

Jean Kickbusch

Marburg

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Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan

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Track 01

My name is Jean Kickbusch and I was married to Bernie Kickbusch of Marburg who was from a family which was one of the old selectors. He died three and a half years ago and I have lived by myself ever since with a lot of memories.

My childhood - well I had a childhood of milking cows by hand like a lot of children did. We lived on a property on the Marburg Range. My father's name was Nicholson; he was English by birth but came into the district of German settlement and I think he found it a little bit strange because some of the German families could still talk German to a certain extent. He was a successful farmer until my Mother died and then things completely changed.

But as for childhood, well it was early rise no matter what. When you got to about five or six, you milked your couple of cows and then it was get dressed for school, walk three miles to school - just imagine! - and then walk three miles home in the heat of the Queensland weather.

There was a road which is still there across the Marburg Range - it is called Pieper's Road at present. It was bitumen in my times, but our hill road was still dirt and I mean dirt, no gravel. We had no vehicle for a long time, people couldn't afford it, but when Dad did get an old T-model Ford, many times it was left at the bottom of the hill because in those times it did rain, and it rained for days and sometimes weeks and that vehicle would stay at the bottom because there was no way of getting it up

to the top. If you tried, you got bogged and there you stayed.

What did the family do on the farm?

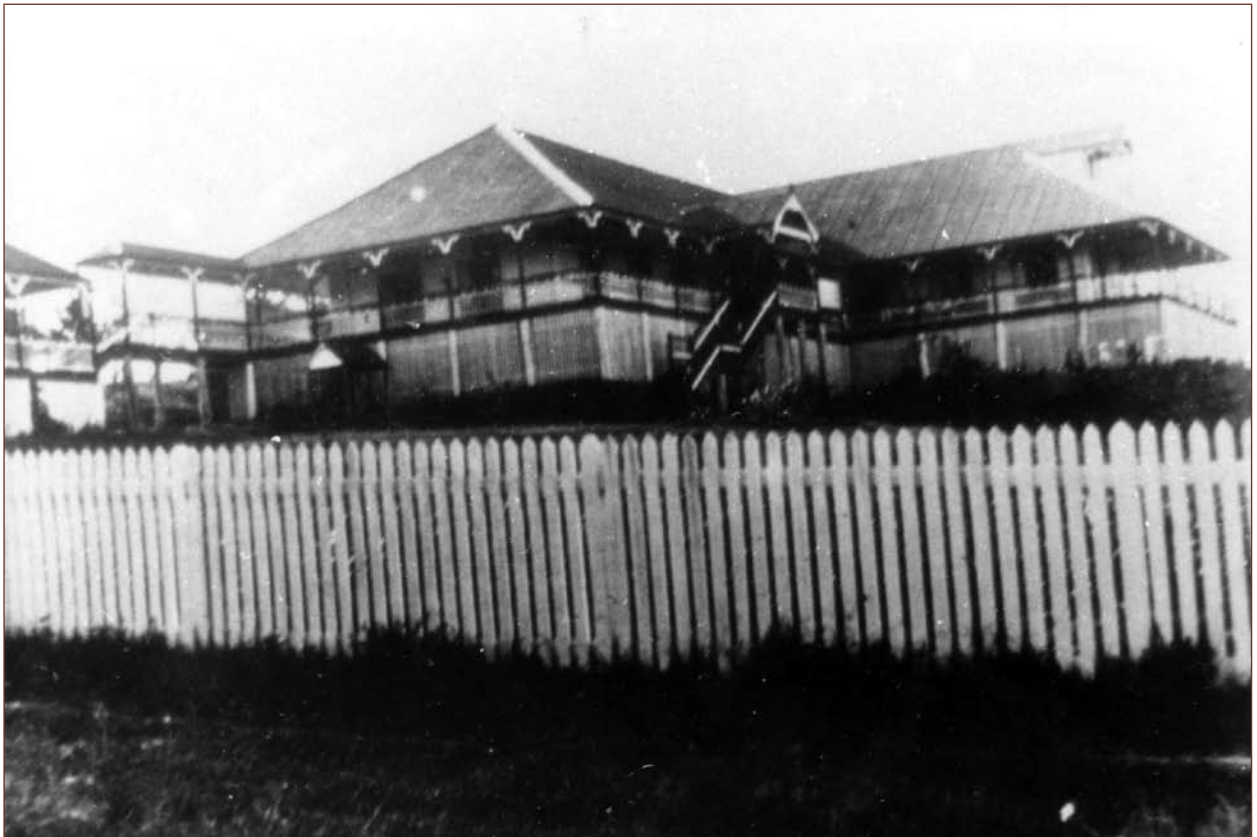
Dad used to plough, with horses of course, and he used to have cows and we'd milk cows. It wasn't a milk supply, it was cream and the excess milk was sent to the pigs, we always had pigs. The cream was picked up at the bottom of the hill - no cars came to the top. The cream sat at the bottom of the hill until he picked it up and it was often in the sun which it should never have been, you find out these days, and then it was eventually taken to Ipswich.

Pigs were always kept and they were taken to Marburg which had a railway line and a train. There were yards at Marburg and the calves and pigs were loaded on the train.

My Dad had mainly Jersey cows with a few reds and that seemed to be the district selection in those days.

As for milking cows, it was a long time before machines came in and my dad never ever had machines as such. We had no electricity for one thing, none at all. Just before my Mother died, he rigged up a little one-bucket milker as they called it, with a little engine and a little air pump and we milked cows with one little set of cups and that was great. I could milk cows with just myself then, starting them off by hand and then putting the cups on them and going on to the next one. It cut time in half.

You always had the cows to milk before you went to



Dr Sirois' hospital at Marburg

school, and you had to milk them when you came home. Then you would come inside. Food was nothing elaborate. Sometimes Dad shot pigeons and we would have pigeon and pigeon soup, or we would have a hare, we would soak it in vinegar and we would have roast hare, wild duck, wallabies - wallaby tail soup goes down very well if you have ever tasted it, it's as good as ox-tail any day. And that is how we lived.

My father was a great believer in good food. He was a believer in wholemeal bread and Dances always made wholemeal bread. We had our bread delivered into the cream can at the bottom of the hill by the baker once a week. We didn't have it delivered at first, dad used to go down to get it. Milk, of course, we always had our supply ourself.

What year was this?

Well, I was born in 1930, so it would have been the '30s and '40s.

We used to get our meat from a butcher in Marburg, a Retchlugg. I can remember Dad coming home (my Dad was a very self-reliant fellow) with steak, and much to Mum's disgust, he would stack up the old wood stove, throw the steaks on top and whoosh! smoke! and Mum had a black kitchen. Mum used to give up cleaning it because he did that, but the steak tasted good, better than sticking it in a frypan. It was Dad who chopped the wood.

The German people in Minden had a brass band and

they would put concerts together and we would walk to Minden, there was no other transport. They put on such lovely concerts, it's all gone.

Eventually, the pictures came in and Marburg had the pictures. They were held where Jack Airey (?sp) had his garage. It had old canvas seats and it was nothing in the night to hear one split because they were old. It was the Saturday outing for the young people of Marburg - and not just the young ones, the older people went.

But then we'd walk three miles home, no worry about being attacked or anything like that. There were about eight of us and we'd walk right up the road and gradually one would drop off here and there as we went. And there was a little cafe on top of the hill. I don't know if it really had a name but we called it Linnings, near the Hospital. Dr Sirois' wife was a Linning.

We'd call in there and have a high time, we'd have fried eggs and saveloys as they called them at that time, and we'd dawdle around. The girls used to get into trouble - and I was one - for getting home late. It used to take us ages to walk home, but that was our outing and we had a good time.

Later on, some of the young fellows managed to get a loan of their fathers' cars and pick up a whole mob and we'd go in the cars then. They were old tourers. My Dad had an old T-model Ford and then an old Rugby. When I got married, we had a Rugby with a cloth hood.

Track 02

Eventually, in a roundabout way, we ended up on my father's farm. We also got part of my husband's father's farm, so we ended up right on top of the Marburg Range, which had a beautiful outlook. We used to grow much the same things and we had no gravel on the road for many years either and we had no electricity. We started off with the one-can milker which was left on the place.

I can't remember what year we got electricity but when we did finally get it, we built new bails because the old bails were only little slab places, and the little dairy had been away from the building and my husband used to carry the milk up in kerosene tins. Many times if it was wet, he would fall and away went the milk. He or I would turn the separator and we did that for years until the electricity came. Then we got the brand new shed, we got four sets of cups for milking and we thought we were just about in heaven. So that was our start-off.

After quite a few years, the Council gravelled the hill. That was a mighty turnabout!

We were eventually allocated a milk quota. Our kids were grown up then and the two older ones had jobs, and we thought this was all right. We used to grow vegetables, so we went out of vegetables and thought with just my husband and I that this was pretty easy going. But the girl decided she wanted to go back on the farm and brought another girl with her from the middle of town and we went back into growing vegetables - which isn't easily done, it wasn't in those times anyway. We had no irrigation and we grew those vegetables with the weather the way it was. We used to have beans and tomatoes and gooseberries and melons, rockmelons, and we survived on that. We had a little roadside stall at the top of the range for many years.

Then the road cut through and went a different way, so we lost our fruit and vegetable shop - which was only a tiny little thing anyway.

Then we existed by sending things to the markets. We used to grow the gooseberries and we'd pick them all day, come home at night and milk the cows, have our tea and we'd sit around the tables and shell gooseberries (as we called it, shelling or husking) and then my husband and I would go to the markets about 2 o'clock in the morning, drop them off and come home, have a few hours sleep and start again. Life wasn't too easy.

Were the seasons a problem to you with no rain?

No, because it did rain. Now and again we would lose a crop, but it did rain. We used to grow cabbages and beans without irrigation. In later life, we enlarged the dam and we did irrigate a little bit, but not a lot. We were what you call dry land farmers.

What we grew - and I'm not boasting - was better tasting than what you buy now. The potatoes, the potatoes were beautiful tasting, tomatoes just seemed to have a different

flavour... and gooseberries of course went to the markets because they were great jam making fruit.

What was the water supply?

Tanks... we knew how to save water. Well, in the early stages you'd only have a proper bath in a big round galvanised tub once a week, and the rest was a sponge bath out of the dish. But then as people could afford more tanks, it wasn't so bad; and the bathrooms went onto the houses and hand basins went in and life was a bit different. Toilets were outside closets until later in life when we got septic, but otherwise you had your earth closet outside. It wasn't very nice to go out at night - you'd go out with your torch and often there was a snake or a frog or spider sitting in there.

Everybody lived the same way, and a lot of people struggled and struggled but they got there... and a lot of people had big families - which I didn't, my family was only my brother and myself.

Track 03

Were you conscious of Marburg being a German community?

Well, yes and no. Even to this day, they still hold their ideas of making their sausage, their German sausage or Wurst as they call it. I can remember my husband's grandmother - and she was a very old lady at the time - there would be the great day of making sausage. The mince would go in; which was beef, and then so much pork... and then so much spice and she would measure it all and then they would mix it in these great big tubs, mainly by hand... and she would take the raw mince and she knew how much salt and how much spice should go in just by tasting it.

Then they had their sausage machines and it went into the sausage skins. The skins were the insides of the pig, and she was very particular they would get washed and washed and washed and rewashed... and then they were *stripped* onto the sausage machines and the machine would just pump in the mince to a certain fullness and the strings would go on and they'd be hung in the smokehouse. I think they used to smoke them close on six weeks I think... four to six weeks before they thought they were ready.

Then they used to make what they called White Pudding. They'd mince up the liver and things like this and they would stuff it into skins and boil them in the big boilers. Some of the family still make it, but in those times, it was absolutely traditional. Almost every family would have their killing day and their sausage making day, and some families would combine and get together to do it.

They had their different breads and they used to make their own certain cakes, but other than that, I think they were Australian to the core.

Were there German traditional weddings?



Building the “new” road over the range at Marburg. The route was altered again in the 1970s.

The weddings would take sometimes over 24 hours. Most of the weddings were in churches, and then [the reception] was held at the family houses. The old families would be boiling plum puddings and doing duck and drakes for days before. I can't remember a lot of this, the information has just come down from my grandparents. They would tell us what great times they had, and what food they had!

They must have had so much food and they were big weddings evidently. They were only poor people but when it came to weddings, the food seemed to turn up from somewhere between all of them and it would be a really outgoing German wedding. Most of them intermarried into German families.

The German families around here were mostly Lutheran faith, or else German Baptist and to this day, I think the majority of German families are still Lutheran.

Were the churches important?

Yes, the churches were very important. Even in the early days they'd have their horse and buggies or their wagons to carry the full complement of kids and they'll all go to their various churches. In fact what, there are three Lutheran churches in the Minden Valley. Marburg has one Lutheran church, but it was a big German settlement around here. I think quite a few around here used to have their couple of rows of wine grapes, made their own wine and got inebriated at times I think.

Track 04

Do you remember Dr. Sirois' hospital?

Yes, I remember Dr. Sirois' hospital; we used to take a shortcut through there to get to school, and I can remember being immunised there but the old doctor had moved then and he moved up further to his big home and a Dr. Williams took over. He would have been more or less my family's doctor, more so than Dr. Sirois because Dr. Sirois was an old man. But as kids we'd come from school on a hot day and we'd call in at Dr. Sirois' house and the matron as we always called her - which was his wife - would supply us with iced drinks. Now that was rare in those times and we'd all have these glasses of iced water and we'd set off again... and it was all uphill you know and we had to walk.

Old Sirois got a good name in Marburg I believe, even in dentistry. I believe he used to tell them that it wouldn't hurt much, but it hurt, he didn't feel it but they did.

He was the instigator of getting the road over the range, which was a big thing. Just imagine now in these days the car winding up there, [the old road] you can go up that road at about half past four of an afternoon - which I often do - and you'll hit spots that you cannot see a thing, not a thing! I don't know how there weren't more accidents, and there were very few accidents on that road. I can remember too big semis going over though because their

load shifted as they came around the bend, they ended up right down the gully.

Do you remember buses coming through?

Yes, Marburg was the halfway stopping place because the main road, the highway as they used to call it in those days, came right through the centre of Marburg and those coaches would always stop for a cup of tea. Marburg was a real little place on the map for that.

I don't remember the butter factories or anything like that, that was gone, and the sugar mill was gone. My husband's people remembered them, but I don't. I was the next generation. I remember a few floods through Marburg, we were so thankful we lived on a hill.

So the 1974 Flood came through Marburg?

Marburg is prone to floods, it's in a valley and it's a natural water course. If the two creeks came down together, Marburg had to look out, and this happened in 1974. When they built the new highway, they did not leave enough room under the bridge. Marburg people told them but the engineers knew better, so in 1974, the two creeks came down in flood and couldn't get away through the bridge. The water whirled like a big whirlpool and built up like a dam and went into everything, where it had never ever gone in all the years before. It was a big mistake, they should have had another big opening in the bridge.

What were the big days in the year?

School picnics would have been big events, and church picnics. I can't tell you much about the show, we didn't go to shows very much although my husband used to ride in shows as a young man. But church picnics were big days everywhere and the Sunday School Christmas trees and concert. School concerts were another big thing; the school teachers used to get the kids dressing up and performing and it used to be a big night. That happened almost every year.

I could tell some tales of school days. Many a smack across the hands or the knuckles with a ruler to make you toe the line, and the boys used to get the cane. I think my brother in law got the cane nearly every day for mischief. One particular teacher - better not mention names, had a bad temper - and when he roared Marburg could hear him. He had a strap, and every time he got a new strap it ended up in the Black Snake Creek... somehow the boys used to get it out of the press [school cupboard] and it would disappear. Of course next time around when he went looking for his strap it was gone, and oh would he roar!

The boys'd have a disagreement and he was one that used to say 'Right boys you'll settle this after school.' and he would referee them down in the calf yard or the pig yards, and he would referee a good old fight. Sometimes they'd go home with black eyes, but I don't know, seemed to settle the argument. There were no such things as these

days with their knives and things like that, they just had a fight and next day it was forgotten.

The Black Snake Creek was totally different, the railway lines used to cross it and we would cross over, walk over the creek on the railway sleepers, that was our short cut to Marburg. That's all gone, and the yards have all gone, and the railways are gone, there's nothing any more of that. With the highway, it's just a few minutes and you're in Ipswich nowadays.

Did you go into Ipswich or Brisbane very much?

Ipswich was our shopping area. My mother in law used to say that was her big day. They'd set off in a sulky, it would take them half a day to get there and they'd do their shopping and come home again.

So they went by sulky rather than by train?

Yes there was a train that used to wend right around Rosewood but the old steam engine took a long time to get there.

Another day's outing once a year was the trip to Redcliffe with the old boat Koopa. We'd catch the train on those times. I think it was really coal miners' trip. But I remember as a child going on that a few times, I thought it was great. Some people didn't like the water but I simply loved the water and the boats. The old Koopa was well known plying the trade around Redcliffe.

It would have taken a long time to get to Redcliffe?

Yes, I know we'd set off from home very early in the morning and catch the train. It would take us a whole day more or less to get there, have something to eat and come home again, it was just an outing. I think it happened practically every year. Mum wouldn't go anywhere like that, she hated water, but Dad taught us to swim when we were three years old - in the dams of course, there was nothing else, and I can remember that he was so determined that I should swim. Mainly it was dog paddle as we called it, but at least I could swim across the dam just dog paddling. He was quite happy to know I could do that because he could tell tales of being in the navy years ago. It was very touching for him; in 1926 or thereabouts, a school ferry I think it was in Sydney harbour was struck by another boat and sank. I couldn't tell you now how many children's lives were lost, but he never ever got over that. He was one of the sailors who were asked to dive for them; he was a pretty good swimmer and he never ever forgot diving for those children and he said if some of them had been able to swim, they would have been safe. I can remember him saying, that 'You kids are going to learn to swim', and swim we did.

Did you ever go up the Brisbane river, swimming?

Yes. There again he was very particular and always went in first to make sure there was nothing there or no logs that had been brought down because he'd almost got drowned himself in the Brisbane river with a whirlpool. He was a tough father, but a very caring father. I got many a hiding

for what was next to nothing I suppose, when you see what children do these days - but I knew what I got it for, you just took it for granted that if you misbehaved, you would cop it. His favourite weapon as you might say was a Pepperina switch, off the Pepperina tree. Nice and switchy and pliable because that stings!

But I tell you, it made you toe the line, you weren't anxious to do the same thing over again. He was a good father, very wise and very caring, but not a father to say "I love you", he wasn't like that. But we knew he loved us, we just took it for granted, he loved us and when I lost him I lost a good father. Mum died very suddenly, he was left 40 years without her; so he didn't have it easy.

Track 05

My maiden name was Nicholson, which was typical English, and my mother's name was Auld which was Scotch. My father came out from England as a child with his mother, father and sister. They were people of typical English background I suppose. I know grandmother used to work in the mill, she used to say how the kids were all sent to the mills at ten years old and how hard it was and what long hours they worked. Today, children aren't allowed to do such things, but that is what was common in England in those times. When she came out here, everybody was so-called poor, and she did a lot of housework for people and the kids went to school whichever place they shifted to. As my Dad got older, and Mum and he got married, they lived in Marburg as I've said before.

My husband's people were Germans. The old great-grandparents would have been original settlers, and I believe the old man is one of the first - or is the first I believe - buried in the Marburg cemetery. I can't just exactly tell you where they came from, probably Prussia, but I'm not sure... and they settled against the side of the hill here just near my place. The old house is gone, it would have been pulled down about 1945 I suppose and remodelled. I think there are a couple of original walls in the house that's there, and that place was eventually owned by Earl Kickbusch, and he lived there all his married life too. Old Jack Kickbusch, who was my husband's grandfather, would have built many a house around the place and he did build onto the old place I believe. Vance Kickbusch, my husband's brother, was another carpenter in the family and he built many houses around Marburg and I think almost every second house would have been built by Vance Kickbusch. He died of leukaemia almost seven years ago and there aren't many Kickbusch's left out of this particular generation.

The house I'm living in now was built in 1954 or thereabouts. It was built originally for my husband and myself; it was allowable for another house to be built on a family property at the time, which you can't do now. We had only lived here three months when my mother died very suddenly and we moved up to the range property and

that's where we spent the rest of our married life. It has a beautiful view, a beautiful outlook. I ended up coming back here to look after Bernie's mother when his father died suddenly. Bernie's father was a real gardener and he planted palm trees and bottle trees which practically surround the house here now. Everyone wonders how long they've been planted, well they'd been planted at least 40 years. They have lovely great big bulbs on their trunk, they look so distinctive. He was a gardener and built stone walls which are still here to this day. I hate to touch them or do other things with them. He had a real flair for setting up gardens, he didn't like milking cows very much I must say, he always seemed to be missing when it came to milking time; and the womenfolk always seemed to be around the dairy and the bails. Anyway, that was his flair; farming, general farming and around the house. It always had a beautiful lawn and a beautiful stone wall and his bottle and palm trees.

The Kickbusch name now is known for the fruit stalls and the fruit shop on the highway?

Yes, Kickie's Fruit Shop on the highway is owned by my oldest son and he seems to have taken after his father with that same flair. I said before about the little fruit shop we had on the range before the highway was altered. My son had done a building technician course and all of a sudden he came home one day and said to his father "Dad there's piece of ground down there that's cut off by the new highway, what about setting up a fruit shop?" ...so that's what happened. We set up a fruit shop and he now is the complete owner, and runs it himself; and that has been there 20 years. He seems to like the vegetables.

When we were first married, my husband was so-called Marburg greengrocer. We used to have a little old tourer car, and we would stack that with all the vegetables we had growing - cabbage, lettuce, carrots, shallots, you name it - he had it there and he packed it to the hood and certain days each week he would go around Marburg as the greengrocer and people looked for him to come those particular days. The old vehicle served us well, and we had it for many years and then in later life my husband was a Sunday school teacher in the Church of Christ at Marburg, and he used to go round of a Sunday morning picking up the children in the old tourer again... and as the hood wore out, the kids stood up and waved to everybody through the hood. Not allowable these days of course, but we used to have about 10 kids in that vehicle and it was happy gathering of a Sunday morning as he picked them up, but that old car is no more. Somebody would have done it up I suppose, it would have been a beautiful old car... but eventually we went to the Holden and he was a real Holden man.

Track 06

Have things changed much in Marburg, in the last say 10 or 20 years? Were there many people still farming?

No, in the last 20 years farmers have moved out. The

thing is the young ones don't want to take over because it's a seven day a week job and they just go for other jobs and a 40-hour week and that's what they look for. Whereas every second farm for sure was a dairy farm, I think there's only about six in the district now. Those that are here have had to really come up to date with their buildings- the DPI is very particular with health regulations. The herds of the cows changed from Jerseys and AIS to Friesians - the black and whites. We had Jerseys and AIS and crossed ones, and when my daughter and husband took over and replaced them with the black and white. [AIS – Australian Illawarra Shorthorn]

But they found out that the Friesians are not high in their protein and their milk content... so back they go to get a few Jerseys. So now they're running I'd say about a dozen Jerseys to about 50 or 60 Friesians and I think most herds are the same. It's so strange that to us, they are all cows and yet they're all so different and different in their milk content. Whereas the Friesians supply the milk, it's very low butter fat and very low protein; the Jerseys don't have such a milk supply but they have high protein and high butter fat. So one complements the other when they run them together... that has been a big change in the area because you hardly ever saw a Friesian cow.

Another big change in the area was when the first grey Ferguson tractors came in the area... and they had hydraulic lifts, which years ago you didn't see, it was all drag ploughs and everything was dragging behind the tractors... and this one was manufactured with hydraulics and the farmers thought it was great on the hills because the others were useless on the hills. So into the district came the little Fergies, as we called them, and I think every farm had a Fergie tractor. Eventually it went to Massey-Ferguson of course, companies amalgamated, and now it's the red Massey-Ferguson's that are around. That was one big change for the farms, the old horses were cast aside and in came in the little four wheeled workers.

Approximately when did that happen?

After the war, it would have been 1945, '47, something like that.

And before that people were still using horses?

Horses, yes. There were tractors around of course but all the equipment had to be dragged behind you see; but these hydraulic ones just picked whatever attachment was on it, they just picked it up and away it went, carried it here and there - totally different.

Track 07

Just some things I remember about those days.

My Mum had her own made up recipe, before she went to the cow yards she would take about half a cup of sago or tapioca or rice and she'd set it with 5 cups of milk and a little sugar and she would put that in the oven, no eggs or

anything like that, and she would come home every now and again and give it a stir and it is simply lovely - has a totally different flavour than cooking it on top of the stove. It would have to cook for almost 2 hours though, you'd have to keep stirring it because it would settle too much but it thickens up and it makes a lovely pudding.

Children sometimes used to get the croup - not my family but others did - and one of our remedies was taking a desert spoon of methylated spirits and two of vinegar and three of water, and then squeezing a cloth in that mix - which was pretty putrid - and putting it around the throat and then covering it with a dry cloth... and they seemed to think it worked well, I can't speak from experience because we didn't suffer from croup. But that was an idea the old families had.

When anyone got sick, we didn't run to the doctor too easily those days. I can remember getting sick one night when we had visitors who were busy playing the old organ. I said to my mum 'I've got a pain in my stomach' - I was 10 years old at the time. I went to bed and I ended up with such pain that I couldn't stand it; and the next morning, Dad as he was, so caring, he came in and I heard him say to mum "Well if she's no better by the time we've finished milking she's going to the doctor, I think she's got appendicitis." So they quickly milked the cows and away we went by 2 o'clock I'd been operated on.

So at 10 years old my appendix were gone, and that was old doctor Williams, who had been out here at Sirois'. When he left Marburg and went back to Ipswich we still went to him as patients and he was the one who operated. Kids used to get the common complaints, measles, whooping cough, I had whooping cough - I'll never forget it, I was about 5 or 6 at the time, and you didn't know when you were going to draw the next breath, it was terrible... and chicken pox, I went through the lot I think, except mumps, I don't think I ever had mumps.

I always suffered with earache as a child, and it was never just earache, it would end up as an abscess. My Dad stayed up all night with he, he'd say to Mum "You go into the other bed and have your rest, I'll see to her". And he would go and take the old frypan and warm it up on the old wood stove - it was usually a winter's night when this would happen - and put salt into it and put it into a flour bag and bring that back to bed. I would stand it so hot. This would go on until approximately 3 o'clock in the morning and all of a sudden there would be a little crackle and I would now it had burst - the pain was gone. That happened to me time and time again until sulfa drugs came on the market.

When my Grandfather was dying of cancer, Mum and I (I was about five or six) we used to walk over to see him, that was about three or four miles. Dad couldn't afford to run the car, so we would walk. She would have my little brother in a billy cart as we called it, and she would walk and pull that billy cart all that distance.

After my Grandfather died, his son and his wife lived there and they took in a schoolteacher. My brother was

about six at this time. We went over one day and this school teacher had been sick and we didn't know what was wrong with her at that time. After so many days, my brother was sick and he was violently ill with such a raging temperature. By that time, we found out that the teacher had dengue fever and had not been covered with a mosquito net. My Dad was a very wary person as far as sickness was concerned and made sure that boy was covered with a net constantly, and we did not get it. But he was ill for quite a while.

Families lost kiddies within 24 hours with meningitis. It would strike very quickly. My husband's grandfather, in their family, they lost a little girl with meningitis.

Track 08

About the middle of our married life, we had people who went into shares with us with gooseberries. We used to grow them on the side of the hills. The men used to brush down lantana ground and chip in the gooseberries just with a hoe, and it used to grow great big bushes of beautiful gooseberries.

Almost a thing of the past these days, although there are still a few round Marburg still do grow gooseberries. My daughter and her husband did for years too, but in recent years they found it too dry. They found it quite a good sideline to the dairying too.

We were in shares with these folk and we had all this beautiful stuff growing. We had tomatoes, ready to pick, rockmelons and watermelons, beans. I think we had picked some rockmelons, but everything else was ready.

A storm had gone round, and we were in the cowyard milking with machines when all of a sudden my husband looked out and said "That storm has turned and it's coming back. Woe betide us, it has come around to the south and come back".

By the time he said it, the hailstones were starting to fall. We had a whole yard full of cows. It started so suddenly and it blew, nothing fell straight with the force of the wind.

Our two kids were in the house. My husband and I hugged each other, we were so distraught. The cows were being chopped about. We were hugging one another and we were yelling and we couldn't understand one word, it was one complete roar.

When it stopped, the first thing we thought about was our kids. The cows were bleeding, one little calf was dead, another one had its eye knocked out.

When we went home, fortunately the older fellow was hanging on to the little girl under the kitchen table. There was glass lying everywhere.

The power was gone, it was dark by then, I went into my bedroom and water had saturated everything. There wasn't a window left in the house, the tanks were

ruptured, the glass had cut my bedspread. The hail had come straight in and it was so deep in my duchess, it had indented. They were as big as cricket balls and jagged.

You would swear we had a new fence, all that hardwood was stripped. Every tree was absolutely stripped

Next day, Bernie went down to the cultivation, he said "You come with me".

We've had hailstorms before, but the residue was always there and you knew what it was.

But there wasn't a thing – the ground was bare. As that hail came, it chopped it up and the wind was so ferocious that it just took everything with it. There wasn't anything left. We couldn't believe it.

We were lucky that Rodney had the sense to hang on to his sister, because she was terrified, she wanted to come to us and she would have been killed. He had the sense to hang on to her under the kitchen table.

We got a whole new roof out of it. A roof in those times was at least twice as thick as it is now, but there were terrible dents in that roof. We got a couple of new tanks. It was terrible, absolutely ferocious.

Everything was wiped out, we lost everything that year. It must have been November, I think, because we had rockmelons.

Our kids didn't settle down for years, every time a storm was coming, they were terrified.

Did you have many years when all the crops were wiped out?

No, now and again we would get a hail storm. Very often, things weren't destroyed, you'd lose some, but if there was wind with it, look out, you lost everything. If there wasn't wind and it came straight down, you'd have things pitted.

We would put ads in the papers and sell it as second class stuff, marked tomatoes. We had no trouble selling it, people would come for tomatoes and we couldn't keep up with the demand, they had such a good flavour. You could sell pitted rockmelons if they had healed over.

We lost one big crop of tomatoes. They were set on, the bushes looked beautiful. Then all of a sudden, one by one during the week, they were dying.

We knew a fellow who used to come around for one of the chemical companies. He said "You haven't got a disease, pull one of the bushes up". So they pulled them up and they were full of nematodes. We lost the lot.

Then they had to plant green crops in there for a while, and we gradually got rid of them.

That was something I hadn't seen before. My Dad used to talk about it, but I hadn't seen it.

If you put sugar water or molasses water on, they disappear.