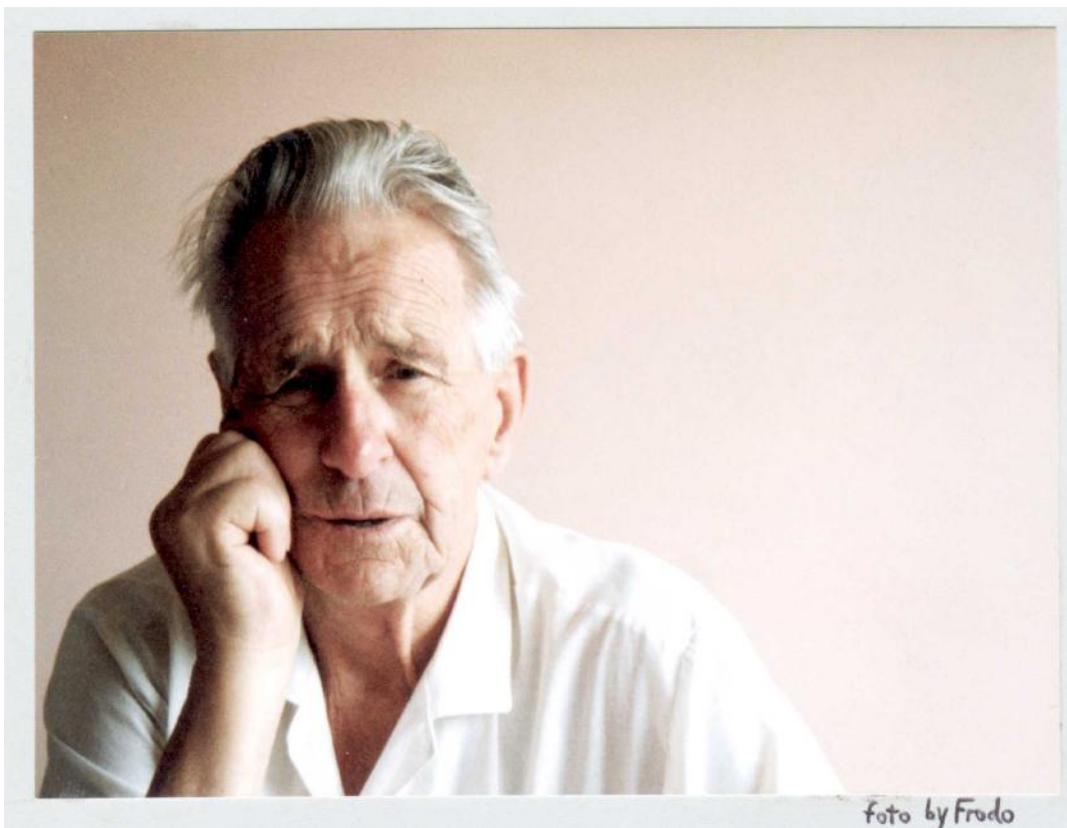




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**LOCAL HISTORY**

**ARCHIVE**



**1999**

**JOE BARTON**





Back row from left: Clarry Dent, Bernard Basham, Ron Abbott, Doug Coote, two are unknown, Lawrie Rosser, unknown, Gordon Hutchinson, unknown, Joe Sibly, unknown, Hubert Abbott, Oliver Barton, Leith Warner and Ted Price.

Second row: Sylvia Rosser, two unknown, Gladys Attrill, Eileen Sibly, two unknown, Biddy Sandland, unknown, Linda Sandland, unknown, Marjory Lawrence, the next four are unknown and teacher Olive

Golding.

Third row: Eight from left are unknown, Elanor Abbott, Headmaster S.A. Keen, next five unknown, Mary Crawford, Allison Crawford, unknown.

Front row: Two from left unknown, Bill Lush, Jack Thessinger, Bob Boston, unknown, Joe Barton, Syd Brittain, Bill Tugwell, Bert Brittain, unknown, Charlie Price, unknown, Eric Williamson, unknown, Angus Warner and unknown.



## **Port Elliot and Goolwa District History Project**

Interview with Joe Barton of Port Elliot

Interview, edited transcription, book design/production, and additional corrections  
(November 2012) by G.W.(Frodo) Krochmal

### **Tape 1, recorded 24/11/99**

Side A

FRODO: I guess we should start with when you were born - I know you're a Libran Dragon, which only tells me October 1916, but what date?

JOE: The 16th. 16/10/16.

E: Unlike Nobby, [or me], your name really is your name - I had to ask him his 'real' name, which I'd never heard before. You , of course, were born in Port Elliot?

J: Born in Port Elliot.

E: And your forebears came from?

J: Essex.

E: And came here in?

J: 1855

E: So it's a little bit after than Nobby and his crew, and a bit after the Buffalo, and the year after all the shipwrecks.

J: No, the shipwrecks came after that.

E: Right. Why did I think they were 1854?

J: Could have been one in 1854, but most of them were [later] in the '50s, or '60s.

E: And what made your lot come here?

J: Well, my great-grandmother's parents were hoteliers, and they owned a hotel in Willenhoe [?], near Colchester in Essex. My great grandfather got this lass into trouble, and he got sort of kicked out of home, so he decided he'd try his luck in Australia. He came out with twin boys, four years old.

E: And the lass in question?

J: Yes, Emma Chamberlain was her maiden name. Disembarked from the "Lysmae", at LeFevre Peninsula in Adelaide, which I think is still there, but not very much mentioned nowadays - it's Port Adelaide. Came pretty well straight down to Port Elliot.

E: Do you know how they heard of Port Elliot?

J: It was proclaimed a port in 1850, wasn't it?

E: Of course, there wasn't that much Adelaide then.

J: My great-grandfather was a carpenter, and was earning nine shillings a day at that time. Beer was sixpence a pint. After the family had been out here for about ten years, his father died in England. So his mother asked him to come back to England. So he left the twins here, and he had other children by that time - the twins would be 16 or something like that, 14 or 16. He had two or three other children by that time. He took them with him, and my dad said he left the twins there as collateral, as he might have had a few debts. [mutual chortling by interviewer and interviewee] The twins never saw their parents again, they never came back to Australia again.

E: Oh, he and the wife went?

J: All the family went, except the twins. They went back to England and apparently he got some money and decided to try his luck in America. So he took the family to Hartford, Connecticut. That's the lady I correspond with now, in fact. I just posted a letter to her. She's a sixth-generation American, Ruth Lincoln Kaye.

E: But she's, what, a cousin or something?

J: Why she writes to me particularly I suppose is her great grandmother is one of the lasses that went back to America with the parents. Anyway, on the way down to Port Adelaide, the wheel fell off the wagon. They had an old dray to take all their gear down to the boat. They missed that boat. That boat was lost with all hands. Boat to England. Of course, the kids in Australia - the twins - thought they'd lost their parents. It wasn't till about three months later that they found out their parents were still alive and kicking.

E: But they never saw them again?

J: Never ever saw them again. Anyway, I should have said in the first instance that it took 110 days to come out the first time, and they brought out with them a watch, made in 1821, in Colchester, by a watchmaker called Holder. It's got my name, around the dial, Joseph Barton - 12 letters, you see, instead of numbers. My great-grandfather, according to my dad, built the original Middleton Inn. He was the second licensee of that inn. Also, at a later date his son's father-in-law had it, people by the name of Sugg had it. I got the details from Nobby - he's got a hotel book. It's a copy of the hoteliers of that period, and from first to last of the Middleton Inn. The same thing I've got

for the Globe House, which is where Cliff House was. At the same time he was licensee of that, the Globe Hotel. this is in the 1850s. Joseph Barton, same as I am.

E: Which makes you Joseph Barton the sixth or seventh or something?

J: Well, it goes back further than I can find out. The oldest is usually Joseph. In our particular family's case, my sister was the eldest, and when Cliff came along, my mum wasn't going to call him Joe - she'd had enough of Joe [laughter]. But when I came along belatedly, after six years - I'm six years behind all the others -

E: Like me

J: I must have been a bit of an accident. So they called me Joseph. Anyhow, the old chap was a carpenter, and he's supposed to have built a church at Point McLeay when he was here, and to do that he had to built a boat first, to get there. He went back to England, on to America. That's where they're buried, the two of them. They both died in America.

E: He and Emma

J: Dad's father went back to see them, the rest of his family, in 1905. The old chap had died blind, he'd lost his eye-sight at the finish - pretty sad, really. He went back to America, in 1905, and took a piece of my father's wedding-cake with him to America, and took twenty pounds with him - twenty pounds was all he had. And he stayed with all his relations. He had relations in England by this time. There were children and grandchildren, and he stayed with them, and he went to America and stayed with relations there, and he got back to

Adelaide, and he had to borrow two pounds to get home.

J: Getting back to Great-Grandfather, he went to Adelaide one day. Walked all the way to Adelaide to get something. Coming back, he had to drink out of puddles in the road, he was that thirsty! [chortles]

E: That great-grandfather, is that one of the twins?

J: [No. Twins were children of Great-Grandfather. One] twin built the school, Charlie [Barton] - built the present Port Elliot school. And where Cliff [Barton] lives is the site of the original school in Port Elliot, where the old paint shop was. I've got a photo of that, too.

E: Where does Cliff live?

J: Cliff lives on the corner, just up the end of Mason Street [and North Terrace].

E: 'Cause there's another old schoolhouse in Waterport Road!

J: That was a private school.

E: Ahh yes, it was too. Next to 'Waverley'. Nearly rented that once.

J: The twins worked together pretty well, they were builders. They built the original museum in Goolwa, the original portion of the current museum in Goolwa. Also, they built the two little houses - when you come up to the service station in Goolwa, on the main road, turn right, there's two little houses on your left - they built those. They lived there, and in the National Trust building in Goolwa, which is what they built originally - of course, it's been altered since - there's a picture in there of J.G. and C.E. Barton, Undertakers - they were undertakers at that time. Grandfather started off a

coach-building business on the site where Cliff lives, and had 16 working for him at one time. He had 6 brothers, and they were making buggies and all sorts of horse-drawn things.

E: That's a big business for then, here. Even now, there aren't very many businesses in Port Elliot that have 16 employees.

J: No, true. T.J. Richards, who built buggies at the same time, in Adelaide, around the 1890s - my dad was born in 1876 - I don't know exactly when they started. They had quite a, they used to call it steam-works. Uncle Isaac - they must have been a bit religious, they named...

E: Isaac and Joseph...

J: Uncle Isaac, he was the blacksmith, my dad was the wheelwright, Joseph; Archie was the farrier, horsey-man

E: Archie?

J: Archie Barton

E: That doesn't come from the Bible.

J: Archibald. No, not really. Benjamin was the painter.

E: But those are very Jewish names. You've heard of the Jewish Passover? That's about Jacob and Joseph and the coloured coat and his twelve brothers - Benjamin was the youngest brother of the twelve tribes of Israel. Isaac and Joseph come into that.

J: Benjamin, Archie and Albert. My dad was the eldest, Isaac was next, George was next - George was a sort of a carpenter-cum-handyman [blacksmith], he was doing a bit of everything, George; they ran the Joe

Barton and Sons place at Yankalilla, which is Martin and Son now. The place is still there. There's Archie, and Albert and Benjamin, and there's two girls, Rose and Maude. And Maude made 101. 1905, when the old grandfather went to America; he came back, and had to borrow money to get home - he said to the boys - "We're okay in business. The motor cars are stuck up all over America. They won't put us out of business." But they did. Dad, in about that period, in the early 1900s, they started this business over at Yankalilla, a branch business, for making buggies and so forth. My sister Gladys and Cliff, they went to school over there for a while while Dad was helping getting the business underway. Afterwards they came back, and the business continued, and changed over to a motor business. That business became General Motors Holden at one time, they were selling General Motors products over there. Still trading as Joe Barton and sons. By this time, Cliff and I had a business here. Prior to that, my brother used to work in the garage where the Royal Family Hotel carpark is. Cliff worked there for a chap named Cricker (?) when he was 12 years of age. Afterwards, W.Burnett (?) had it, and Cliff worked there and I helped him. On account of the Depression, there was no work about, and we were living hand-to-mouth virtually. Cliff and I were there for...

E: You weren't shooting rabbits to live, like Nobby? There's a lot of rabbits in Nobby's story.

J: (laughing) Eight dollars in the market, I see.

E: Now? At one point, Nobby tells how he made his fortune on rabbits,

because the price just sky-rocketed..

J: And skins..

E: And skins, that's right.

J: Anyway, after we'd been there for - prior to this, I'd been to school, and I had my schooling here at Port Elliot

E: At the little school that your relative built?

J: Yeah, that's right. The teachers then were Mr. S.A. Keen and Miss Polly Golding and later Miss Burchill came along. Funny thing, I met her son the other day - took him up Meals On Wheels. He recognised me, I didn't remember him. Polly Golding'd be the sister of the chap who did the photograph, the Nature's Eye [one of which, for example, can be seen as part of the historical display at the Pt. Elliot Railway Station] - he was a photographer, and he operated from that little shop, where the girl sells books, by the railway line.

E: Books on the Strand (*By 2004, P.E. Newsagency*)

J: That's another thing, too. While Dad had the business, Mum started up a shop, and Dad used to cut hair in the little, it's gone now, there used to be a little lean-to part attached to the shop where the Emporium was, [the building next to Dodd and Page's, on the Strand], there used to be a little annexe on the side. Dad used to cut hair there. Afterwards, Ray Deed had a boot-shop there. Where they drive in, on the side there, there used to be a little annexe, little room, sort of lean-to room, and old Ray Deed used to do his boots there, when we first started our garage on the corner. The boys complained about

Dad cutting hair at night and not putting in enough time at work during the day, not putting in proper effort, so he stopped cutting hair.

E: Eileen Warrender wasn't cutting hair at this stage, was she?

J: That's how the Siblys come to be in Port Elliot, because Dad advertised, and Sibly took on what he was doing. Dad made a little part of the shop, opposite the Hotel Elliot, where the shop was, a little room on the side for Sibly to cut hair. In fact, there's a picture of the shop, with 'Sibly, Hairdresser' on the corner we've got.

E: We're talking about Eileen's father?

J: Yes, Ernie Sibly. Afterwards, he moved up to the anchors reserve, to the Harbourmaster's place, and lived in the Harbourmaster's cottage. Old Sibly, he made ice-cream, and ice-cubes, and made ice up there. Sell you oil shares, too, ...

(laughter)

E: Oil shares?

J: Yeah, he had some oil shares. They were never any good, but they were selling. Anyway, the motor-cars put this place out of business in 1925, the one were Cliff lives, and my dad gave Cliff - Uncle Isaac and, they split the thing in halves, and Cliff was given the piece of land where the house is by Dad. And the other part, he bought from Uncle Ike, Cliff bought from Uncle Ike afterwards, latterly. In the back of the yard was the old paint-shop, and that was where the old school was originally, in the back of the premises. Taplin was their first teacher, and that's a relation of Ernie Willets. May be a

relation of this Taplin - Mark Taplin, too. Anyway, the business folded up in 1925, and they lived in 'Pine Lodge', where Jack Brougham, opposite the church, next to Duncan Small, Duncan Small on the corner on your corner, up here - left-hand corner, [from Charteris St.] , next one along is 'Pine Lodge', next one along is 'Limba'(?), next one along is a vacant block, opposite the school, - diagonally opposite here, along North Terrace - that was built by an uncle of the girl that's got the [book] shop up here - [Rosemary McConnell]

E: Cause she's also related to George Brittain

J: Yeah, they're related to the Marshalls and the Greens and that's another story - in 1936 Centenary Motorcycle Race here, Alec and Jack Bain (?) came over from Melbourne for the races and they married two sisters, - you've heard of Freddy Green? Alec married Freddy Green's sister, and Jack married the other sister.

E: Do you remember much of the '36 Centenary?

J: Oh, yeah. I sat on top of the Royal Family Hotel chimney and watched the race.

E: Did you? There was someone more famous for being on a chimney and watching the race, though.

J: Les Brittain? Yeah. (laughs)

E: I've got a tape of George giving a talk to the National Trust and I've typed it out, and he tells the story about his dad on the chimney.

J: Anyhow, after 1925 my Dad , when the shop closed here, he went into the shop with Mum. They had a business there for a number of years.

E: This is what I think of as the butcher shop, blue-tiled place on the railway line. Was it a butcher shop?

J: No. They had that business till 1940, and then my sister took it over, and she had it till about in the 1980s.

E: So was it a butcher shop, or something different?

J: No, never a butcher shop. It was a general store. My sister and Frank, Frank Mudge, the Mudges, they used to fill the orders around the district in an old Morris Cowley, old bull-nosed Morris. A delivery service. Of course, Gladys only had one child, Jeffrey. Dad and Mum had four children - Clifford, Gladys - well, Gladys's the eldest - Cliff, Thelma, who died in Western Australia, and Joseph.

E: Your good self.

J: Yeah. Gladys married Frank Mudge, and Cliff married Linda McKenzie. Bob McKenzie's sister. Ron McKenzie's another brother.

E: The electrician?

J: Yeah. She's got another brother, Ken. Her father was a carpenter, good carpenter, so Bob followed in the trade of his father. To go to school, like I told you earlier, I had to go to Strath, there was no high school. We had a free pass on the rail-car.

E: The what?

J: You know, rail car, those days.

E: Train?

J: Rail car, train sometimes.

E: What's a rail-car?

J: They had a sort of a tram-car with an engine.

E: That ran along the railway line?

J: Yeah. It ran on the railway line.

E: Is that not like the thing in Goolwa, in the cage?

J: No, no, no.

E: That's the original railway carriage.

J: Incidentally, my Dad had a ride in that, one of those, I'm not sure that's the original one, they might have had two of them - I'm not sure how many they had. But his mother lived with her parents at 'Bellendean' [?], up Flagstaff Hill Road. The Sugg family lived there. When he was being born, his mother went home to her parents. She lived in Port Elliot, and she took Dad up to her mother, to be born virtually, and to get born she caught the horse-tram to Goolwa, and she brought him back - he had the trip both ways, inside her and out!

[chuckles]

E: She was preppers and she caught the horse-tram?

J: Yeah. Delivered up in Goolwa, so Dad was born in Goolwa, in 1876.

E: Ready shook-up by the horse-tram. You wouldn't wish that on anybody, would you? Be a long way from as comfortable as a modern ambulance, or a modern car, or something.

J: Sometimes, we had a train. Mostly it was this bus. In tandem sometimes, have another carriage clipped on. Driven by a petrol motor.

E: When is this? This isn't 1876, when your dad was born. We're moving forward now.

J: No, this is in the late 1920s - 1928.

E: 'Cause we're talking about you going to school.

J: '28 - '29, I went to Strath. We were in the new school, second year in the new school up there, which was opened in 1928 - high school. Previously, all they had in Victor was a higher primary, which my sisters went to. Cliff didn't go at all, he only went to the local school. They used to go to the higher primary in Victor, which was where the old remaining building in Victor is now, the old school building, on the traffic crossing, on the Woollies complex. Mr Le Lecheur was their teacher in those days.

E: La Lasher? Did he carry a whip?

[Both, I confess, laugh].

J: French name - Le-Lache [?]

## **Tape 1, recorded 24/11/99**

### Side B

J: Then, after going to Strath for about three years, in which time I attained my Intermediate Certificate, the rail-car changed its time-table. Earlier, the time-table was - we used to leave here about nine o'clock, and get up to Strath about ten to ten and start school, and finish about ten to five at night.

As there were more children coming from the south coast than there were from the Strath area, they bent their times to suit us, suit the time-table. Well, after three years, the time-table changed and made it not possible for this to continue. At that time they opened a high-school in Victor, in the Wonderview. We had it upstairs, and the teachers were Archie Campbell, Miss. Chloe [?] and Miss Pentilow [?] and Jack May. Jack May might not have been there for long. Anyway, we hadn't been there too long - we used to play football out on the reserve where the train is now.

E: Those pine trees would have been tiny little things then.

J: Quite small, then. After we'd been going there for a while, we shifted over to the church, that's the church where the roundabout is, Harbor Terrace [actually, Victoria St.]. We weren't in the church proper, we were in the lower building,

E: Where they have the fetes and things.

J: And the time I went there I was more in the senior classes, were down underneath, and the juniors ones were on top - there's two levels;

E: They have the books downstairs when they have the sales.

J: I went to school two years perhaps longer than I should have. I took my Leaving Certificate in Victor Harbor. As there was no work about, Mum sent me back to school the next year. The new school in Victor was established in 1936, where the present high school [is], and I think Ted Harding would have been one of the first to go there.

E: Was that built for the Centenary, or is that a coincidence?

J: No, nothing to do with that. Of course, that was the period when they had the race around the race circuit. The 1936 Centenary Race. The race through the town of Port Elliot. They come down the straight here, up to the corner, down to Nangawooka, around there and along the back straight, down to the corner down here, and back - that was the circuit. They raced in a clock-wise direction. That drew a lot of people into the town. In fact, that's how the school up here came to be, you know, the two brothers come over from Melbourne...

E: Oh yes, and married the two girls here...

J: About this period, Cliff and I were in the business down here, working for Burnett. Cliff offered Burnett - I forget how much it was now, four hundred pounds, I think - for the business down there, and Bill accepted - that's Bill Burnett - but Mrs. Burnett, who was a Miss Roberts, and lived in a house just this side of Cavalier Inn, and she wouldn't agree. At that time, a chap by the name of Cook had the bakery business in Port Elliot,

E: Which was then next door to this corner that you later had the garage?

J: Yeah, that's right.

E: Where it is now, of course,

J: And he was renting it from Harry Spencer, who was the owner of the business. Cliff and I always wanted to buy that corner block, and he said, "No, I'm going to build a nice bakery on that corner". Then he offered Harry Spencer X amount of pounds for the bakery, and never got a reply! So, about twelve months later, he bought the property I was telling you about, where the

'Emporium' first went, [next to Dodd and Page], he bought that property. Incidentally, that's where my brother and sister were born, they were born on that property, Gladys and Cliff. Also Pat's, my wife's, grandfather lived there also, and some of the family went to school at Port Elliot. His name was Wigzell. The Wigzells lived there before the Bartons, but not much before, they must've been pretty close.

E: This was when it was rented?

J: Yeah. I don't know who owned it, but they lived there. The Wigzells are on the register of the school. They went to school same as the Bartons, so they must have known each other. Anyway, he [Cook] bought this property. Harry Spencer heard about his, and then accepted his other offer! So, he had two properties virtually, and he went to a solicitor, and he said "Yeah, that's legal. That'd be legal, even though it took him twelve months to answer the letter". So he had two properties, and he came to Cliff and I, and he said "Look, you boys always wanted that corner block. I'm short of money now. You can have it for three hundred pounds." That's where the Emporium now stands. So we didn't have three hundred pounds, so we borrowed it off Mum and Dad and that's how we come to be there. At the same time, we had a three-year stint on the other place, where Burnett's had. So we continued on there, and the place was built, and then I moved over. We had kerb-side pumps down there, opposite the bakery, four or five kerb-side pumps. There was C.O.R. and Golden Fleece, Plume and Shell and Caltex, all there on the kerb. Then we shifted them over, the company put other pumps up in the

front. We moved in there in about 1939, just about the out-break of war.

E: And that looked essentially as it did until recently, with the pillars and...

J: Yeah, that's right. We were a multi-site. We had all the pumps. We were one of the last to change to specialised brands. It was what we called a multi-site. It had all the companies represented, like I said. We were one of the last to change to fixed, one station site. So we weren't there very long, and of course I joined up in 1941, the military, and I was away for four years, and Cliff carried on in the meantime. Cliff's eight years older than me , you see.

E: Was he regarded as too old to go to war, at 33, or something?

J: Well, they reckoned it was essential that he continue on because there wasn't too many repair shops, there was only - in Victor Harbor, there was Griffin's Garage in those days, and a lot of the old cars were not [chuckles] - you know, they were starting to come into their own, motor cars, a bit.

E: There must have been an explosion of cars in the 1930s, here.

J: In the '30s, yeah.

E: The story we were talking about before, where Nobby's talking about being a kid, and the business with the string, and then he tells me the names of the three or four people that own cars, and that's it, in the entire of Port Elliot, and that must be early '30s, 'cause he's a couple of years younger than you. Now you tell me, by the late '30s, you've actually got five petrol pumps! That's amazing, when you think about it. So, by the late 30s, there must have been, if not as many cars as today, certainly quite a lot of them.

J: There were cars, but they weren't... every man and his dog's got a car,

now.

E: Except me.

J: Except Frodo.

E: But five petrol pumps, which would have cost enormous amounts of money. You had to pull up the street and everything, didn't you?

J: Well, in those days, basic wage was eight shillings a day. You weren't getting a lot of money. Clarrie Dent dug most of the holes, and he wasn't get much for digging the holes. Just as well we did shift over - when they pulled all the old tanks out, half of the side of them fell away - must be leaking, all rusted out. Of course, today, they put them in with sand and all sorts of things, but they were - big slab of the side of the tank just stopped in the hole! So it must have been losing petrol, so just as well we did shift.

E: How many years did you say they were there?

J: They weren't there that long, over the other side. Bill Burnett had the pumps there, might have been there for ten years. Bill was more on radio. Poor old Mr. Tommy Boyer had a Ford-T. Reverend Thomas Morris Boyer, local Parson for 40-odd years.

E: St. Jude's?

J: Yeah. He had an old T-Ford. In fact, I don't know if he'd been drinking some of the Church wine, but he come up to the, where they drive in now, and he realised he was going too fast, so he went through the verandah, out where the driveway - they've got a shed there now, there used to be a driveway there inbetween the shops. I'm talking up here at the Manse - he

was driving his old T-Ford into the driveway, into the back, to go into the shed, and he realised he was going too fast, and he speared off, went through the verandah and out the outlet, where the cars used to go down the drive, and hit the post across the other side of the street! I was showing his son - old Boyer's son came down, Sholto Douglas, who was a surgeon in Adelaide, I was showing him where the mudguard of the old Ford - the mark's still on the window, where that gift-shop is - the shop I'm talking about is next door to Peter Trowse, the papershop. If you look on the window, you'll see a gouge-mark right across the window - didn't break the window, fortunately. So his son came down - his son's dead now - Doctor Sholto Douglas, and a very good surgeon in Adelaide. In fact, he saved Cliff's son's life. Gilbert had something wrong with his throat, and just about choking, and they operated in the Children's Hospital and fixed him up, Gilbert Barton, Cliff's son. Cliff's got four children - Gilbert, Margaret, John and Michael. Lorraine [Pomery] often laughs about this - when my Dad got married in 1905, the wedding present that he[the Reverend Boyer] gave us was a photo of himself!

[some raucous laughter is luckily inaudible on paper]

I gave the photo to the Church the other day. Old Mrs. Boyer used to call out - "Morris! Morris!", and his daughter used to have a shop where Don Hutton lived, that little shop like the girl's got here, sort of needlework shop.

E: There aren't any Boyers here now, are there?

J: No, no. In those days, when we went to school, Mr. Brierley used to be

the Stationmaster. He was Stationmaster a bit, afterwards. His son had a garage opposite the Shell station in Victor now - on the railway land. That was all railway land, on the corner there - whole lot of shops, I think there's a garage there, sells car-parts or mufflers or something. Anyway, [in Port Elliot] in those days you used to have [railway] gates - lift-up gates, hydraulically lift-up with air, and Mr. Brierley used to have to walk down the end of the platform - they had a little house on the end of the platform - and mirrors up on the roads, to see if any traffic was coming, and he'd pump the gates up and then let them down. In the winter months they used to have lights on the gates, because the train'd get in during the dark, and I used to bring the light up - cause I lived in the shop in those days -

E: Right next door

J: When Mum had the shop. And when I'd walk home, I'd jump down off the platform, and go and get the light, and bring it up to old Mr. Brierley. He appreciated this, and one morning he said - "Come up Saturday morning, Joe - I got something for you." So he bought me a rod and a reel. He was an avid fisherman. Had it all rigged up for catching garfish. I must've caught thousand of gar with that!

E: And this was the beginning of your fishing career, obviously.

J: Yeah, that started me off on fishing.

E: You've been a fisherperson longer than Nobby [Clark], just about?

J: Well, my Dad did what Nobby's did, for about the same period through the time that Nobby did, that's about forty or fifty years.

E: Pulling the nets up?

J: He had nets up there. Lorraine's grandfather, John Trigg, he used to have a yacht in the bay, and he had a little shed with nets on the back of the jetty there. Dad'd have his bouys out, and he'd go down there, and Uncle John Trigg would have his nets on Dad's bouys, so just about fisticuffs, for Dad'd probably let his net go or something, and one day he said - "Joe, you're a bloody low shit! I'll hit you over the head with a oar!" That's how they were getting on with each other! [laughter] Anyway, the yacht tipped over one night in a storm, and put the mast through the bottom, and that was the end of the yacht that old Trigg had! I've got copies of the Globe Hotel., the licensees of that period - I'll let you have them. [Which he generously did - see Appendix I].

Getting back to another part of Port Elliot, the Harbourmaster's cottage was in a bad state of repair - this is going back in the '60s, I suppose it would be - and a chappy wanted to build a little annexe on it , do it all up, build an annexe for him to live in so he could look after it. But the Government wouldn't allow it. I don't know why, but they wouldn't let him live there. Eileen [Warrender, last occupier of said cottage] and them, they had all their old buildings demolished. You've seen where they used to have his [father of said Eileen] Iceworks and shop, that little cafe, you've seen that picture?

E: I've seen that picture of a New Year's celebration.

J: Whole mob out in front. Yeah, that's right. Well, that was all demolished. Of course, Eileen lived in the other place. The place badly needed doing up.

People were throwing stones through the windows, and were generally derelict. It would have been nice if you could re-do that.

E: Eileen's got a water-colour of it.

J: I've got a sketch of it. The result of it was the Foreshore Committee was given the job of knocking it down. So I pushed the chimney over, much to my wife's disgust. [laughter] Some of the old windows were the old glass in them, bubble-glass. Of course, the Council finally bull-dozed the rest of it. We knocked down what we could. It was in a pretty bad state, white-ant right through it. Would have taken a lot of money to fix it probably. Unfortunate, in a way. Lot of history there.

E: And Eileen's lived more or less there, and across the road, all her life, hasn't she?

J: That's right. Ernie'd [Sibly] get your hair cut for sixpence.

E: What did your Dad charge when he did it?

J: I don't know - he wouldn't have been charging very much. Prior to the War, I used to play football, tennis, cricket, with Nobby and

E: He mentions you playing cricket after the War, too.

J: Nobby was quite a good bowler, left-hand bowler.

E: And he says you were a good batsman.

J: I see a chap I played against died the other day, chap by the name of Rundle, in Adelaide, got a big write-up. This Rundle played for Glenelg. The Association down around Glenelg used to, Glenelg Cricket Club used to come down and play Great Southern in the cricket. I played against this Rundle

chap. Ted Harding's father used to play against his father! He was a bank manager down here in Victor.

E: Funny how things repeat themselves from one generation to the other. It's a good thing Lorraine doesn't fish.

J: I played a few games of football for Sturt in Adelaide. I played Sturt seconds. I probably could have played the other, but working down here, and I used to go down Saturday mornings, quite a rush to even get down there.

E: Did you drive down?

J: Motorbike. 1939 it was, I won the Mail medal down here - football - and there used to be an Ozone medal at the same time. They had two medals. On the way the scoring went, I won the Mail medal, but I drew with the Ozone medal. They had two separate scoring systems. 'The Mail' still provides that medal.

E: Ahh, the newspaper. And what's the 'Ozone' - was that a company or something?

J: I don't know - the Association medal that would be probably, locally. Reg Masters and I - that's Geoff Sheridan's [former District Clerk] father-in-law - he got the medal on the day. I had to stand him on this particular day of the final, so they judged on that, and they gave him the medal. So I suppose it's fair enough - I got one, and he got the other one.

E: You had to 'stand' him?

J: He was my opponent that day. Anyway, I spent four years in the War. I never left Australia, I was up in Darwin most of the time. The Japs were

coming over - they used to come over about one o'clock every day, one o'clock in the middle of the day. We were camped on the Larakia [?]. They gave us twelve rounds of ammunition. I was too far away from the next bloke round the harbour - we were supposed to be guarding the harbour - to talk to each other, so we could have shot each other! They had guns up there under camouflage netting, wooden guns, you know, imitating the - they never had much weaponry, those days. After the first raid, the vehicle-civil-men [?] jumped in their vehicles and drove them till they run out of petrol, and they were strung out all the way down the South road. Where they ran out of petrol, they left them. And the train, the old Ghan, used to go down as far as Mataranka. A little further than that, I can't think of the name. Anyway, from Mataranka area they used to go down, on narrow gauge, took the people down, you know, they all got out of Darwin quickly. We went into Darwin, which was only - Larakia's on a dog-leg out of Darwin, still part of the Darwin Harbour area, all surrounded by water apart from about 300 yards, but Darwin Harbor encircles all that land. We were in Larakia for a while, until our vehicles - I belonged to a Mobile Workshop Unit - the vehicles were being fitted out in Keswick, and we were due to go to Singapore. Fortunately I suppose, in a way, by the time the vehicles got up there, Singapore had fallen and we were used as more or less extra troops until they arrived. Of course, the track up to Darwin in those days was not like it is today, in that it was just a dirt-track, filled up with a grader. A lot of these work-shop vehicles, or wagons that we had with all our gear in them, we had lathes in the wagons,

and all our cook-house gear and lighting plants in these vehicles, everything was mobile.

E: You were basically doing mechanic's work, weren't you?

J: Yeah, that's right. They rolled three of these on the way up. You can imagine the mess it made of things. They only had single wheels in the back, and there're 900 tyres, and of course they got a blow-out with the hot weather, and they'd block like that [makes motion], and over they'd go, pretty easy.

E: Yes. That's why they usually have two tyres.

J: They only had single wheels on these big wagons. A lot of air space, anyway. After I'd been up there for a while, I came down to Mataranka, and then across to Mount Isa, and finished up my time in Western Australia, in the Army, and was discharged from over there, and came back when the Jap's war finished. I applied for Bill Brittain, who was a friend of mine - I'd been with Bill in the same 106, Independent Brigade Workshop Unit - been with him, and he wanted to get out of the Army. So I applied for him, and got Bill out, and Bill Brittain - that's George's brother - came to work for us for several years, and afterwards he left us and he went up to Gilberts to Mount Barker, and finished his time up there with his brother Sid, who was already there. So, when I went into the Army, my eyesight was not too good, I was classed as A2. First thing I did when I got into the Army, I got some glasses made. I used to, we used to have shoots, regular shoots, in the Army, to test your marksmanship. There was about 300 boys in our unit, and I could always

come within the first four or five of the shoot. After I'd been up there for a while, I left my glasses home. I still come within the first four or five.

**Tape 2, recorded 24/11/99**Side A

J: After that, I was more than happy to think that the eyesight had fixed up like it did. By this time, Cliff was pretty busy in the business, and we started to employ labour, and we had up to six working for us there at one time, a girl in the office, various local girls in the office. A relation of Nobby's was in there, I was talking to her yesterday, Pam Knight, she was there for a while. We really changed over to Barton Brothers as a name in the late 1930s, about 1936 we changed the name, just before we moved across the road, and we sold out to Clarrie Matthews in 1975. I worked on for Clarrie then for seven years, and I gave up work in 1982. My brother made up his mind suddenly he wanted to sell out. He was 67, I think, when he made up his mind. He'd lost one eye, through a detached retina, and I suppose he thought he'd had enough, so that was it. He'd had a couple of bad car accidents. My brother Cliff, he'd done a lot of things in his life-time - he'd imported a bike out from England, and raced on the Speedway Royal - that's Wayville, and in the 1920s he got a pilot licence, and he had a pilot's licence at the same time as Nobby Buckley and Jimmy Melrose and a lot of these early fliers. There was only just a few after World War I that had pilot licences. He used to ride his motor-bike down to Parafield - they had the airport at Parafield in those days - and get in a plane and do a few hours when he could, at weekends. I had my first plane-

ride with Cliff, over Adelaide. I think I was a bloody fool! [hearty laughings]

Not long after that, he flew it over to Kangaroo Island and smashed it up over there, and he smashed his lip up. He worked in the railway at Victor Harbor, and he used to ride an old belt-drive Lebbace [?] with a gas light on the front. One night, he'd been out with a girl-friend down Victor, and he was coming home late. In those days, the night-cart used to have a light on them. You'd take the light off the night-cart, and go in to get the can, and come out, and bring the night-light out with him. Well Cliff ran in the back of the night-cart! [much laughter] Old Dr. Douglas and Dr. Shipway were the only two doctors we had in those days. He [Dr. Shipway?] said - "It would have been worse, Barton, if the lid had been off". [more laughter] Anyway, Cliff damaged his throat pretty bad with the accident, and when he was in the railway afterwards, up at Spalding, and they had a big high bank and a swimming pool - Cliff was one of the first life-savers in Port Elliot, with the Greens and the Dodds and the Hallidays and Alf Gibbons and all those blokes, the first mob that started off here - they got him to dive off the bank up at Spalding to open the proceedings on this big opening day for the swimming pool, they started a swimming-pool up there; now Cliff ran rather awkwardly, and when he damaged his throat in this accident with the bike, he had a big abscess on it and he was going to have to have an operation - well, he went into the water fairly awkwardly and that solved the problem - the abscess came away and he didn't need the operation! Old Mr. Lines out here, Doug Lines' father, he gave Cliff his first job - he had a Hudson - and when we lived in the

shop up here, where Dad had a garage/shed out the back, Cliff pulled this old Hudson down, and re-bored this old Hudson. In 1948, we obtained the agency of the H.V.MacKay Massey Harris

E: Massey-Ferguson?

J: No, International Harvester Company. My Dad previously had the agency for H.V.MacKay, after he got out of the shop down here. We had the agency up until '75, and when Clarrie took over they lost the agency. In fact, the company [I.H.C.] was starting to pack up all over the world.

E: This is combine harvesters and tractors, isn't it?

J: That's right. Of course, no-one wants that type of business today, like Clarrie had, or we had, because it's hard to sell - unless you got a franchise or something, you've got to be on the ground floor with all the information, how to service things and all that sort of thing. Those days, you didn't have the advantage of trade schools. Tom Ellis used to be Head Mechanic down at Griffin's in Victor Harbor, and anything Cliff didn't know, or we didn't know, we'd ask Tom, and very often Tom knew the answer. Some of these old cars had common problems. In the meantime, Cliff took a correspondence course in mechanics, and that helped him a lot.

E: How did you learn mechanics?

J: I learned a bit when I was in the military, that helped a bit.

E: But you'd already started before then - you just learned on the job, you mean?

J: Yeah, that's right. Of course, in the latter part, we'd send all the lads down

to the trade school, and they'd come back with knowledge and so forth. I did a gas conversion course, to convert your petrol to gas, have a dual system,

E: Is this during the War?

J: No, no, this is only back in the '70s, after I was working for Clarrie.

E: 'Cause people used gas after the War, didn't they, when petrol was scarce?

J: Well, that's another thing, too - when Cliff was managing in the wartime, they had charcoal gas burners on them, quite cumbersome old things. Cliff used to have to go out [?] bring the charcoal in. My first car was a Model T, and it was a single seater, with a boot with a couple of seats in the back; the hood went down and the back had a dickie-seat

E: Two-cylinder?

J: Four-cylinder. Jack Rogerson's father owned it, and he got killed out in the local quarry out here, on Lyons' Hill, and I bought it for 15 pounds, this old bus, and we used to go to Victor in it, and it'd do about 55-60, and you'd jump in it and it had a spark lever, advancing-tailed [?] spark lever on it you'd move it up and down and start up without even the starter motor sometimes, cause it had a pretty hot spark on these - they had four coils, one coil for each cylinder. She was pretty potent. In fact, Ken Green used to have his tractor, and he'd hold on to the wire, and poke his tongue out, and a spark'd leap off his tongue about that long! [unfortunately visual, and with much laughter] If you want to stop the vehicle, you could put your hands on the spark-plug - that's pretty traumatic. Cliff used to stop the car - I wasn't game to do it.

E: By the way, what was your motor-bike?

J: First of all, I had a Douglas, belt-drive, two-speed. Be worth a lot of money today if I'd kept it. There's one up at the Birdwood Museum - two speed, a bit better-looking model than I had. Old Charlie Coote, lived out there where Murfets live, on Waterport Road, and old Charlie Coote, he was a local identity, he lived in Tarookie for a while, [house corner Charteris and Arthur streets], anyway, in those days - I'm a teenager - and he was hanging over the fence, stirring up a bit of strife, and he was always complaining to Dad about the way I rode my motorbike. I was tootling down the back road, on the dirt road there one day, when I happened to see him looking over the fence, so I turned around and went back down the road and give the old bike all it had - I was doing about 55, I suppose. What I didn't know, my belt was a bit slack on the bike, so I tore down past him, he shook his fist at me, and I got down to the corner there, this corner down here - Waterport corner and the main road - and I slowed down, and the belt jumped off the thing, and jammed the back wheel and I went straight off the road into the fence. [laughter] Lucky I didn't kill myself! And he had a nice old story to tell my Dad! After that I had a Norton...

E: When you could sit again after your Dad had finished with you

J: So that was my motorbike experience, although 7 or 8 years ago I had a motorbike - I used to go cockling with it, down the beach, a 250. I lost my wallet in Adelaide one day, and I had licence to drive articulated vehicles, the whole works through the Army, and when I lost my licence and got it renewed,

all it had was my motorcar licence, they just renewed my motorcar licence, because of my age. So when I got my [newest] motorbike, I had to do the test again, at about 75 or 76. I got through that all right. I rode the bike up to my daughter's at Balhannah sometimes, and I used to go down the beach. I had a box on the back to put cockles in. Where you go on the beach at Goolwa Beach, it's all sandy, and the vehicles cut a track through. Even with a motorbike, unless you want to push it, you've got to get a bit of a go up to get over that. I'm half-way into the trail on this track, and this couple of kids come down with an old bomb, old Holden, and they're in the same wheel-track as I'm in, so I can see that I can't stop and they're not going to stop, so at the last instant, I laid the bike over, and all my cockles out on the ground, and the wheels touched each other and the kids're laughing their heads off - course it never hurt me - I had to pick all the bloody cockles up again. That's pretty dangerous, you've got to be very careful what you're doing on the beach. I used to go down to the beach with a Jeep afterwards, and get cockles. We'd go fishing, too. Caught a lot of fish down the Murray Mouth. Used to go down there with Harry Rogerson, and quite a few boys. Get big fish, too, up to 40 or 50 pound.

E: And now Nobby's the last one left fishing here, in Horseshoe Bay. You still go with him sometimes?

J: I might not do quite as much this year, but he's got quite a few helpers. When they formed the Lifesaving club, I remember when they had the first meeting in the Hotel Elliot with Alf Gibbons, and about that time Nobby's

uncle, Darby Knight, was setting nets out at the island, and they caught this huge shark, was about 13-14 foot long, blue pointer, and that's a fairly short type of shark, but it's big - it was 10 foot around the girth, and took about six people to pull the shark up on the beach. They opened the mouth, and propped it open, and I was only about 14 or 15 then, and I could have slipped down without touching the sides. [laughs] Scared the living daylights out of me. About that time, the Lifesaving club was formed, and no way was I going to join, I'm not going to swim out in the Bay with those big fellows! My dad used to set these shark-lines out where Nobby puts his nets, and Dad had these big hooks made out of half-inch steel - Cliff made them up in the forge - and one day a lad comes up and says - "Mr. Barton, there's a shark on your line, out at the breakwater", so Dad grabs the axe, and calls me, and I went down with him out in the boat; one of the Moyle [Max] boys was there at the time, he come with us. Dad had this big shark on the line, he pulled it over the back of the boat, raised the axe to hit the shark on the head, and another one that wasn't on the line at all poked its head out like that, so Dad changed direction and had a go at that - axe fell out of his hand in the sea. My brother dived and got the axe next day - I wasn't going to dive out there! [convulses into possibly-relieved laughter] We had nothing to kill the shark with, so had to take him and pull him up into Ladies' Beach.

E: Oh!?! You still pulled the shark in?

J: Pull the shark in to Ladies' Beach. Another occasion, we had two on the line out there - two 8-foot tiger sharks - they're pretty lively, so we just undone

both ends and we're tying them in, and one shark chopped the other one in half, so I wasn't going to do much with them! Used to get some big sharks out there. Don't seem to be so many sharks about as there used to be.

[There is a pause here, after which I suggest that we might, at some point, go on to Joe's years in the local Council]

J: What really got me interested in Council first, and why I blow my top like I do in some of these meetings, the thing is, in '1959, we had the big bushfire here and when the siren went - we had an International ute and I had the ute out on the road, changing a chap's tyre. We could see the smoke coming over the hill and so I got the tyre fixed up for this chap, got him mobile, and this fire I could see is going to be something really nasty, you know, so I come up the road and I see Clarrie Dent, and I say - "Clarrie, we'd better go out and see what that fire's doing out at the Valley, Hindmarsh Valley. Clarrie came with me, we jumped into the thing, and went out to Hindmarsh Valley - this is the '59 fire. Things looked pretty crook and we put out a couple of outbuildings, out on the farm there, see the fire going on over the hill towards Port Elliot, and I said to Clarrie - "We'd better get home." So we got home. In those days they used to have the fire-truck, which was a trailer-pump in the shed where Mrs. Smallacombe lives, in those sheds of hers at the back of the

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<sup>1</sup> and The Times of February 17, 2000, in the 'from our past' column, p.14, notes that - "**40 years ago**: The Adelaide City Coroner (Mr T Cleland) found that the bushfire of January 1959 that started at Hindmarsh Valley and swept through to Port Elliot and Middleton was started when an electric power line was brushed by a tree branch.

Institute. So I hooked on to that. Brian Clark was working for us at the time - that's Ern's brother. By the time Clarrie got home, his place was in trouble, because he'd got a lot of wood stacked up at the back, and that was all alright. I thought the place was on fire because you opened the front door, and the smoke come through the place. The fire had got through to Middleton. I jumped in the ute, and took Brian with me. By this time the Victor Harbor Fire Brigade had got through to Middleton. Arthur Attrill - remember the garage Arthur Attrill had there? Opposite the store, there was a garage up there, the street opposite the store in Middleton. Mrs. Attrill lives there now. They said - "No water! No water!". What had happened, all these water points had filled up with mud, because they hadn't been serviced over the years, so Brian - he'd had a bit of training with the local C.F.S. with the trailer-pump - so he jumped out, turned the thing down, pushed down through the mud, found the turn-cock and flushed all the mud out, and we got water, and saved the garage - in the back of the garage, there was about 12 petrol drums, 44-gallon drums, and they were all likely to blow up. As it happened, they didn't blow up, because they were full. If they'd been empty, it might have been more dangerous.

E: Right, because they need a certain amount of oxygen

J: Yeah. Not that all the bungs are at the tops of these things. After we'd put out the fire, the petrol was only down a little bit, through evaporation probably, but the aluminium bungs at the top were all melted out, and the petrol probably still all right. Thanks to us, we'd saved that building and probably the

house with it

E: And half the neighbourhood, if the drums had gone up.

J: Afterwards, they always blamed the fellow next door, he stacked a lot of stuff against the fence, near these drums. Anyhow, then we went up to McLeod's house, which was up the back of the school, and that was alright. Tom Ellis, the mechanic from Victor was with us, by that time we'd picked him up. We went up to Jim McLeod's house, new house he'd built, and that was alright. I remember Tom Ellis reached up with a shovel and just touched the window, and it blew out in his face and cut him on the hand. We got the water there the same way as we did down there, and saved what was left - it did do some fire-damage, but we saved the house. I'm walking around the building, and I trod on a piece of wood with a nail in it, so I had to go down and get a tetanus injection. Took Tom down to get his hand stitched up.

After that, I became a member of the Fire Service for 20-odd years, (and they give me a certificate for that afterwards). In the 1960s, also, my Mum owned five blocks down here on the swamp [now Lakala Reserve] and I used to take the cows down there and bring them back home and milk them. Brian Francis was the Councillor of the day, and they had ideas of developing the reserve. Over the years, the Lions Club had a couple of 'go's and nothing was done. Anyway, Mum sold these five blocks for 20 pounds each. Of course, she was only paying about 10/6d a year each [Council rates] on the blocks - there were no Council rates much to speak of, in those days. And Brian Francis - I think he would have got it done it, too - he always had plans

of developing the swamp. One day he came to me and he said - "Joe, I'm going to Queensland. Would you fit a couple of seat-belts on my 1962 Holden?". So I said yes. I fitted the seat-belts on, and probably saved his wife's life, but helped to kill him.

E: (A little incredulous) The seat-belt helped to kill him?

J: What happened - up in Queensland, these cane-trains, they come across the road, but they always stop before they cross the road. Brian was a notoriously-fast driver, and none of the Councillors used to like riding with him. He must've been tearing along this road in Queensland, and he sees this train coming, and he thinks it's going to go across the road. Instead of that, train stopped, Brian tried to stop his car, got into a skid, went sideways into a pole and killed him, and his wife - she had big marks where the straps had pulled on her, and saved her life.

E: When was this, in the late '60s?

J: In the '60s. So, nothing was done with the reserve. That upset me a little bit. I used to be on to George Brittain and Wally Perry about getting something done to the reserve, so in 1977

**TAPE 2, recorded 24/11/99**Side B

E: In 1977, you put your name down for Council because you were very upset about Lakala...

J: Yeah, I thought to try and get something done, so with the help of Maurie Eckers, we got it passed the reserve be done. At the same time, the Foreshore Committee said they would maintain it, look after it. That's where Len Ball came into it. Len became a member of our committee. When we were in the process of doing it, we had a committee, and we had a couple of Lions Club members on the committee - chap from Mount Compass, I can't think of his name now [Bert Watkins] - and [Gus] Schellhase, they were members of the Lion's Club. They were helpful, they did certain things, they fenced off a portion of Young Street [for car park], and on the other side [as also on Rosetta Terrace], fenced that portion, helped put up one of the [shelter] sheds, those shelter sheds and helped put in some of the water system, on the corner, Gus helped, [and also Mike Schetter] and put in those brick barbecues that were there, they did that. Fortunately, with the help of Maurie Eckers and the agreement of the rest of Council, we got the reserve done. What Brian's plan was to have the whole area as a reserve, but unfortunately we were too long doing it, and in the meantime houses got built, like Bob McKenzie's place got built. See, when Cliff House got knocked over

up there, a lot of the rubbish was put in this corner, which is a very low corner, on the corner of Lakala where Bob McKenzie is. Had they been a bit smarter, they should have bought that block, the Council. Same with Nobby's block coming on the market. Then the old Chantrell House thing, and the whole thing could've been done with Brittain's shed gone and all. In fact, Council of the day offered George Brittain 12,000 pounds [*however, being the 1970s, he obviously means dollars*] for his block, and gave him five years to clean it up, free of Council rates, to get all his stuff out. But he didn't agree to it. In those days, 12,000 dollars was a lot of money, but he got a lot more for it afterwards, possibly. So that's how I come to be involved in Council. After I was in Council for ten years, I thought I might like to have a bit of spell, so I gave it up. I'm a bit critical of Council, because when I was in Council, they used to worry about Council doing things ad hoc, off the cuff. So it was generally agreed that we engage Doug Wallace, the Town Planner, to plan what we need in the way of parking up on the Knob to Watson's Gap. He compiled a report, about an inch thick, and it cost about four or five thousand dollars. With this in our hands, I went down to the Brothers who manage St. Luke's in Adelaide, with Roy Galpin and Geoff Sheridan, and we showed them what they wanted to do, and he suggested they have a parking bay in Handby Street, acquire a piece of land from St. Luke's; have a parking area at the end of Rosetta Terrace, and also have the parking area that's there, was there at Boomer, from the end of Carfax. Bob Brandenburg, one of the Brothers, agreed with this. Well, I was out of Council for those two years, and,

lo and behold! in those two years next Council wants to sell the piece of land! When we had a more-or-less hand-shake agreement we wanted the land for carpark. At that time St. Luke's was having trouble with people using the toilets, using the showers and parking all over the place, in front of people's driveways, and doing things like surfies do. I got so stirred up, I wrote a letter to the Times, got front page of the Times, criticising the Council because they hadn't even looked at this book [the Town-Planner's report]

E: I remember this vaguely - 'cos now, it's the late '80s?

J: Yeah [*the date still seems uncertain, however*] They hadn't even looked at this book. So bugger 'em! I'll go back into Council again. All the townspeople got up in arms about them selling this piece of land, when I stated how it all come about. So now, it's all gone back to square one, so everything we tried to do is down the tube. The moral of the story is one Council can't make things for the other. At least, they should have looked at this book, and none of them knew of its existence, I don't think. Although some of the Councillors were still there. But the officers of the Council were still there. So that's why I get a little upset. Same thing up on Freeman's Knob - Basil Thompson promised to make it right for busses up there - you see a bus backing out the other day - they can't go up there, not when there's cars up there, they can't turn around. I was on the same committee as John [*Lane, Councillor for P.E. at time of taping*], on this Basham Beach Trust Committee. See, the reason they shifted the caravan park was because the sites were too small. They tried to get as much land as they could, they went as far to the sea as they

were able to, and you can see what the sea's done now, it's all eroded away. What we were going to do is remove some of that dirt that we put there on top of the dunes, contour it off, and at the back put a brush fence, to prevent access, still have stairs down like they've got - that's what upsets me about these drift fences, they serve a purpose but there's no sand to collect there, there's no drift at that end of the beach, very little sand drifts down that end. The drift fences are needed up the other end. I always say to the Committee, which is better?, have a neat brush fence, and a contour, and expose the sand dunes underneath and make it try and look a bit like the top end. 'Cause I don't think it looks very nice like it is. It doesn't look natural, does it? And yet, the top end where they put the drift fences, which we did a good job, did catch a lot of sand, and stopped it blowing into the caravan-park. So that was what really upset me a little bit. I've done a lot of cray-fishing in the bay, and the sand comes and goes on Horseshoe Bay the same as it comes and goes on Boomer. And when the sand is gone, I've been down there sometimes that bit of ramp they've got on the other side of the bowling green, and Cliff and I, (my brother) have had to get a shovel, it's too big a drop to run our vehicles down, and when that occurs like that, it's no good setting your nets, your pots on the reef in the bay, because the reef's covered with that sand. It's the same down on the beach going to Middleton. The seaweed goes out, doesn't go anywhere, it stops out in the bay, and then it comes back onto the shore. Fortunately, the sand comes back on our bay, too. So you get a bit frustrated to think that in a lot of things the Council has continuity

with previous Councils, but on some they get ideas of their own, and we were criticised for having ideas of our own, and we put ideas in place from a specialist, and they get knocked off!

E: By the next bunch.

J: Yeah. And they're going to have them [car-parks] strung along Ocean Parade, which is fine, but I think, from the point of view of the visitors up there, if they had 120 car-parks where we bought this land, consolidated park, it would be far better than having them strung along in front of the houses. Be that as it may, that's all ancient history. Trouble we used to have when I first went into Council, there was Ted Pitkin, Lindsay Dunn, Wally Bartlett, Harold Bedford, Geoff Duffield, myself, Molly Ellis and Tony Scott. Those Goolwa Councillors, they'd gang up on you, they'd all vote together! As you know, committees is a numbers game - if you haven't got the numbers, you can't get anything done. I sat in Council for twelve years, and watched all those other roads, those arterial roads, Nangkita, Tooperang, Cleland Gully, all done with an untied grant, each year do a little bit - we weren't allowed to have anything, until they had finished. Lo and behold! When they were finished, the thing dried up, we got a little bit done, when John Roche agreed to let us get some stone out of the quarry, we got a little bit done one year. The next year, we had the \$90,000 offered to do the road around Commodore Point, tourist road, and I said, "If Basil Thompson's going to do up the top of the thing like he said, there doesn't seem to be much point in having a ring-road around it, so the 90,000 was spent around here, at the top

of the hill, Crowsnest Road on the hill. There it stopped. Nothing more was done. There was only 3.3 kilometres to do. Now John [*Lane, afore-mentioned P.E. Councillor at time of taping*] has followed it up, and that's good. I appreciate what he did there, 'cause it was long overdue. We were due to get this without any Council money going into it, those other roads didn't cost Council anything.

E: 'Cause that was State Government money.

J: Yeah, it got a grant. Over the years, you have your wins and your losses. [*laughs*] That applies to all careers, doesn't it? Like I said the other night, [*at a Town and Foreshore meeting*] you make criticism tongue-in-cheek a bit, because you realise...see, I been on that foreshore committee now 40 years.

E: You joined that also about the time of the '59 fires?

J: Yeah, yeah. We've been very lucky there, we've had some good secretaries.

[There is some discussion about committees in general, and a little gossip about the current state of the Foreshore committee, and a need for new blood, Joe assuring me how pleased he is that I, Frodo, have recently become President, and a little discussion on the need for more new blood for working bees, etc.]

E: We need some more people on working bees though. The last few working bees have been you, me, John Lane and David [Batchelor].

J: Well, I'm getting to the stage, my legs don't work like they used to, I mean I'm 83, now.

E: I'm 44. We need some younger people to come on working bees. I find it disappointing that we haven't got more, like ten years ago, when we did the path [around the headland], we'd get seven, eight, ten people out there. There were people there then in their '30s, well now, I'm not in my '30s any more, the other guys don't turn up and we haven't got a new batch in their 30s, and that's what we really need.

J: I think more businesspeople. I was on the Committee, I was on the fire-thing because I had a business, and I was concerned...

E: The fire-thing? Oh, the C.F.S.

J: Fire-control Officer for years. They gave me a certificate after...when I got too old, they phased us out, you know [chuckling somewhat] but I was only on there because of selfish reasons, I suppose - I had a business, and I thought - I had the vehicle to pull the old fire-truck with, worked out all right, I was always around the place. See, Goolwa had one of those trailer-pumps, same as we did. When the old 'Renmark' caught alight, on the punt, on the wharf at Goolwa, they were using it up there then, 'course finally she burnt, and sunk up there by the wharf. I think Veenstra got the steam engine out of it.

**TAPE 3, recorded 8/12/99**Side A

E: That last bit you told me, before we turned on the tape...

J: Well, we used to be a coach-run to Adelaide, from Elliot, and it just so happened that, coming down the Crowsnest Road, there was an accident, horse must have stumbled and the shaft broke, or something, and they all got thrown out, and my great-grandmother was one of them. Simpson Newland was also on board, and he eventually got killed. She nursed him until help arrived, but he apparently succumbed in the meantime.

E: And she went to Southcote, you said?

J: They went to Southcote for help, but by the time they got back, he died. That'd be in the 1850s, 1860s

E: I'm sure the years are readily-enough available. Now, there are a number of other tracks we can go off on - for instance, about collecting berries at Basham's Beach, and selling them for sixpence a kerosene-tin full.

J: I don't know about sixpence, the price, but we were selling them quite cheap.

E: And it wasn't Basham's Beach?

J: No, Basham's Scrub. Middleton Scrub. Where the airport is now was quite thick with low scrub, and these native currant bushes were quite loaded with native currants, and they make blackcurrant jam, beautiful jam, and we used

to go out quite often as a Sunday outing in the trap to collect these, and Mum used to sell them in the shop which she had directly opposite the Hotel Elliot, [over the railway line] which she started when Dad was in the coach-building business.

E: The one with the blue tiling on it, which I always thought was a butcher, but I was wrong. It's the blue tiling makes it look like that, but of course it wasn't blue tiling in those days. I think I have seen a [black and white] photo where it says "Bartons" on it.

J: Got a photograph with "George Sibly's" on it at one time, too.

E: Are you related to them?

J: No, no. Dad had advertised, you see. His brothers complained that he was cutting hair at night, doing hair-dressing at night, and working during the day, they reckoned that was hardly fair. So he gave it up, but to give it up he had some clients who wanted to be looked after, so he advertised, and that's how Sibly came to Port Elliot. Sibly came from Terowie. Started there, and afterwards he went up to the Harbourmaster's Cottage.

E: And that was Eileen's [Warrender, nee Sibly] father?

J: Eileen's father.

E: And your father ran that shop as a hairdresser, also?

J: No, he had the shop that used to be the "Emporium", opposite the garage, opposite what is now "Vincent's". There was a little annexe on the side where we used to cut hair. Ray Deed used to have a boot shop in there afterwards. It's gone now, pulled down.

E: But this shop up here [with the blue tiles]...

J: Was a hairdressing shop for Sibly. They bracketed off a piece of the shop - I think it might have been a room, in those days, and they changed it into a shop for Sibly and Sibly, they had the side shop. Eventually, he must've got sick of being there, and he moved up to the top of the hill.

E: Or got a better deal with the Harbourmaster...

J: Sure.

E: But your Mum made the jam, and sold the berries?

J: Made jam, sold berries, she'd probably've sold jam, too.

E: Now this is possibly about the same time, 'cos I'm presuming this is about the mid-'20s, - the car and the gate.

J: When my dad and his...the business sort of disintegrated after the advent of the motor-car, and, like I told you, my grandfather went to America, and he said "The cars are stuck up all over America, and they'll never put us out of business", but they did. In the meantime, Dad started a business over at Yank [alilla] with his other brothers, so George and Bert and Ben moved over to Yankalilla, and ran that business, and Uncle Ike and Dad carried on here until they wound it up in 1925. The business where Cliff lived, where Linda lives now, when Steamworks was there. Making buggies and drays, and all sorts of horse-drawn vehicles. And they had 16 working for them at one time. And comparable with T.J. Richards in Adelaide, because Richards, in those days, was making buggies before he made cars, and he used to come and show at the Port Elliot Show. My Dad used to sneak around and get some of the new

ideas off it, and they didn't like it very much! (laughs) When the business folded up, the two brothers that were left there, they made two what they called rows of buggies. They were back-to-back seats with a hood over the top and rubber tyres. In the early days, they made them with steel wheels, and that was a real exercise to watch them on the tiring day - they were swearing and yelling and carrying on, and get all the people round the village with hammers, knocking the rims on. They had a big steel plate on the ground, about ten foot across, and they'd lay the fellies - that's the wheel in its wooden form, you know, the wooden form - then they'd heat up this ring in the fire, and block it on when it's hot, and they quickly, being red-hot, burn its way through the wood, and they'd, as quick as they could, quench it out, pull it off quickly, so it didn't burn the wood too much. But the factor of burning the wood helped to seat in properly, if you get what I mean. Later on, on the buggies and things, they put rubber tyres, which was quite nice. And they had a special process for doing that, used to have special joining things on the thing, and stick the rubber on somehow.

E: Not like we do it today?

J: No. It was very narrow, on the buggies.

E: 'Cos I'm getting the impression of a flat metal...

J: No, the buggy wheels... they still had the steel wheels on the drays, the heavy equipment, but on the light buggies and things, they put these rubber tyres...

E: But not blown up or Vulcanised or..

J: Just solid rubber. No air in them. Later on, people got smart and converted old motor-cars, and put motor-car wheels on the buggies. Motor-car lowered them down a bit.

E: There's a bit of irony there - first you get the dray, then someone invents the motor-car, and then takes bits of the motor-car to fix up the dray!

J: Some of the brakes were pretty primitive on these old buggies, big levers, and the big lever for you to put your foot on as well, so they were pretty primitive. In fact, my grandfather lived for a while out at Glenford Gully Road, out where Gommers had his piggery. Colin Thiele had a place out there, and they had that place for a while. That was out past what we called Double Bridges, where all the kids used to go for their picnics, Church picnics. It's only a couple of mile out off the Middleton Road. He [*Joe's grandfather*] had a load of stuff on, and he yelled out to my Dad to jump off, and the wagon got away - bit of a grade down there - and he sort of fell off, and the thing ran over him, with a load of wood on. That really helped to fix him. He didn't live too long after that. That was my Dad's father. Dad said he was never properly right after that. What I was going to tell you, when the boys gave up the business and they made these two buggies with the rubber tyres - solid rubber tyres - , and Dad bought an old Superior-K Chevrolet, 1922 Chevrolet - in the '20 areas, might be '24, '25, about the time he gave the business up. Brand new Superior-K, cost very little in those days

E: And you were 10 or 11 or 9 years old?

J: That's right. Dad used to drive past Uncle Ike, and Uncle Ike driving his

trap, he wouldn't look at our Dad at all, and Dad'd honk the horn! [laughter, mine perhaps sounding a little too akin to said horn] Uncle Ike afterwards bought a Rugby 4, and he was that used to driving the horse, he comes up to his gate up home, and he says - "Gee, back! Whoah back!", and he went straight through the gate!! He said - "Good God! What am I thinking about!" [more, and raucous, laughter] He lived up at Waterbury (?), you know, where the Thorpes live up there? Where Bayview Road is, runs up to that tank up the hill, [the first tank in P.E.], just before you get to the tank, there's a turn-off goes up to the house in the gully - that's Waterbury, and that's where Uncle Ike lived when he first got married, and that was originally the Chambers', some relation to Don Hutton, and Chambers had the place in early days, I can just remember him. He married a Burns, from Goolwa, so there you get the Burnses mixed up with the Bartons. On the other side, you get the Bergers mixed up with the Lundstroms. Lundstrom is an old Goolwa family. Burns, the concrete bloke down in Goolwa, he's related to Eileen (?)Barton, she was Nita Burns. You get so many other branches of the family, all mixed up through the district, cause no-one moved away very much those days.

E: My lot had a street named after them somewhere in Poland for the same reason, that they were there so long they had the main street of the town named after them.

J: That was the idea - still is the idea - with the District Council, to name streets after some of the older residents.

E: We've got a Barton Street, or a Barton Boulevard, haven't we?

J: There's one down here. That runs into Brittain Street, more or less. It was done when George Brittain was in Council. There's a new subdivision over there, the western part of Port Elliot, where Lorraine's [Pomery's] grandfather, old John Trigg, had a big property on the hill, opposite the drive-in. When that was done, he owned all that flat, too, down the bottom, some of that, cause when they developed that, he had all the sand-hills there that run from Boomer Beach right through to....Triggs family owned most of opposite the drive-in, and afterwards, the Dents owned the property down where Clarrie [Mathews] lives, where Clarrie lives was sort of draught horses, all the old draught horses working there, and that's why the area's so rabbitted out, so low, from the rest of the area because with the wind blowing, and the horses paddling around, the dirt blew away. In those days, we used to use that as a burial ground, for any of your pets that died. When Clarrie was working for us, Bunny Basham had a horse called Tiny, and we acquired it somehow or other - my uncle bought it, or... - the horse got sick, so I had to see Neiderer, a vet. He was coming up, giving it injections, [but] the horse wasn't getting any better and I said - "What's that injection? What's wrong with the horse?" He said - "I don't know". One night - it wasn't a very nice night - and the horse used to be in the paddock, outside the house where the tennis court is. One night, the old horse bumped on the wire door, and went out, poked its nose through my arm, walked out into the paddock and died! So I said to Clarrie the next morning - "Do you think your Dad would let me

bury the horse up near the Gap down there, Watson's Gap?" He said - "Yeah, that'd be all right", so he gave me a hand, and we dug a big hole in the sand-hill up there - I had a 'Blitz' in those days - a truck with a hoist on the back - so I tied the legs of the horse up, hooked it on the crane, and took it down to the sand-hills on the crane, and didn't bury it quite deep enough - the hoofs were sticking out a bit! [more raucous laughter]

E: The horse was obviously fond of you !

J: Yeah! It was like the horse was saying goodbye - rather poignant to sort of think that the old horse was trying to say goodbye.

E: How old was the horse?

J: Pretty old. It had colic or something - something wrong with it. This was a horse my daughter used to ride, Isabel used to ride it. In fact, all the people in the district used to ride it eventually - she took charge of it - I think it originally belonged to Bun Basham - 'Tiny' they called it, anyhow, the horse. Then, of course, it wasn't long after that, my dog got sick and I had to put him down, and I put the dog up there, too! [laughs] Buried the dog. After that, I thought I couldn't have another dog because it upset me that much. When you lose an animal, it's like using one of your children - you get attached to them.

E: I had to bury my Beest. Remember the big orange dog I used to have? It was traumatic. He was big too - it was a bugger of a hole!

J: Where'd you bury him?

E: In the backyard at 1 Merrilli Place, where I used to live. But, of course, the entire town used to feed that dog. Do you know, my dog used to walk in the

back of Monty [Warrender] and Eileen's place, nudge his way through their back door, nudge his way into their bedroom where Eileen had some sausage that she would feed him, from bed<sup>2</sup>. That's the kind of dog I used to own. Just for the record, I've forgotten Clarrie's second name, whom you just mentioned?

J: Mathews, one 't'. There's a Mathews Road up there - they may have altered it -used to have two 't's, Clarrie objected to that. [chuckles]

E: It was named for his family, then?

J: Yes, that's right. Because it was his property they really developed.

E: 'Cos you said something about asking his dad about burying there.

J: He owned all that.

E: But he's no relation to the Triggs?

J: He owned the property at the back of...where the plums are now, also....28 acres, I think it was. One day, Clarrie's dad comes to me, and he says "Joe," he said - earlier in the piece, the Council had bought a piece of this 28 acres for the two ponds that they dug and afterwards, the town grew and they had more people on, they needed more ponds - so he said to me - "Look Joe, I'm thinking of selling the rest of that property. If the Council want any more ponds, they'd better get in early and I'll sell it to them." So I told Ross Bartel..

E: Now this was while you were Mayor, or Councillor?

J: No, while I was Councillor. So, I told Ross Bartel, who was Planning Officer, Building and Health, he had several caps - Building and Health, mainly. So he said- "Right. We'll check on that." Eventually, it came up in

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<sup>2</sup> However, Monty insists The Beest was only ever fed sausage in the kitchen.

Council about this land. Geoff Sheridan was the District Clerk at the time, and he said - "There's some problem", when this came up, "There's some other bastard after that." And I said - "Geoff - the other bastard's Council!" [laughter] So the left hand wasn't talking to the right hand. That's how Council came to buy the rest of that 28 acres. I think they paid about \$30,000 or so for it. It wasn't a great price, but it's just as well they did, because it's very necessary.

E: Isn't that where the new C.F.S. centre's going?

J: No, it's going on the end of part of the football oval, isn't it?

E: Ah yes, that end. The car in the gate, I was just thinking, there's an irony - you know how he said "Whoah, whoah!" and the car wouldn't stop? Well, we've come full-circle, 'cos we're nearly now up to where you've got cars that can be voice-activated - we've almost developed to where you could have a car that would brake when you said "Whoah"!

[There is some discussion about a teak ex-life-boat that Joe's brother Cliff owned, that may have been, at some point of its apparently-long career, sunk off Kangaroo Island during World War II, but Joe did not know about this.]

J: It had a Nash engine, and I know Cliff, when he sold it, had a spare engine to go in it. In the 1959 flood, the river was really in flood. Four blokes got drowned near the Murray Mouth. They never found the body of one chap - or it might have been a couple of them they didn't find - but one chap in particular they didn't find, because he had 400 pounds stuck in his hip pocket.

E: In notes?

J: Yeah. He'd just drawn it out of the bank, and they knew he had this money

on him, but they couldn't find the body. But when the river went down, of course, they were looking in the wrong place - he was a lot higher up in the bushes than what they ever looked, and when they found him, found the body, it still had the money sticking out of his hip pocket! [laughs]

E: It means he died of natural causes, doesn't it?

J: Anyway, Cliff and I, when the river was in flood, we decided to go around Hindmarsh Island, past Clayton - the idea was to go through the lock at Tauwitchere, you can lift yourself through the lock, wind yourself through the lock, open the gates yourself, and work yourself through the lock. When we come up to the lock, the water's like that, and the lock's like that [this bit, unfortunately being somewhat visual] and coming up to a lock like that, and you open the gate, and the other end's closed. Well, when you come up to the lock like that, the boat wants to follow the stream around - you come up slowly like that, and the boat wants to go through the barrage, which could damage your boat pretty badly. Cliff had a rather peculiar steering system - he used to have to look up, then go down and steer, stick his head up to see where he was going, then go down and steer.

E: You wouldn't want that on a car, would you?

J: No. [laughs] Anyway, he put me off on the lock, and I'm directing him. I'm saying "Give it the gun". So he gave it the gun, and he all but missed the lock - the boat went round like that, hit the edge of the lock, bounced in and I saw the side of the old boat go out like that! [laughs] Bounced in and let it out, and, of course, with that lock up there you've got to be very careful - they

wind this thing up and they wind it up too tight, and when you release the catch that releases the handle, it can fly back and break your arm - it puts tension on it. Anyway, we went around and the old motor went very well. When we were coming past the Murray Mouth, it's really in flood - tearing out, very wide stream, going out to sea like Hell - and Cliff and I went across in the boat, and he didn't have enough throttle on, when we hit the current, it stalled the motor. Immediately, I panicked and threw the pick out, and the old boat tightened up and just about flicked us out of the boat. Cliff just reached down and touched the setter(?) and it started up again and we pulled the thing, and away we went, but we were very lucky - could have gone out the Murray Mouth. Very good boat. Cliff used to have all sorts of trouble with birds messing it - used to have all these rotary things sit on the top to stop the birds. Birds are a real problem if you got a boat anchored - they'll sit on it, and crap on it and so on.

E: You said about the side of the boat bashing into the, and you saw it go in, but it was teak?

J: But it moved in and out - it hit it pretty hard.

E: But it's wood? It's not a metal boat?

J: Yeah, it's wood. Lucky it didn't make a hole in it. See, the side of the thing is a bit rounded, and it hit enough of the inside to bounce in, rather than bounce out.

E: And maybe it's lucky that teak isn't brittle?

J: Yeah, pretty strong.

**Tape 3, recorded 8/12/99**Side B

J: Cliff steamed in, and he gave it the gun a bit - of course, to stop him going around the thing, you had to get a bit of speed up, that's why he hit it pretty hard. 'Course I used to go down there practically every Sunday, down into the Coorong with the boat, and Harry Rogerson and I used to catch about 100 bream each, every time we'd go down, and we'd clean them on the way back. I had a Chapman Pup engine - this was in my little boat. Single cylinder motor. I put this engine in Dad's old boat, which Dad made, and they called it 'Phar Lap'. I used to go down in this boat every Sunday. Spark-plug used to stick up on it, off the top of the cylinder straight up like that. I sat a tea-chest on top of it, and the tea-chest sat on the top of the spark-plug like that. I used to have a dog called Sailor, and one wet day I'm coming across the Murray Mouth, and it's raining like mad, and I had a bag on top of the tea-chest, and the bag must have got wet and come through, and the dog got a shock off the spark-plug!! [laughs] And the motor stopped! Same thing, going across the Murray Mouth - so I had a narrow squeak there. We used to pop down there - it'd take about an hour to go down, hour to come back or so, and it was pretty good, because you'd clean all your fish on the way back, and when you'd get back there was no rubbish to worry about. The fish were pretty plentiful here, until after the 1956 flood - I said 1959 before, did I? '56 floods,

it was. '59 fire. I'm getting mixed up. Big fire in '59. I used to go there pretty regularly. I used to keep the boat just the other side of the lock. Wouldn't have to go through any locks or anything, to go out. Sometimes, I used to put it in on the other side, and we used to....before I started to leave it on the other side of the lock, I used to motor through onto the lock, over the top of the logs, the logs are in the water, flying over the logs. But one day I went through, and the logs - two foot dropped out of the side! Fortunately it had a skeg (?) on the bottom that tipped the boat straight into the water - it never hurt me. Shows you how you've got to be careful. See, to save going through the lock, we just motor through between the - over the logs, and quite often the drop was only about that much on the other side. This particular day, it was about a two-foot drop! Years ago, I used to go down, and Dale Trevelyan's (?), Val Rogerson's father, used to be lock-keeper, was working there. He wasn't the boss, he was working there. Quite often, he used to have awesome fishing tales to tell you. Some days, you wouldn't go fishing, you'd just go and talk to him. He used to walk through the locks and get to my boat, parked, my vehicle, on this side. Those days, you didn't have the road around. The road to 19 Beacon wasn't there. If you wanted to get to 19 Beacon, you had to walk through the lock. That made it a bit awkward, because I used to carry my motor through the lock - that little Chapman Pup, you just unbolt it and carry it through, which is pretty heavy.

E: You don't remember anything about the building of the Barrages?

J: I worked on them. I worked on the road. In the Depression years, there was

very little work. My brother was working for Burnett, whom I mentioned earlier. When I left school, there wasn't any work. I'm about 17 or 18, so I used to go down and help him, and I'd get about 15 shillings a week.

E: This is still drays, or this is cars by now?

J: This is motor-cars. Bill had a bit of a Ford-T agency. You hear a lot about Ford-Ts.

E: You could have any colour, so long as it was black. That was Henry Ford's slogan. They were very easy to fix, weren't they?

J: Henry Ford used to reckon that - I think you could buy them for under 200 pounds, 190 or something - that he only made about a pound on selling the cars, and he made his money on the spare parts.

E: Because he owned everything. He was the first person to do that thing where they owned the entire chain of production, making the rubber for tyres, etc. And they were easy to fix, nearly anyone could. That's a point - given that Henry Ford boasted that nearly anyone could fix his cars - he boasted something like that - then, apart from the spare parts, what did you guys do?

J: We used to fix them up. Put new bands in them, grind the valves, put new head-gaskets on them. All the tyres those days were beaded-edge, really hard to change. And they're high-pressure tyres. The balloon tyres came out later. You used to get beaded-edge tyres.

E: And no inner-tube?

J: Yes, there were tubes in them. But they were beaded-edge, and they had a pretty heavy bead, that fitted into a bead in the rim. They weren't well-based

rims, they got a well in them, makes them easy to change. Very often, without the well-base, they used to have what they call scoop-rims, and the rims used to split, and bolt together, so they couldn't come adrift - when you bolt them on wood they couldn't collapse then. Years ago, old Mr. Sandland - that's Bidy Lovell's father, you remember Bidy? - he used to be the District Clerk, and he used to drive to Goolwa to work - afterwards, he lived at Goolwa, finally, finished his days in Goolwa - in his backyard, as the cars packed up, he had an old Star, an old Buick, an Empire, which they had, in brackets, "Little Aristocrat" on the bonnet, and a Renault - four, all old buses, all beaded-edge tyres. My Dad had a Centenary Dodge, Centenary Model 1930 - I called it the Centrendian model, I think. He had this Dodge(?)-bearing-crankshaft model, and old Mr. Sandland moved to Goolwa. Don Green bought the property, and started a woodyard afterwards. That's where Fonzie's is now. There was a house there, that's all gone. Alongside the hotel. [The Railway, or Pt. Elliot Hotel, on the Strand. Fonzie's, [and the remains of the name can still be seen, in the right light, on the facade of the present building - "Fonzie's, I understand, was for a time, in the '70s? '80s?, a pin-ball parlour.] In the backyard of the property, and the property extended right back to this street [Charteris Street] to where Eva Hider lives. The property he owned went right back from The Strand to Charteris Street. He had these four old vehicles in there, and he owned an old Maxwell car himself. He moved to Goolwa, and he had to get rid of these old cars, so he said to Cliff - "What about it?" He wanted a new re-plate battery for his

Maxwell, so Cliff, very reluctantly, traded the four old cars for one re-plate battery, worth about 30 shillings.

E: Why was your brother so reluctant?

J: We didn't want them. We had nowhere to put them much. We were at the back of the Hotel [Royal Family]. Burnett's. I think I did tell you before, but after we'd been there for a while, Bill wanted to sell out. Me and Cliff offered him a price which he wouldn't accept. Eventually we - I think I told you about how Cookie the baker bought two properties, and he didn't have enough money. So Cliff and Jay (?) always wanted that corner block, where 'The Emporium' is now, - "You can have it for 300 pounds". Harry Spencer accepted his offer for the other [property], after about 12 months delay, and, in the meantime, he'd bought this other property, and he didn't have enough money, so - long story - we bought the block of land. In the meantime, we had a lease of the other place. So while our place was being built, the garage was being built, we were still working on the other old property, Burnett's property. We parked these old buses out the back. We cut them up, made jinkers out of them, and all sorts of things. Some of these old car fanatics were horrified to think we could do that. The old Renault engine went into a boat, two-cylinder Renault engine. The Studebaker - I think there was a Studebaker there as well, went into a boat at Goolwa - one of the Rumbelows put it in a boat up at Goolwa. In those days, they were pretty heavy motors, because they didn't have detachable heads, a lot of those early models - later on, they had detachable cylinder heads, which makes them easier to service.

E: How did you replace a head-gasket?

J: There wouldn't be any head-gasket. You had little ports in the top which screw out, where your valves dropped in. When the more modern ones came out, you had detachable cylinder heads, which was a lot easier to service. We finished up with a lot of old bits and pieces. I was in the Army for 4 years, and Cliff carried on. Just about the time the war broke out, we had the garage built. I wasn't in it for very long before I was in the military, and I didn't get back till 1945. Vern Harding was very good to Cliff. He used to come over and help Cliff whenever he needed a second hand. In those days, everyone had gone to the war pretty well.

E: By then, you're also not just dealing with Ford-Ts - it'd be a lot different

J: A lot more of the old cars. I'm not interested in old cars - I got sick of them.

E: We got sidetracked from the Barrages - you were working on the Barrages.

J: The work wasn't very plentiful. I was down there, fixing up push-bikes for them, re-spoking push-bike wheels and painting push-bikes. Then, Howard Abbot - that's Margaret Abbot's father-in-law - Howard offered me a job on the Barrage. He called it a 'time-keeper'. It was really a labouring job, getting me on the cheap. [laughs, which is good of him]. Mum was very reluctant for me to go, but I was not very old then. I spent a bit of time helping to make the Barrage Road, from Goolwa out to the Barrage. Collecting limestone from out the paddocks. Harold Bedford's wife's father, Parker Linn (?), he was in charge of the barrage in those days, when they were building on it. When you see the coffer dam they made, and all the piles they drove in, the old barrage

is not going to move downriver! [laughs]

F: No, and all the sand-bags they had to put in in the first place, and all the wheelbarrows...

J: They drove these big piles in, quite long, 20 or 30 foot long, drove them right in, on angles, and then they trimmed around the top to make a sort of a knob on the poles, so when the cement went around them, it sort of grabbed hold of them, so nothing was going to slip off.

E: It was steam pile-drivers, wasn't it?

J: Yeah. They made a coffer dam - drove piles in all around to...kept pumps on to keep the water out. What they call a coffer dam. A lot of the quarry was got out of Lines's (?) Hill, and the other at Miles' Hill. That's where Nobby worked.

E: Yes, he mentioned that. Are you in the film, the one of the making of the Barrages?

J: I don't think I'm in the film. I was only there about six weeks, I suppose.

E: But you'd remember some of the people in the film?

J: Probably, yeah.

E: What I remember most [of the film] is the humungous number of sandbags, and then the wheelbarrows, looking like they're about to sink right into the water as they're bringing more sandbags so that they can keep building it up. Not easy work.

J: On the Tauwitchere locks, they've got gates, gates that open and shut like valves, just like a valve on a carburettor; but on the Goolwa barrage, they're

logs they drop inbetween ... they've got steel pylons, and they drop the logs inbetween them. To raise or lower the level, they pull the logs out with a crane. What they used to do is - to lower the lake level, they very often let the water go from Tauwitchere, which was easier, to open the lock-gates there, than it was to pull these piles out. As a result, the water used to rush from the lakes towards Goolwa from Tauwitchere, and that's why I reckon the Murray Mouth moves towards Goolwa, because the water was coming from the other way and pushing against the other bank. That's only my theory, cause the river mouth moved about a kilometre from where it used to be. It moved toward Goolwa.

E: But then there's an argument that says from time to time it's going to do that anyway, isn't there?

J: The way it used to be with the tides, the way the tide's coming in and the tide's going out, it used to go backwards and forwards - it varies, sometimes it'd be more over one way than the other, it'd vary a bit. But the sand is an amazing thing. Even this morning - walked around to Commodore Point, and, from yesterday morning, there's about two foot of sand been put up on the rocks. I take the dogs for a walk every morning. I walk around to Commodore and sit on the rock. The rock was about two foot lower this morning than it was yesterday morning because the sand had built up up there. That's an amazing thing that happens. Sand comes and goes on the beach, like it does on Boomer Beach. Fortunately, it comes back. Mightn't be quite a kilometre moved, the Mouth, but it was quite a distance, moved towards

Goolwa. Big sandhills just disappeared.

E: And this is over what period of time?

J: The last 30 or 40 years. What the E.W.S. used to do, on top of the sandhill on the Goolwa side of the Mouth, they had pegs driven in, and they'd know by the numbers on the pegs just how much had moved. But big sandhills just disappeared. Very dangerous down there, with your four-wheel drives. You've got to be very careful. You go and come at the right tides, otherwise a bit dangerous, motor stops half-way, tide comes in - several vehicles disappeared down there.

E: I've had friends who tried to cross it walking that nearly drowned.

J: I've driven right across the Mouth when it blocked up, with the Jeep. I just forget when it did block up, but it blocked up completely. You could drive a vehicle across.

E: How long for?

J: Oh, not too long. A few months was blocked up, and then the Government had to dig it out, to get the water to flow again. They had to dig it out.

E: And it only happened that one time?

J: It's the only time in local history, they reckon, that it's ever blocked up.

E: Weren't they worried about it doing it again a few years ago?

J: I think they are, they're still worried about it.



**ADDENDUM**

from the 'HOTELIER'S RECORD, Licensees, S.A. -

'Globe                      Port Elliot

G-42                        Existed 1854 - 1875.

Licence lapsed 1875 - became Cliff House.

National Trust File    (Item no. 1267)

1854	JONES, D.I.
1855 - 1863	JONES, D.T.
1864	BARTON, J.
1864 - 1872	BORN, John    (BAKER, ? and JARVIS, ?)
1872	BORN, E.
1873 - 1874	JONES, C.R.
1874 - 1875	BAILEY, E.'

(Part 3    page 241)

Note also:

'Middleton Hotel	Middleton	
M-29	Existed 1856 - 1919	Demolished
1856 - 1858	THRING, W.	
1859 - 1862	BARTON, J.	
1862	WARDLE, M.    junior	
1862	BARTON, J.    junior	
1863 - 1864	BARTON, J.'	

(Part 3    page 371)



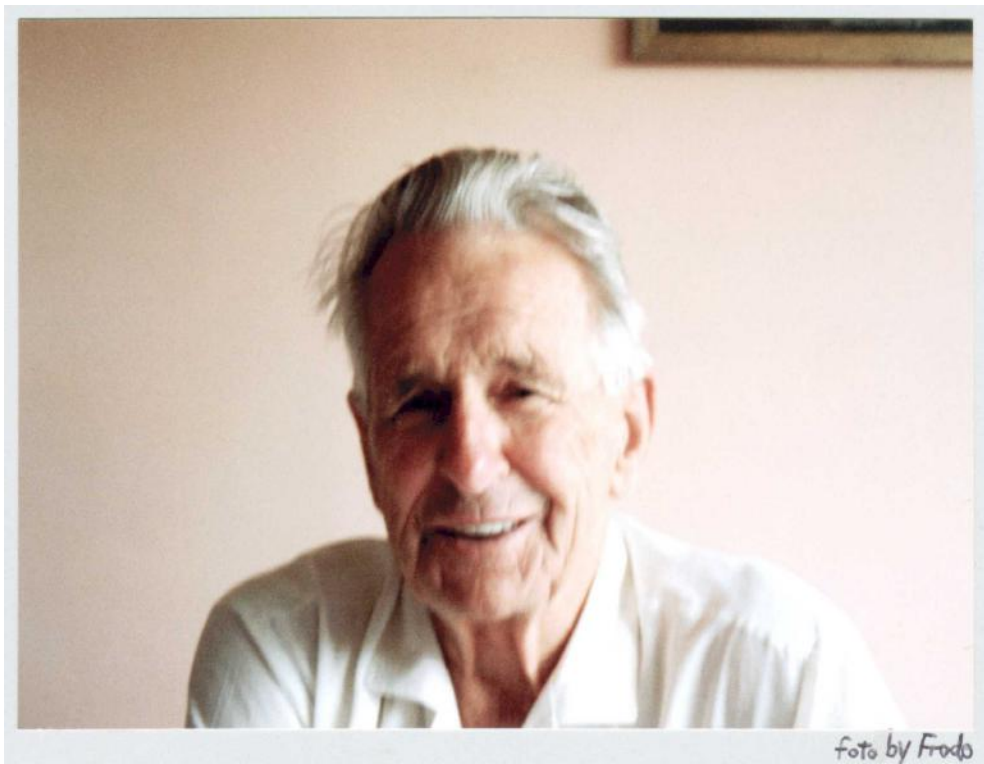


foto by Frodo



# Meet a name synonymous with PORT ELLIOT

Times  
5/7/01



**JOE BARTON** is well known around Port Elliot, being a former mayor and long-time councillor. He spoke to **ADRIAN DEZEN** this week about his love of the town and what he does during his retirement.

**SNAPSHOT** Former District Council of Port Elliot & Goolwa mayor Joe Barton is synonymous with Port Elliot having lived in the town all his life.

He has an undying passion for the town having worked as a councillor for 10 years from 1977-1987, before taking up the role of mayor in 1989 for two years.

An unassuming character, Joe says he was a little surprised to attract as many votes as he did during his election campaign.

"Being a mayor you have to have the gift of the gab and I didn't think I had that, but I was happy to be selected in the end result," he says.

During his time as Port Elliot ward councillor, Joe campaigned vigorously for additional car parking near Boomers Beach.

This was based upon a vacant block of land owned by St Lukes Church that council was looking to acquire to build car parking. Subsequent negotiations proved successful and the church offered to part with the block for about \$40,000.

Joe says that an enormous effort went in planning and negotiating.

"We had a town planner survey the area to determine what parking was needed and to come up with a suitable plan within Handby Street, Rosetta Terrace, and Carfax Street," he says.

"When I left council in 1987, there was a changeover of council soon after and they wanted to sell the land that I fought so hard for.

"That was one of the main reasons why I decided to go back to council so that I could block its sale, and that's what upset me the most."

The publicity generated helped stop the sale prior to his re-entry into the council. Alexandria Council later sold the land for housing subdivision soon after its amalgamation.

During his term in the council, he says his job was made easier by having a very efficient CEO, staff and fellow councillors.

He believes Port Elliot has been forgotten to a degree since the District Council of Port

Elliot and Goolwa joined forces with the District Council of Strathalbyn in 1996/97.

"They say bigger is always better, but I don't think the amalgamation was very successful," says Joe.

"In my view, the Port Elliot ward is not the same as what it was and there is not the same level of maintenance as before.

"We used to have a gardener that would work 30 hours a week in the Soldier's Memorial Gardens and that service has now disappeared, except for spasmodic maintenance by the council."

Joe's origins in the town date back as far as 1855 when his great grandfather migrated to Australia from Essex in England.

Soon after, his dad Joseph was born in Goolwa and had the distinction of travelling on the old horse tram between Port Elliot and Goolwa as a newborn.

But, it wasn't until October 16, 1916, that he was born, and the spritely 85-year old has never looked back ever since.

"I've always been interested in the town's affairs and that's one of the things that's kept me going, as it's often easier to let go," he says.

One of his greatest loves in life was mechanics and during the 1930s he set up a business with his older brother Cliff that he ran for 45 years as Barton Brothers.

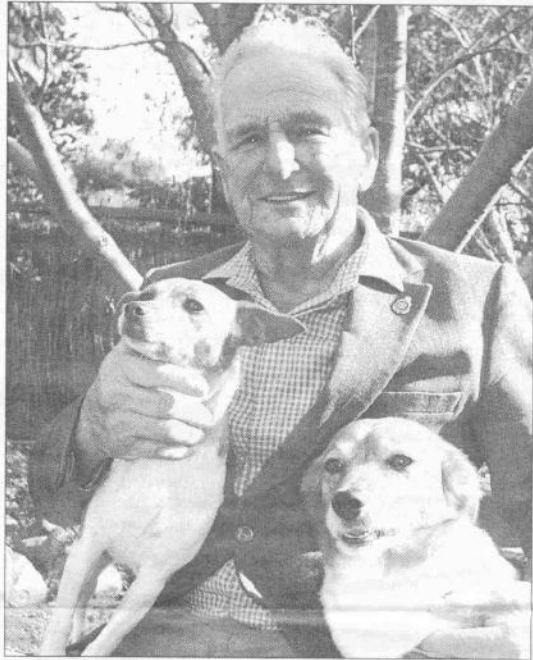
This was situated on the corner of North Terrace and The Strand where they specialised in harvesting mechanics, working between Yankalilla and Willunga.

He eventually saved enough money to buy three blocks of land during the 1940s for a total 150 pounds, with council rates priced at 10 shillings and 6 pence per vacant block.

Joe worked as a mobile mechanic during the Second World War where he was based in Darwin in 1942 with the 106 IBG (Independent Brigade Workshops).

"I was a workshop mechanic and we had to fix trucks and most of that was helped by a mobile welder and lathe that we had access to," he says.

"We were about to be posted to Singapore before Darwin was raided, and then I managed to return home."



**•SYNONYMOUS WITH PORT ELLIOT** - Joe Barton is synonymous with Port Elliot having been a mayor of the former District Council of Port Elliot & Goolwa from 1989 to 1991. These days, he enjoys the quiet life with his wife Pat and two dogs Henry and Hettie whom he often walks.

Upon his return after four years in the Army, he sought his long time friend from Adelaide Pat whom he first met in 1937 when she holidayed in the town. The couple eventually married in 1944 and soon after had two children Isobel and Michelle.

It was during this time that Joe began offering his services to the Port Elliot CFS where he acted as a fire control officer.

One of his biggest tasks was in 1959 when the town experienced major fires that he helped to avert, and example of his passion towards his community.

But, it wasn't just through his community involvement that Joe was noted. He was also a keen footballer, winning the Mail Medal in 1939 as captain of PE Football Club.

He also played a couple of games for Sturt's reserve team where he would travel to Unley by motorbike to play.

In later years he played tennis for Port Elliot Tennis Club and badminton at various locations in the South Coast.

One of the reasons why he has remained in the town is

because of its natural beauty and the beaches that surround.

However, he has noticed some marked changes over the years that saddens him to a degree.

"There used to be a time when you would know everybody in the district, but that's changed a bit these days," he says.

"We've (the town) has also been disadvantaged by a lack of amenities including no resident doctors, chemist, petrol outlets, or policemen.

"So, we've had to rely on Victor Harbor, rather than Goolwa, to compensate for that."

These days, Joe is still fairly active in the community as a member of the Bashams Beach & Horseshoe Bay Advisory Committee, and a volunteer of Victor Harbor Meals on Wheels for 16 years.

These days, Joe enjoys the quiet life at his home with Pat and his two Jack Russell dogs, Henry and Hettie, whom he often walks regularly.

And apparently they are more well known around town than Joe.



NEWS

TIMES 30/9/04

# Steps named in honour of Joe

By **BELINDA BILLING**  
Alexandrina reporter

PORT ELLIOT - A ceremony to officially name the new steps to the Port Elliot Jetty after well known local identity Joe Barton was held at Horseshoe Bay on Saturday.

Through Joe's persistence and tenacity the old steps have finally been replaced.

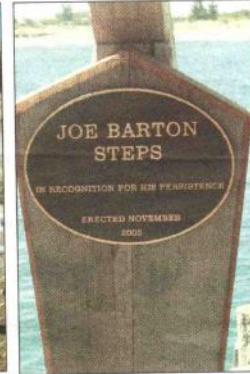
The original steps had fallen into disrepair and were removed some years ago.

Joe remembered the steps as an integral part of his, and many other children's, childhood fun as they would dive from the jetty and return via the steps for more action.

Joe was concerned the absence of the steps forced many children to undertake the dangerous practice of climbing the adjacent rocks to get back up to the jetty.

Joe is the great-grandson of a pioneering family of the district and a life long resident of Port Elliot, excepting his Army days during WWII.

For many years he has been an active member of a number of local organisations including the CFS, the Port



#### ▲ MANY WELL WISHERS:

There were many well wishers on hand on Saturday when the steps at the Port Elliot jetty were named in honour of Joe Barton, pictured above with his daughter Isobel Corbally (second from right), Lorraine Pomery and Jan White. **Above right:** The plaque that honours Mr Barton's 'persistence'

Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association (he is currently their patron) and The Basham's Beach Trust.

He was also a well respected footballer and cricketer in his younger years and served as Mayor of the Port Elliot and Goolwa Council prior to the amalgamations which gave rise to today's Alexandrina

Council.

At a sprightly 87 Joe still delivers Meals on Wheels in the district and can often be seen walking his two dogs.

He is always good for a chat on the history and personalities of the town, or the Crows latest calamity according to a spokesperson for the Town

and Foreshore committee who added it was a fitting tribute to name the steps after such a wonderful identity and supporter of fun.

The plaque and steps were funded by the Alexandrina Council and was unveiled by the Basham's Beach Advisory Committee, prior to the AFL Grand Final.



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Name: JOE BARTON

Address: Nth. Terrace, Pt. Elliot

File Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE: Joe Barton  
DATE: 17-8-07

*Preserving the past, securing the future*





From: Carolyn Jeffrey

[mailto:manager.victortimes@ruralpress.com]

Sent: Thursday, 8 April 2004 15:49

To: Jill Patmore

Subject: Use of The Times for oral histories

Dear Jill

As requested I grant permission for the library to use extracts from The Times as part of its oral history program on the condition that these extracts are acknowledged as being from The Times, Victor Harbor.

From the desk of

Carolyn Jeffrey

Managing Editor

The Times/On The Coast



## When you're never late for school

**B**ert Brittain and Joe Barton played marbles in the Port Elliot Primary School grounds when they were little kids, and now nearly a century later they're grateful they haven't lost them.

In a remarkable tale of mateship, they went right through school together, served their country at war in Darwin, and returned to live in Port Elliot where they are now residents at Resthaven, an aged care community service provider which encompasses the Old School House.

Bert is 98, and Joe turns 99 on October 16, and they can remember every key date in their lives and how Mrs Olive Golding used to give them the cane during class. It was tougher for dear Bert because she constantly belted him over the knuckles trying to change him from writing left-handed to right-handed. "I wonder if she ever knew that I was a left-hander out of school?" he quipped.

It was in this very classroom that Bert, at the age of six, met the only girlfriend he ever had in his life, his darling wife, Doris, who passed away aged 72.

When told he was still spritely and as sharp as his coloured pencils in Grade 4, Joe said: "You can't tell a sausage by its skin." The wit obviously remains too, and he also fell in love with a former Port Elliot school classmate, his wife Patricia, who died, aged 80, but they didn't really know each other well at school. Adding to this school connection, Bert and Joe each had two children who also went to Port Elliot Primary, as did their children and grandchildren.

"They were good times," Joe said of his old school days. "The only problem was that there was no high school here at first so we'd have to catch the 10-to-10 train to Strathalbyn and get the five o'clock train home. Later we had secondary school classrooms in Victor Harbor at the old Wonderview picture theatre on Seaview Road, and the church hall near the roundabout on Adelaide Road."

Bert milked cows when he left school. "It was during the depression, and there were no hand-outs," he said. "I remember mum and dad going to the police station to get



rations." Later, Bert ran the general store in Port Elliot for many years, while Joe worked in a petrol station down the road.

As if it were yesterday, Bert spoke of when he arrived in Darwin with the Australian Army, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, and like Joe he recalled the bombings of Darwin. They weren't in the same unit, and according to Joe he lived in luxury compared with Bert.

The reminiscing continues daily in the comfort of Resthaven. They said they love it here, especially with the old school building retained. In the morning they probably talk of the old local footy and cricket days, Bert's tennis matches over 40 years, and how he still goes to the local bowling club for a quiet drink, where he is patron.

After their move to Resthaven Port Elliot, Jo and Bert were delighted to tour the refurbished building, which was gutted by a fire caused by vandals in 2012. Now restored and housing Resthaven Murray Bridge, Hills and Fleurieu Community Services offices and wellness centre, the Old School House is back to its former glory. The centre only opened four months ago and last month




Top: Bert Brittain (left) and Joe Barton at an old desk inside the Port Elliot Old School House. Note the original blackboard in the background. Above: The Old School House.

reached a significant milestone with 50 per cent occupancy. Features retained include a section of the original chalkboard wall that was saved after the blaze.

And so the visit to memory lane and to the naughty corner in the Old School House continued, as did the memories of their childhood sweethearts. When it was mentioned that it was a long time to live in Port Elliot, having been born there, Bert said: "Oh no, I was well away for 10 years including the war... when I lived in Victor Harbor." ■





**BARTON ~ Joseph Edwin**  
**16-10-1916 ~ 24-09-2016**  
Passed away peacefully  
in his home town of  
Port Elliot



A true gentleman and an  
inspiration to all who knew him  
Loved Husband of Patricia (dec)  
Devoted Father of  
Isobel & Stephen,  
Michele & Allan (dec)  
Loved Grandfather of  
Emma, Karl & James  
Great Grandfather of Jack & Lachie  
Beloved companion of Henry & Hettie  
*"Forever In Our Hearts"*

\*\*\*\*\*

The Relatives and Friends of  
the late Mr. Joseph Edwin Barton  
are respectfully invited to attend  
his Funeral Service, to be held at  
the RSL Hall, The Strand, Port Elliot  
on Friday 30th September, 2016  
Commencing at 2.30 pm

\*\*\*\*\*

In lieu of flowers donations to  
Resthaven would be appreciated.  
Envelopes available at service.

**In the care of**  
**South Coast Funeral Services (SA) P/L**  
 **VICTOR HARBOR**   
**8552 1814**

*Family owned & operated in SA*

Times 29 Sept. 2016



