanwy: But he's studied radio since its inception.

Norm: I used to make radio sets for the teachers at school when I was a little boy. One of my teachers, Bill Sebley, he taught me in scholarship class, I used to make radios for him and eventually he got his licence and we were great friends up until he died.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

FUNDS MAY BE QUICKLY, SAFELY AND ECONOMICALLY TRANSFERRED BY MONEY ORDER TELEGRAM. (PLEASE TURN OVER.)

RECEIVED TELEGRAM

The first line of this telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.

Office of Origin.	Words.	Time Lodged.	No.
MELBOURNE	79	8 40PM IST	

T.G. 42.

OFFICE DATE STAMP.

Sent at BOOVAL

Ch'n/No. -2SE39

By GID

Remarks. Sch. C.2233.—11/1938.

This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations. The time received at this office is shown at the end of the message. The date stamp indicates the date both of lodgment and of reception unless otherwise shown after the particulars of time lodged.

<p>To</p> <p>N V HART</p>	<p>BOOVAL ST BOOVAL</p>
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THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN IMPOSED IN RELATION TO YOUR EXPERIMENTAL LICENCE ISSUED UNDER THE WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY ACT AND REGULATIONS. STOP OPERATION OF RADIO TRANSMITTER AUTHORISED UNDER EXPERIMENTAL LICENCE MUST CEASE IMMEDIATELY AND VALVES TRANSFORMERS TUNING COILS OPERATING KEYS AND MICROPHONES MUST BE DISMANTLED FROM EQUIPMENT STOP PLEASE COMMUNICATE BY FIRST POST TO SENIOR RADIO INSPECTOR IN YOUR STATE THAT THESE INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH

BROWN
DIRECTOR GENERAL
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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

TELEPHONE NO. BY8371
SWITCH NO. _____

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
NO. QW35/2193

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.
GENERAL POST OFFICE.
Wireless Branch,
BRISBANE, 20th September 1935.

Sch. C. 1313. 5/1935

Mr. N. V. Hart,
67 Glebe Road,
Newtown,
IPSWICH.

Dear Sir,

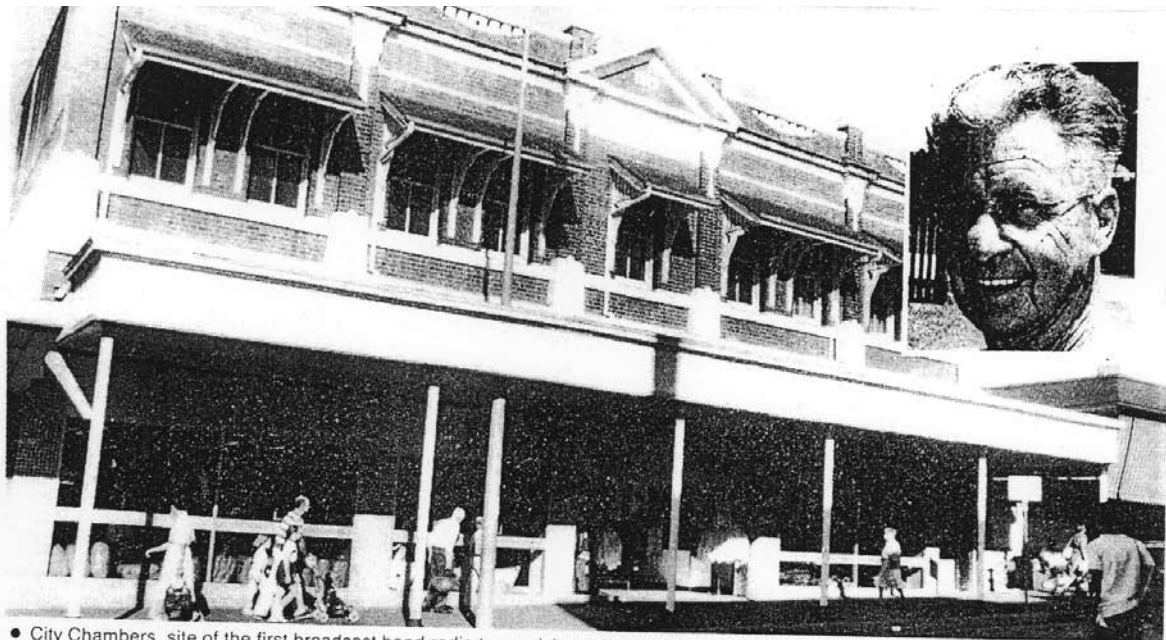
I am in receipt of a complaint of interference almost every night between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. from an experimental station, the complainant residing in Glebe Road, Ipswich.

The name of the person is unknown but the information was forwarded to me through the S.T.C. Agent in Ipswich, and I shall be glad if you could advise me whether any of your neighbours are suffering interference from your experimental transmissions. If so I should be glad if you would take the necessary steps to prevent any trouble to neighbouring broadcast listeners.

Kindly let me know at your earliest convenience any results you may have.

Yours faithfully,

T. Armstrong
T. Armstrong
Senior Radio Inspector.



• City Chambers, site of the first broadcast band radio transmissions in Ipswich. Inset: Bob Davidson... "The Professor" on Radio 4P

Percy pilots the air waves

THE FIRST broadcast band radio transmissions in Ipswich were not made by the Ipswich radio station 4IP according to Bob Davidson of Mooloolabah.

Radio 4IP (now Stereo 10, Brisbane) started in September 1935.

But Mr Davidson, a former Ipswich resident, said the first transmissions came from Radio 4PW — the PW standing for Percy Woods.

"The technician behind the venture was my good friend Perc Wood. We both had motorbikes and spent a lot of time together," Mr Davidson said.

He said Perc experimented with short wave for some time then built a radio for Mr Davidson, the first in the neighbourhood.

Then Perc started to think about building a broadcast band transmitter. The first step was to find a location.

"The answer came from a mutual friend Bob Watson who said there was an empty room in City Chambers (in Nicholas St, now demolished), owned by his father.

"The next I knew, Perc had been granted a licence, a frequency, a strength of signal and a call sign 4PW.

"Next I was climbing a fire sprinkler water tower on Cribbs building nearby where I fastened one end of our aerial. The other end went on a 70 foot pole fixed near our radio room.

"With power and telephone installed, Perc brought in all the gear he had at home including a turntable, half a dozen records, a lot of valves and condensers which when assembled made a transmitter — and we were ready to go to air.

"One Sunday morning, it was all hands on deck for the first broadcast. Bob Watson had already been added to the team so after instruction from the Chief, the station went to air.

"While we broadcast, Perc hopped on his motorbike and went firstly to his home then to my place to check the transmission.

"Then he raced back to the studio, made a few

By ROBYN BUCHANAN



adjustments or changed a valve or two then went back again to check. This went on for an hour or so until he said OK.

"But it was never finally OK for Perc, he was always changing something. If it wasn't the transmitter, it was the pickup or the microphone.

"He even showed me how to make a new microphone with carbon granules, two carbon electrodes, a piece of finely split mica and a block of wood which when specially assembled made a Reiss microphone.

"Our times 'On Air' were from 8am to 12 noon Sunday mornings. By the second Sunday we were in business, our listening audience being the whole of Ipswich and beyond.

"Perc did very little time on the microphone, leaving it all to Bob and myself as he was always 'fixing things up'. I would open the station at 8am and continue until 10am then Bob would take over.

"People started to write and phone to say how much they enjoyed the program. They referred to me as Uncle Bob and Bob Watson as The Professor.

"The Central Hotel was three doors from the studio. The owner Mrs Townsend was an admirer of Richard Tauber records and lent them for broadcasts. She offered her lounge for a live broadcast.

"We had never made a live broadcast before and this was a challenge Perc could not resist. It meant more tests, adjustments, a land line across a few roofs and more adjustments.

"Then one Sunday morning, we assembled a group of first class Ipswich artists and put to air a concert of which any radio station would be proud.

"Not to be outdone, Mick Sullivan of the North Star Hotel also offered us the use of his lounge for a concert.

"The North Star hotel was about a kilometre away and needed a telephone hookup, another challenge for Perc.

"Once again, a jazz band, pianists, vocal and instrumentalists, all broadcasting for the first time.

"Our greatest thrill was when we started to get letters and requests from children at the Ipswich General Hospital.

"Christmas was approaching and a radio appeal to listeners brought money for all the children in the ward, specially delivered by Perc, the Professor and Uncle Bob," he said.

Mr Davidson has a letter from Ipswich Hospital dated September 1935, thanking him for 4PW's help with an appeal for funds and for Easter Eggs.

"The radio project lasted six months and interfered greatly with our private lives. We couldn't get away for weekends, we still had jobs and the radio work took a lot of evenings as well as weekend time.

"Perc was asked to be the principal behind the start of a B class broadcasting station. Big business could see it coming but Perc declined all offers.

"Instead he started his own business making and selling radio receivers. He carried on successfully until his retirement, and I carried on as a plumbing supervisor with the Railways.

"Looking back, the whole exercise was a delightful experience. We had a lot of fun, met a lot of nice people and demonstrated that Ipswich could sustain its own transmitting station," Mr Davidson said.