

Dorothy McInnes

Peak Crossing and Radford districts

Normanby Shire Council and Moreton Shire Council

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Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan

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Track 01

My name is Dorothy McInnes, my maiden name was Brown. When I was a teenager and attending the Ipswich State High School, the Chairman of the Normanby Shire Council approached Mr Cairns, the Shire Clerk of Moreton, and said he wanted somebody to work in the Normanby Shire office at Harrisville.

Mr Cairns then went to Mr Evans, the Principal of the College, and because I lived in the area (at Peak Crossing), he sent for me and asked me if I would be willing to take a position there. I said no way could I accept a position there because my Father was a Councillor. There had been considerable trouble some years before because Councillors and staff had appointed a lot of their own relatives and it wasn't a very popular idea.

When I got home that night, my Father said "You start work on Monday". I said "How come? I told them that you wouldn't allow me to work there, being a councillor." He said "Mr Hayes rang me up and blew me up and said 'We are making the appointment, you're not!'"

I went there only in a temporary capacity because they wanted someone just for a short while. It was funny really because I worked there from 1939 until 1942, but the appointment was never for that time. Almost every meeting, they would say they couldn't afford an assistant in the office and they couldn't keep Miss Brown on.

Then the Shire Clerk would say "The work is there, you will only complain if nobody is in the office when people come." So I ended up there for three years. Then a vacancy came at Moreton Shire for which I applied and I worked at Moreton Shire in the office there from 1942 to 1945.

Whilst I was at Normanby, the war broke out, and life began to be different. There were patriotic dances and the Shire Clerk encouraged people to buy War Bonds so a lot of us bought War Bonds each payday. Some people who bought them cashed them at once - you couldn't understand why they bothered in the first place - but it was quite amazing how much money was raised for the Government in that way. At the end, they were quite valuable.

There was a women's voluntary national register formed, and the Council encouraged this. Because I was the secretary in the office, I did the secretarial work and through there, we then proceeded on to lectures and first aid classes. We learned to knit with four needles and knitted socks to send to the soldiers, and there was a lady who came to teach us to make camouflage nets and we did quite a lot of that. It was quite a busy group and we learned quite a lot of things that we had no idea about before the war. We used to meet in the School of Arts.



Harrisville School of Arts

There was a parade where the staff decorated the grader with all sorts of ribbons, but I can't remember just why that was, because the war hadn't ended then.

The staff were all very good. Mr E.J. Hayes was the Shire Chairman - and if I remember correctly, he and the Councillors only got an allowance when they attended the meetings. On meeting days, Mr Hayes used to take all the councillors and the staff to the hotels in turn [for lunch], which I used to think was very generous because if I remember rightly, he only got an allowance of £4/6/8 for attending the meeting and the other councillors would have got something like 2 guineas. The staff included a health inspector (who also worked with Moreton and Boonah) and myself and the Shire Clerk J.C. O. Moore.

We used to have a woman come in to polish the floors and it was all spit and polish, but some of the councillors used to stub out their cigarettes on the floor and at the end of the day, we used to think "Why did we ever have the office cleaned?" I'm sure they didn't do it at home. My father was a councillor but he didn't do things like that, but some of them did. But they were all a friendly lot and they treated me with respect.

Where was the Normanby Shire office?

It was across the street from the School of Arts. It has gone now. It was there for years and it was so cold. When I'd get to work in the winter time, there was a leaking tap at the edge of the verandah and there would be an icicle from the tap to the verandah. It was right on the watercourse there, very cold. We used to have a kerosene heater when it was really cold.

Of course there was no electricity at that time and we thought we were very upmarket when we had a duplicator - you had to put the tube of ink on it and roll it evenly on - not anything like the later ones of course. But it saved an awful lot of typing, you would type the stencil and run off the copies of the minutes or whatever had to be done and then posted them out before the meeting. It was a great experience and I enjoyed my work there.

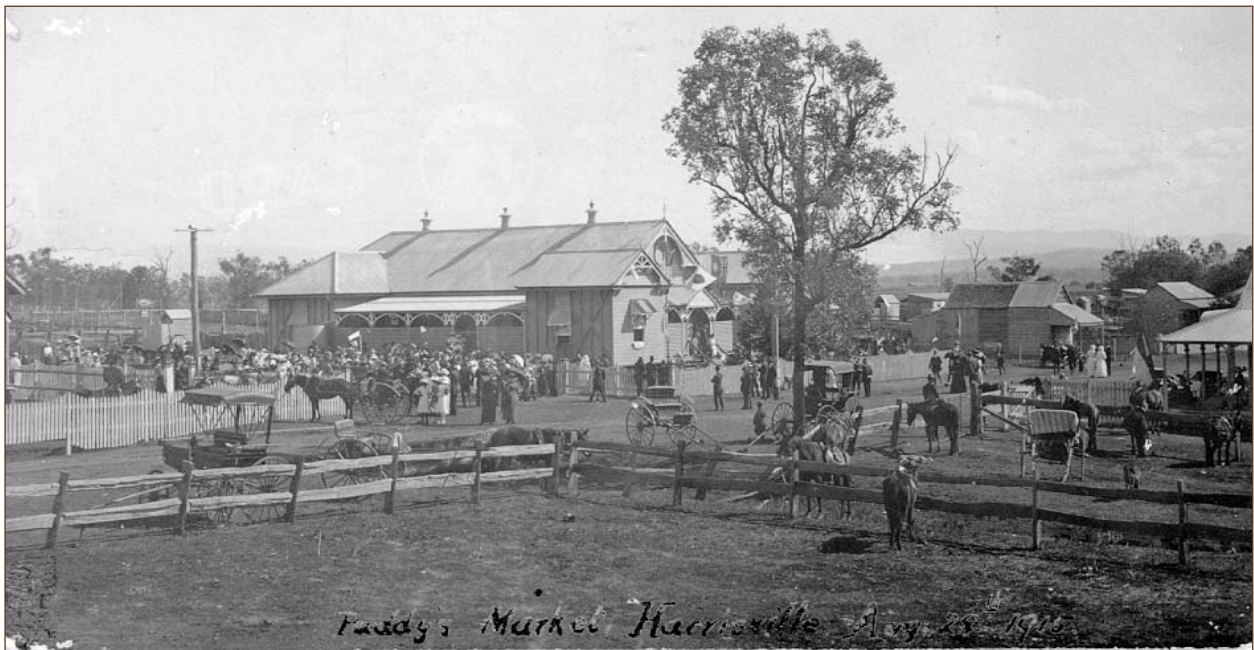
Track 02

What was the Normanby Shire Office building like?

The Normanby Shire office was not a big office, it was an old building when I went to work there. There was the main office and I think the Shire Clerk's office was a verandah that was closed in. I suppose it would have been perhaps 20 feet square. Then there was another little store room off the building, behind the Shire Clerk's office and the safe was kept in there.

One of my tasks I remember, the Council used to buy the skins of foxes and dingoes and the farmers would bring these in and get 6d a head for them. But they would only bring them in when they had had those skins for maybe a month and they were high!

They would bring them to the counter wrapped in a piece of newspaper. It was my task to count them and then take them out later and burn them. I gave the people their 6d a head - I guess that 6d a head was very welcome. People then didn't have cars and I suppose they could only bring them in when they came in to a cattle sale or pig sale or



"Paddy's Market" at Harrisville in 1915

some such thing. It gave them some pocket money but it wasn't a very pleasant job.

The bank was operating in Harrisville then - it has been a home for quite a long while now - and my duty was to go to the Post Office to get the mail. The Post Office then was in Eagle Street, at the front of a house. For a long time now, it has been in the main street. And so I used to have to go around to get the mail and post any mail in the afternoon and go to the bank and any other messages.

After meeting day, I had to go round the town and pay the accounts and any other business accounts that were required - there was the plumber and the blacksmith down the bottom of the street. There were two stores then, there was a Mr Scott Smith who had a produce store. It wasn't until after the war that Pugsleys came, I think that was a private house there then. And there were three hotels - one hotel was burned down whilst I was there but then another one was built in its place.

The railway line came through beside where the Country Women's rest room is now and the station was on the right side, going down into the town. I think the station master's residence is still there but it is a private residence now. The night officer lived further along, towards where the pig and calf sale yards were. They had a goods shed, and it was quite a busy place because a lot of produce was sent by train. But of course all those days are gone, they were closed I think in the early 1960s.

It was always a busy time in Harrisville when it was pig sale day. That was every second Monday and there used to be cattle sales and the Country Women did a lot of catering for the cattle sales for many years. Those sales were either in Harrisville, next to Mr Hayes' residence where John and Marg Hayes live now, or out at Wilson's Plains where Harry Hayes, (Mr E.J. Hayes son lived) and they had sales there.

The pig sales are still held at Harrisville but there is not nearly the amount now as there used to be during those years when I was working in Harrisville.

For a period of time, the Methodist Ladies Guild started catering at pig sales. There used to be a cafe at Harrisville but it closed down, so when people came in, they had to go to a hotel for a meal. Often they just wanted a cup of tea and a sandwich, so the Methodist ladies started catering and when we went into union, the Uniting Church ladies guild continued with the catering until the sales got to be so small that they felt it didn't warrant it. The state school decided to do some catering there last year but whether they are doing it now, I don't know.

It used to be a real event for the town, there would be vehicles parked all up and down the street and it was really a busy day and it brought business into the town.

Track 03

It was a great experience working at the Normanby office, and I enjoyed my work there. Then I was glad to go on to work at Moreton. They didn't want a senior - I was 19 when I went on to Moreton - and the office being in the town, it was wonderful.

There was a garage under the Moreton office, and I can remember how noisy it seemed to be with the machines working. You wondered how you would ever put up with the noise. After a while, you heard the silence when the engine stopped.

Would you explain where the Moreton Shire office was?

The Moreton Shire office was then in Nicholas Street [Ipswich] opposite the Memorial Hall. There was just Mr Cairns, the Shire Clerk, and myself and then the Health



Dorothy Brown (now McInnes) and Shirley Morgan in the Moreton Shire office, 1945.

Inspector who, of course, also worked with Boonah and Normanby. While I was at Normanby, the Shire Clerk was a Mr Moore who later went to Pittsworth and I believe he is still alive and in his 90s.

Mr Cairns was a wonderful man to work with and he did a lot of work during the war for Legacy. Moreton was a bigger office and had a bit more equipment of course, as was available at that time. Later on, after I left to be married in 1945, Moreton merged with Normanby and Rosewood, but it was still Moreton Shire on its own then. The shire surrounded the Ipswich city - Goodna and those areas were in it, and out to Mt Crosby, up towards Rosewood and up towards Normanby. Moreton as we know it now is quite a different area - until it merged then with Ipswich City.

It was good way of life, working for local government and in comparison to today, unless you did something terrible, you had a permanent job as long as you wished to be there, whereas I think nowadays with contracts, you don't know sometimes where your next job is to come from. But I enjoyed my working life, but I was quite happy to give it up when I married.

What sort of work did you do for Moreton Shire?

I was fortunate in that with both Moreton and Normanby, I suppose you could class it as a Girl Friday - you did all sorts of things. You dealt with the counter, you answered the phone, you did bookwork, you did typing and shorthand and it wasn't just one particular task. I think in that way, a job with so many different aspects, it made it ever so much more interesting. I can remember talking

to some of my peers at that time and they would get sick of doing one thing, day in, day out, week in, week out, whereas I had a varying position because I was the only girl in the office and there fore, it made it so much more interesting.

Track 04

I lived at Peak Crossing with my parents and I used to travel on the railmotor and that suited very well, I caught it just near our home in the morning and then home at night. When it was rate discount period, we would work Saturdays.

We actually lived about two miles out of Peak Crossing on a farm. When I was born, we then lived with my Mother's mother because she was getting elderly. After she passed away, we moved to Flinders where Dad bought a house but during all that time, he worked on his Uncle's farm and after he died, Dad and Mum and Kenneth and I went to the farm.

The railway line went past the farm and the train would stop there and Dad would put the cream on the train or the railmotor - it was a dairy farm we had. When I went to work at Normanby Shire, I used to catch the goods train, the one that went to Dugandan in the morning and I would get to work in time and then come back on that same goods train in the afternoon.

I attended the Peak Crossing State School in my state school days and sat for Scholarship and went to the

Ipswich State High. Very few children then went to secondary school when they finished their state school days, it was case of go home to help the family and I think there were only two - another girl and I - who went on to secondary school at that particular time.

During the war, we used to attend the patriotic dances at Peak Crossing Hall. They were wonderful nights. My family and I worshipped at the Presbyterian Church at Churchbank, my mother was the organist there for 27 years and my father was Session Clerk and we grew up with that type of life and they were happy years. We had a Presbyterian fellowship association, quite an active group, and we had meetings and all sorts of things. People didn't have cars and we made out own fun. There was a group of people, neighbours and friends, they would have surprise parties and we would take it in turns - we had really happy nights, they were really great.

It was when I was working for Moreton Shire that I met my future husband Don McInnes. We had known the family through the years and then we married after he came back from the war, but six months later, I had polio when I was expecting my first baby. But we have had a wonderful life, we had six children, 20 grandchildren, and we have been married for 52 years and life has been good to us. We have been given the strength from almighty God and we know that each day, we will be given strength to go on.

Track 05

Would you tell us more about your polio attack.

In May 1946, I became ill. I hadn't been well and I went away for the weekend with my mother and my mother's sister who used to be the Matron of St Andrew's in Ipswich for nearly 25 years and she knew that it was something serious that I had wrong with me, because

my leg went. She ordered the ambulance and brought me back to Ipswich and I saw Dr Donald Cameron and he then diagnosed polio and Don was sent for; we were living with Don's mother but he came down to see me.

Then they had to send me to Wattlebrae, the infectious disease ward, and I was there for I suppose a fortnight, and then I was shifted to a ward in the General Hospital and I was under Dr Harold Crawford. I had polio in both my legs. My left leg, I didn't lift off the bed for five months but it gradually came good, but my right leg and hip did not respond to treatment. However as I was expecting my first baby when I had polio, I came back then to St Andrew's in Ipswich where I had Glenys and then I was able to come home and then I had to go back to Brisbane and have a calliper made to fit with a pelvic band and life just went on from there.

We had six children who are really all of them loving and caring and my husband never complained that he ended up with someone who was handicapped from being able to milk cows, ride horses, do this, do that. But life brings these changes and that had to be accepted. But he has always been most caring, as the family all have been.

We have lived a full life, but it saddens me to think that some parents become too casual about not having any injections for the children in case of polio epidemic, because it can still happen.

Did many people in your community have polio?

At the time that I had it, our next door neighbour Ann Harsant had it and she was affected with her left arm. Because she was a child, that arm never grew. But she lived a full life and worked in Brisbane - she might be retired now.

I can remember people in my youth that they had a handicap from polio but no one knew where it came from or what caused it, it was just one of those things that happened.



George Brown (Dorothy's father) working on the farm



Don and Sandy McInnes loading hay

I think they are still learning a lot about it. I think, looking back at those times, there is a lot now who have heard of Sister Kenny and I really feel that if doctors and Sister Kenny had both got together and each listened to the other, they would have learned a terrific amount. It was Sister Kenny who told them the limb must be massaged but the doctors felt the limb should be kept without any movement.

By the time I had polio, the doctors finally were exercising it but the limb would be in a plaster that was just strapped on, not right around the leg. But Sister Kenny could have learned from the doctors, and the doctors could have learned from Sister Kenny. To me, this was one of the tragedies in life because there were a lot of people who may have had a better life because of it. But by the time I had it in '46, I think they had all learned a lot more about it. But I think maybe Sister Kenny was appreciated more in America than here.

Track 06

We lived on a dairy farm here at Radford until we retired and our sons took over the farm - we had three sons on the farm and one son is at Rathdowney in the Post Office, he and his wife. And our daughters are in Brisbane and Mackay.

It was a busy life, children growing up, children to be got off to school. I can remember saying to somebody who had no children, "We have three breakfasts in the morning, the high school ones have breakfast, then the state school ones have breakfast and then we have breakfast in peace!" This lady said "Oh you should organise things better than

that" and I said "Well, the oldest ones had to go, then the next ones would help at the dairy for a while, then they'd come for breakfast." So we felt that was the better way of organising it.

It was a wonderful thing when we got electricity through in 1948, and even to have a refrigerator and an electric iron was absolutely marvellous. At that time, the main went through from Ipswich I suppose to Boonah and there were certain pockets then that didn't get electricity until a number of years, but it was really great to have the refrigerator. You didn't have to have oily butter in the summertime then.

What did you use before that?

Before that, we used to use what was called a Coolgardie safe. My husband put a board across underneath the galvanised tank and on that board, we sat a dish with water in and then we had a crock dish with a cover on it and in that, we would put the butter. A cloth went over that and into the water and the breeze blowing on that kept the butter - well it wasn't hard like from a refrigerator, but it was much more edible. Before that, the oil butter!

I can remember as a girl, one of my jobs on the farm at home was to make the butter and I never knew when the butter "came" because it was so thin. It wasn't really pleasant.

With no refrigerator, we had a meat safe hanging outside the window and the breeze blowing on it would keep the meat, but you would have to cook the meat up as soon as you got it from the butcher because you knew it wouldn't keep indefinitely.

But in those days, a butcher came twice a week, a baker

came three days a week, the local grocer at Munbilla would contact us during the week and ask for our order and they would deliver on Friday afternoon or Saturday. Nowadays, you go to the supermarket for everything, and I think in those sort of ways, we have gone back a way - though we do have a baker calling now once a fortnight from Marburg and it is quite wonderful, something you don't have to think about and you don't have to watch that the bread might get crushed in the supermarket trolley.

I think there was more neighbourliness perhaps, though I can't say we have never had neighbourliness here because everybody has been very friendly all throughout the years. But unfortunately, you read and you hear of, more in the city perhaps, where you are perhaps quite afraid, you don't know who your neighbours are. We had a very old friend in Harrisville Mrs McCann and if she thought anything was wrong, if she heard anyone wasn't well, she would be out like a shot, she was absolutely wonderful.

I suppose I have been fortunate too that we have been able to have home help. Through the years when the children especially were little, there was a lady who lived not far from the Harrisville Cemetery and she used to come once a week and she would help me, she'd break the back of the ironing and do the floors for me, I could cope with the washing and ironing up to that extent, but she helped a lot. Then there were other girls later on who came once a week and they would do the things I would find hard to do, but I cope with most things myself. The family grew up and they were willing to help. Now I have a lady who comes when I need her, once every three weeks, and she gets into the corners that I find hard to get into. But we have been really fortunate in being able to get help when we needed it.

Track 07

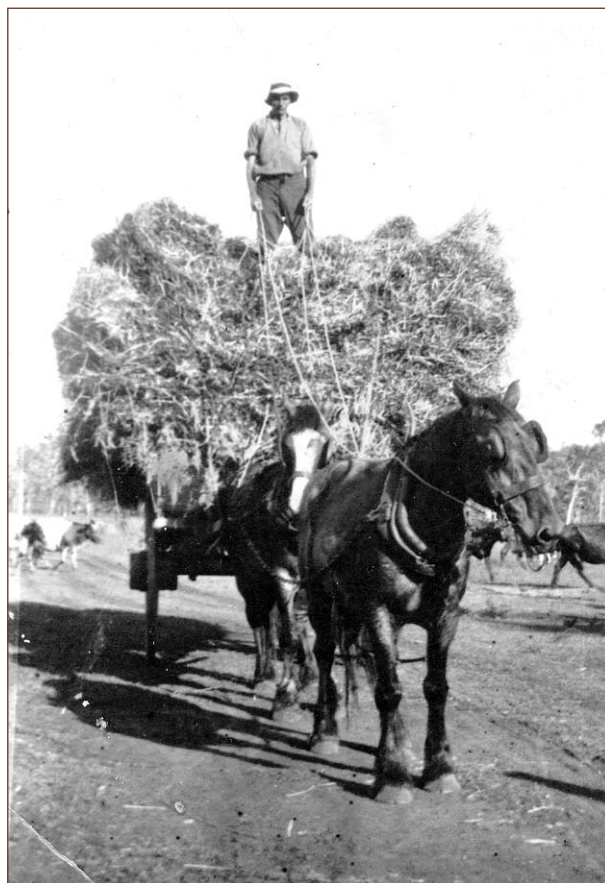
What was life like in Harrisville?

There might be a few more houses there now, but there are people coming and going. The grand-children might mention so-and-so and we say "Where do they live" and find they live in Harrisville.

When our children were going to school, we were involved with the school and you knew everybody. I suppose there was a more permanent way of living then, there weren't so many people just coming for a while and going away.

I was involved with the mothers' club and for a while I was vice-president and I suppose always involved with the Harrisville Presbyterian Church - we became Uniting Church in 1977 - and I have held office there in the women's fellowship. Now we have a family fellowship and I've held office of some kind for I suppose 30 years. But I'm not as active as I was and my husband isn't as well as he was so we tend to be not quite so active.

About 10 years ago, we started a group of elderly people and we meet in one another's homes. Of the group, we



Sandy McInnes



Harrisville Centenary Parade 1963

have lost three or four mainly through death, old age, and there are still 10 of us and we meet every couple of months and we really have a wonderful time, it's a really friendly and caring way of meeting.

In the days when I was connected with the school, it was a wonderful time each year for the kids when they had a fancy dress ball. Although I didn't have any prowess at making some magnificent costume for them, our kids always dressed up in something - I can remember our



Sandy McInnes on the binder, Don on the tractor.

eldest daughter getting a prize with a shirt of her fathers and a little nightcap I had made and her grandfather's pipe well and truly covered with Durex tape. The judges tended to give prizes where a lot of thought went into them, not perhaps people who had just hired a costume.

Albert Hall, later the chairman of Moreton made a wonderful costume for one of his boys, a parrot in a cage. Some of the people had a lot of ability. They still have the balls. I try to go along at breaking up times for the school concert but gradually the families are reaching the stage where they have no more at state school.

Our family have always worked hard for the community and for the school.

Track 08

The family is still dairying here, and the boys have added to the farm by buying a few other pieces, two live on the hill farm here, and Ross and Pam live down the road, they built a home there. So they all have very busy lives, they are all involved in something to do with the dairying.

The milk goes to Jacaranda at Booval, the tankers come mostly at night. They milk up to 250 cows - there are three families to keep. They have updated, they bought a new vat last year which cost a colossal amount of money, but they keep abreast of modern farming and they grow crops. They need to keep the milk supply up, they have a big quota.

The Radford School was built on 5 acres that the Education Department bought from my father-in-law in the 1920s or early 1930s, and the school was built and opened in 1932. If I remember correctly, I think he sold that 5 acres to the Education Department for £5 (or possibly £5 an acre).

Miss McEneiry was the school teacher there, then she became ill and died and her sister came from wherever

she was teaching on the Downs, I think it might have been in the Killarney area, and she was here until the school closed. A lot of the pupils didn't sit for scholarship [at Radford], they went to Milora and sat for Scholarship there, but it was very convenient for a lot of people to come to the Radford School. I can't remember the figures of just how many pupils attended, but then the numbers became so small that, like a lot of country schools, they closed and they merged into the Harrisville area and I think now, there is only one one-teacher school in this area and that would be Warrill View.

So then my husband and his brother Sandy bought the land back from the Education Department and the school was sold for removal and I believe it went to a farm out at Mutdapilly or Mt Forbes.

When my husband was a boy, he attended the Milora School and he had to walk three and a half miles each morning and then each afternoon. Later on, he rode a horse. He wasn't alone in walking to school, there were quite a number from Wilson's Plains area and Radford who went to Milora School and they all went along together and had loads of fun along the way.

He left school when he was 12 and then came to work on the farm where he has worked until he retired 16 years ago. He is now nearly 86 but he is still very alert in his mind and is interested in all manner of things.

After the war, about 1951 or 1952, they started school buses to pick up children, but they didn't have them before the war. We have been very lucky because there are several patches where parents have to take their children to school in the morning because they are not on the bus run and go for them in the afternoon. When our daughter Glenys was at high school, she went on the railmotor and back at night, but in winter time, she stayed with a cousin in Ipswich. The high school bus started after that time, my husband was on the bus committee. The bus is still going, it comes just to Parcell's Corner.



Flinders Post Office

Track 09

I lived at Flinders from about 1926 to 1932. There are a lot of changes since then. My mother had the Post Office at Flinders. It used to be at the Railway Station, but for some reason - I don't know why - my mother was asked to take it on and she conducted the Post Office from our home. There used to be a notice on the fence that said Post Office and a post box for people to post the mail.

Mum would meet the railmotor when it came up in the morning from Ipswich to Boonah and she would get the mail bag and then put the mail bag with any mailed post back on the railmotor in the afternoon as it returned to Ipswich. She had to seal the bag with sealing wax and a seal - I can't remember what was on the seal, but that was the way they did it then and people came to the house to collect their mail.

My father had bought that house in the middle 1920s and at the end of the allotment which was a v-shape on the corner, there was a blacksmith's shop and after we left to go on to a farm a mile away, a Mr and Mrs Millen rented the house and the blacksmith's shop from my father for some years and Mrs Millen then conducted the Post Office, but I can't remember when it finished. In that time, a lot of the railway stations in the Fassifern area conducted the Post Office from the railway station itself.

At Radford, it was conducted that way for years - until after we were married in 1945. At Peak Crossing, the Post Office was at a store behind the railway station. In the late 1940s, I think, all of that finished and we had a mail run that came out from Harrisville or Peak Crossing.

Flinders was a township and there is a most interesting mention of what it was like in the earlier days in the Peak Crossing 125th Anniversary book. They used to load a lot of logs from Flinders and Peak Crossing. Pig sale days were very busy - people used to send their pigs to, I think Dalgetys - and they used to go on special tricks.

I can remember a butcher shop there - a Mr Marcus Fisher used to run that in my time, and I think after that it was a Mr Bauer.

I believe there was a shop near the church property at Flinders, I don't really remember that, and it then moved to Peak Crossing and that was the one that had the Post Office behind the railway station.

The station itself at Flinders was on the road side of the railway line and a big goods shed was on the other side and 100 yards up the hill from there was where the fettle and his wife and family used to live - the house is still there.