



TOWN OF
VICTORIA PARK



Interview with Bill Bickerton

*Interviewed by Heather Campbell
January 2020*

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Interview with Bill Bickerton

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Bill Bickerton in his class photo at East Victoria Park Infants School, 1946

Interview with Bill Bickerton

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INTRODUCTION

William (Bill) Lloyd Bickerton, was born in 1938, one of three children of James Lloyd Bickerton and his wife Dorothy Jean Nugent. James Bickerton worked on sheep stations in the Karratha area and met Dorothy Nugent from Lake Champion, when she was working in the North West as a cook. They married in Claremont in 1936, subsequently opening a small delicatessen shop in Albany Highway, Victoria Park. The family then moved to 39a Sussex Street remaining there throughout the years of the Second World War. Although enlisted in the Army, James Bickerton suffered lung and respiratory problems. He trained in the manufacture of munitions, becoming a supervisor at Welshpool munitions factory and built a house in Thomas Street, Queens Park moving the family there in 1945.

Bill Bickerton started school at East Victoria Park Infants School going on to East Victoria Park Primary School and high school years at Kent Street. He continued to attend school at Victoria Park and Kent Street, even after the family moved to Queens Park, travelling by bicycle or bus. An apprenticeship with Tomlinson's Steel was followed by a varied and distinguished career in many parts of the world. A precis of his career can be found at Attachment Three.

Family background and the initial move to Victoria Park are discussed in the interview. Family life and childhood at 39a Sussex Street in the stringent war years are covered in some detail and including the streetscape, house and garden. With many men away at the war those living in Sussex Street were predominantly women and children; there are word pictures of neighbours and also personalities from nearby streets.

A plan of the East Victoria Park Infants and Primary Schools 1943-1950 [Attachment Two] shows many local businesses and places of interest. Some are elaborated on in detail including Dr Meagher, a general practitioner who had a medical practice next door to the primary school and the Ice Works in Albany Highway.

Bill Bickerton describes a happy childhood, but one in which the threat presented by the Second World War and always present in the background, lead to a sense of fear. He loved school and was a good student, but school routine included air raid practice two or three times a week. Teachers included Miss Phillips, 'a little short lady, with a very strong Welsh accent', who took the choir to the ABC office in Perth to perform. Of particular note is Alice Hannant, the head teacher, 'a regal and beautiful lady', 'respected by everyone' who had exceptional teaching qualities and a strong affinity with students and parents alike. Bill Bickerton retained contact with Miss Hannant after her retirement in 1947, continuing to visit her two or three times a year.

In closing the interview Mr Bickerton looks back on the Victoria Park of the forties and fifties as a good place to have a childhood but is doubtful 'it would be the same now'.

The interview, which was conducted on 3 January 2020, in Manjimup, is contained in 1 hour 45 minutes of recording and the interviewer was Heather Campbell.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS TO TRANSCRIPT

1. Listing of residents, Sussex Street, Victoria Park, 1946, taken from *Wise's West Australia Post Office Directory 1946*.
2. Plan of the East Victoria Park Infants and Primary Schools and surrounding area 1943-1950, drawn up by Mr Bickerton.
3. Precis of Mr Bickerton's career, prepared by Mr Bickerton.
4. Teaching career of Miss Alice Hannant taken from *The Education Circular, Western Australia WA State School Teachers 1900-1980* at https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?keyword=Victoria+Park&page=38https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?starts_with=H&page=71

References to Miss Hannant taken from Western Australian Newspapers on Trove 1912-1947.

5. List of references used.

TRANSCRIPT

This is an interview with Bill Bickerton for the Town of Victoria Park, held in Manjimup on Friday, 3 January 2020. The interviewer is Heather Campbell

Bill, can we start off with your full name and your date and place of birth please?

BICKERTON: Yes. William Lloyd Bickerton. Place of birth is Berwick Street, Victoria Park. 22 September 1938.

HC Give me a brief outline of your family background, where the family came from.

BICKERTON: My father, James Lloyd Bickerton was born 1908, '08 or '10, in Roebourne in the North West of Western Australia. My mother was born in Perth in what is now called Northbridge in 1911. I have two sisters, Helen Joan Dewrance and a younger sister, Kaye Roberts, both of whom live in Mandurah currently.

HC Tell me a bit about your mum and dad.

BICKERTON: Let's start with my father. My dad was born and grew up in Roebourne in the North West of Western Australia. There was quite an extended family in that area – Fishers, Hancocks. They were all sheep station people. My dad never owned a sheep station. He was educated at Christian Brothers College in Victoria Avenue in Perth as a young man. I don't have a lot of knowledge about his work experience other than he worked on sheep stations in several capacities. I understand at one stage he was the manager of Karratha Station, the homestead of which is in the location of where Karratha township now stands. He also worked at Cossack. There's some heritage listed buildings there. It was originally the port for Roebourne and then the river silted up and they couldn't use it. Then they built the jetty at Point Samson. They built a railway line from Point Samson into Roebourne town, which is not a long distance, probably about 30 kilometres and he was involved in building that railway line.

My mother – her maiden name is Nugent - Dorothy Jean Nugent. She was the oldest of five siblings, four girls, two boys. Mum had a good education, she was a very, very astute, very intelligent woman. When her father, Grandfather Arthur Parham Nugent, came home from the First World War he had been badly gassed and he was very sick. He was granted land which was at Lake Champion, about 40, 50, kilometres north of Merredin in the Eastern Wheatbelt. It was virgin country and it nearly broke their heart. The whole family were there and with the aid of horses and some assistance, they cleared the land, but they never ever did very well out of it. I have some wonderful

stories about those years in my personal diaries, in my personal memoirs, of the hardships of those days. My mother, she was sort of the leader of the children in the family and established the social activities at Lake Campion. They built tennis courts and they had a crowd of young people that socialised and occasionally went down to Merredin for Saturday night dances and stuff like that.

Anyway Mum was a wonderful cook. Her father gave up the land and they moved back to Perth. Grandfather Nugent went back to work for the West Australian Government Railways. He was a guard on the railways, on the Fremantle line. My mum then was employed by the government as a cook, a hospital cook, and she was rotated through several state hospitals. I recall that she worked in Albany and I think she was in Esperance. Then eventually she was sent to the hospital in Roebourne where she met my father.

HC You did tell me earlier that they married in a church in Stirling Highway in Claremont in 1936.

BICKERTON: I don't recall the reason why they came back to Perth, but I suspect my mum would have been fairly influential in that. There wasn't much of a future for a young family in a place like Roebourne. It was a very hot, hostile, undeveloped sort of a place in those days. Yes, they came down and my father's mother lived in Princess Road in Claremont and I suspect that's the reason why. They married in a small Church of England Church on Stirling Highway in Claremont, just on the Fremantle side of Bay View Terrace. I've never been able to find that church, it may have been demolished.

HC Do you know how they came to be living in Vic Park, Bill?

BICKERTON: I think the reason was my grandmother Ruby Nugent – her brother – we called him Uncle Sonny. His name was Lou Toogood. He lived just behind the police station in Victoria Park and he was a great help to my parents when they were young people and he assisted them in many respects. Uncle Sonny (as we called him) didn't go to the war because he had a club foot, so he was physically incapable of being a soldier. But I do recall when I was a little boy that Uncle Sonny always featured very much in our life, in the building of our house and so on. So I am almost certain that would be the reason why they went to Vic Park because the little delicatessen/café sort of shop that Mum had on Albany Highway was just only 300-400 metres from Uncle Sonny's house¹. They were in Litchfield Street.²

HC That was near Gresham Street was it?

¹ J Bickerton, mixed business, 455 Albany Road, Victoria Park is listed in The Western Australian Directory [Wise's] 1939-1940. This address is close to Litchfield and Gresham Streets.

² Louis Toogood lived at 11 Litchfield Street, Victoria Park. [The Western Australian Directory [Wise's] 1936]

BICKERTON: Yes, it's not far from Gresham Street, yes.

HC What happened to that place when they moved to Sussex Street?

BICKERTON: I have no idea. It probably wasn't very successful. They rented the house at 39a Sussex Street³. By that time my father, he was in the Australian Army, but he had lung and respiratory problems and he was sent to South Australia to train in the manufacture of munitions. He was still in the Australian Army, but he didn't serve overseas as such. He was a supervisor at the Welshpool munitions factory. My mother did odd cleaning work, but generally she was just the focus for the entire family. I recall as a little boy that all of her siblings as they came and went to the war – because almost all of them fought overseas – whenever they were home on leave, they always came to our place. So we always had a houseful of family at Sussex Street. The house would have been rented, I am almost certain. It was 39a; 39 was on the corner of Gloucester Street and it was a little shop, but the shop wasn't open. It had a residence behind it and it was occupied by a family named Armitt, Fred Armitt and his wife. Fred was a baker at, believe it or not, Mias. Mias Bakery, which was there along Albany Highway in those early days. They had two children; Harold, who eventually owned a clothing emporium on Albany Highway and a daughter named Doreen. They were good friends next door. Fred worked nights at the Mias bakery and brought beautiful fresh bread for us every day. In fact Billy Mias, with whom I have just communicated actually, because he's the same age as me, his father had the Mias Bakery and they went on to become a very big time bakery business in Western Australia.⁴

HC Tell me about the house at 39a, what was it like?

BICKERTON: It was a big large elevated house on stumps, very high at the front, a timber-framed house. I reckon there would have been three bedrooms, a big back verandah, a huge big lounge room with big windows looking out onto Sussex Street. Steps down from the front verandah to a concrete path. A big wattle tree in the front garden. At the back there was a trellis. In those days we had outdoor toilets – the toilet was up the back yard, so there was a concrete path up the back with a trellis covered in grape vine and some lawn.

HC Was it a push button toilet or an empty the can?

BICKERTON: No, you pulled the chain! It was a flush toilet.

HC If you went through the front door of the house, take me for a walk through!

BICKERTON: Oh gosh Heather, that's asking a bit much! There was a long passage way all the way through the house, with rooms off to the left and right. That's probably

³ Wise's Directory for 1945 lists Jas L Bickerton at 39a, Sussex Street, Victoria Park.

⁴ <http://miasbakery.com.au/the-mias-bakery-story/>

as much as I can remember. To the right was Mum and Dad's bedroom, to the left was a huge big lounge room, which was the place where we all congregated when we had visitors. There was a place to park a car – you could come into the back garden behind Fred Armitt's place, off Gloucester Street. My Uncle Wally, when he came home from New Guinea, he bought a car and I remember he had it there. On the back verandah on the right-hand-side was the old twin concrete tubs and the copper, with the fire underneath, that Mum used to do the laundry in. My little bedroom was on that back verandah, a little sleepout, closed off.

HC What sort of facilities did Mum have in the kitchen, a wood stove?

BICKERTON: Yes, definitely a wood stove. My mum was a wonderful cook, a great cook. As I said she was a cook at the hospital. She made all sorts of goodies and it was always sort of the highlight of our life when we had visitors that Mum would cook up all sorts of goodies. Yes, she had a great kitchen and she was a very organised and clean and disciplined cook, because that was her profession.

HC What about the bathroom, did you have hot water?

BICKERTON: We had a wood chip heater, the old chip heater. That was fairly limited, so the kids shared the bath and Billy always got the last lot, by which time it was probably like soup [Laughter]

HC Let's go on to the garden, what did you grow in the garden?

BICKERTON: No, I don't believe there was a garden. There was a front lawn. As I said there was a great big old wattle tree out the front, that I used to climb up and sit in and watch the world go by. That's really all I remember other than that lovely grape vine over the trellis. From the back door to the outdoor dunny was, oh quite a way, probably 30 or 40 metres and there was a fully covered trellis down, with grape vines over it. That's about all I remember about the garden.

HC Right, so you didn't grow vegies, or have chickens or anything like that?

BICKERTON: No. Later on – my dad was a good gardener, but of course in those years he was working all sorts of shift work – it was during the war years, so obviously he didn't have time, so I don't recall we had a vegie garden.

HC What's your earliest memory of that house as a little boy, Bill?

BICKERTON: Sneaking out of the lounge room window and running up the street to play with Johnny Maloney, who lived about two or three doors further up the hill.⁵

⁵ The Maloney family lived at 45 Sussex Street.

HC Had you been forbidden to go?

BICKERTON: We were supposed to have a sleep after lunch, that was an absolute, without question that had to be. So after lunch, unless you were at school, of course, you had to go and lie down and have a sleep. I didn't want to have a sleep. The sleeping place for the afternoon was in the lounge room on the carpet on the floor, so as soon as Mum disappeared I went through the front window and ran up the street – and always got caught, always! I was for everlastingly in trouble!

HC If you were standing in Sussex Street in those days, when you were kid, and looking up and down the street, what would you see?

BICKERTON: Well the street was fully occupied. There were houses from Albany Highway, all the way up to Berwick Street. All of them were in good condition. They all had lovely gardens, all nice houses. I do recall that the street was predominantly women. All the men were away at the war. I have many names in my head and it was nice to get that list from the Wisps Post Office Directory of 1946⁶ and I recognised all of the names there. The only man that I recall living in the street was a Mr Evans, who had an old Ford A car and he was on the other corner of Gloucester Street and Sussex Street⁷. All the other houses were occupied by middle-aged women and their children, with the exception of next door where there was Miss Bake⁸ and Mrs Dawson, who were sisters. To answer your question, the street was sealed; it was a bitumen road. It was fully occupied by residences from Albany Highway up to Berwick Street and all the places were in pretty good condition.

HC Was it a quiet street?

BICKERTON: There was no traffic in those days.

HC Would you go and play in the street, you kids?

BICKERTON: Not a lot. We weren't allowed to play in the street, we'd get into trouble if we played in the street; we had to play in the back yard. Although I do have one incident where I threw what I thought was a sand bomb at my sister out in the street and it had a rock in the middle of it and split her head. I got a smacked bum for that.

HC What sort of games did you play?

BICKERTON: Well the boys predominantly marbles; I was a bit of a marble expert. The girls played hopscotch, skipping ropes, hide and seek, climbing trees, bird nesting.

⁶ See Attachment One.

⁷ J H Evans lived at 33 Sussex Street.

⁸ Miss Flo Bake lived at 41 Sussex Street.

HC Collecting the eggs?

BICKERTON: [hesitates] Yes . Yes we did. It was quite a thing to have a birds' egg collection. We knew how to blow the eggs and keep the shells from breaking and kept all our little birds' eggs in cotton wool in a little box.

HC As it was wartime, were you conscious of the war?

BICKERTON: Very much so, very much so.

HC With a sense of fear?

BICKERTON: To a certain extent. It was talked about by the women a lot and there were constantly reports coming in because both of the men in my mum's family were at the war. Uncle Stanley was in the army and he was in the Middle East and then New Guinea, in the Australian Army. Uncle Wally, my mum's youngest brother was a radio man in the Air Force and he served in New Guinea and then in Japan when the war was over, in the occupation forces. Auntie Joan was in the Royal Australian Air Force, Mum's youngest sister. Auntie Rene was Mum's second sister, she was in the forces. So yes, we were very conscious of the war. All three of my Mum's sisters were still single, all three of them – my Mum was the only one that was married at that stage. The other three sisters were all single girls and they often brought servicemen home that they'd met, wherever, I don't know where. So we often had servicemen in the house.

HC So as child, did you have any sense of fear?

BICKERTON: Yes we did because we had air raid trenches in the school grounds. We had to do a practice two or three times a week when we had to file out. We were taught to sit in the trench and hold our hands over our heads and not to let our tongue between teeth. We had all sorts of funny training, so we were very, very conscious... Not that we ever had any aeroplanes come over but we did the drill. It was explained in great detail to us, about why we were doing that particularly when the Japs began bombing the north of Australia, Darwin and down the coast. That was very topical and of course the news those days was through the radio; everybody sat glued to the radio in the evening, so we knew what was going on. Yes, there was fear; I was frightened. It was unknown; we didn't know what it was all about.

HC You mentioned the neighbours and Miss Bake, she was at 41 Sussex Street.

BICKERTON: That's correct. A lovely, lovely lady and my very best friend for years and years, to the extent where my dad put a gate through the side fence so we didn't have to walk around the front, we went through the gate into Miss Bake's place. Miss Bake's place was a huge block of land and a huge big old elevated timber house. Her father

must have passed on before I came on the scene, but his activities were most obvious because it was all still there. Her house was on a big block of land and it ran right through to the next street at the back, which was the street opposite the Lady Gowrie Kindergarten. I can't remember the name of that street.⁹ At the back of the house there were two huge big fig trees and stables. Her dad had a business with drays and draught horses and he carted beer from the brewery and delivered boxes and crates and stuff to all the shops around Perth. He had drays and draught horses there in stables. The back part of the block was cobbled with stones, had cobblestones. You could hear the horses clip-clopping around at night. As I said although he'd gone and the horses had gone, the drays were still there and all the saddlery and the harness and all that stuff. It was just an amazing place to play for us kids. We used to get up in those big old fig trees. Miss Bake – I don't know much about her personally, other than she was a good friend and she used to make me pancakes and syrup. [Laughs]

Even after we left Vic Park and Dad built the house out at Queens Park and we moved out there, I continued going to school at East Vic Park and then I went to the Kent Street High School. Every Wednesday, at lunch time, I used to go over to Miss Bake's on my bike, or walk, and she would have my pancake lunch ready for me. She was just a wonderful friendly lady and she just loved us kids to bits. I think she was a spinster. Her sister Mrs Dawson lived there with her. She was an equally nice person, but I don't know anything about her background, whether her husband had died in the war or whatever. Anyway these two elderly ladies lived there. Miss Bake had one of only two cars in the street. It was a little Austin 7. Occasionally – it was the greatest treat of my life that Miss Bake would say, "Come on Billy, come shopping with me." I'd get in this little Austin 7, in the front and I thought I was the king of Sussex Street. And she would take me for a ride. I remember we nearly got smashed into by a big truck on Albany Highway. She obviously wasn't a very good driver, we nearly had a bad accident, I remember that very clearly. But yes, a lovely lady and a good friend.¹⁰

HC Any other neighbours in Sussex Street that come to mind?

BICKERTON: Well Johnnie Maloney, two doors up¹¹, who I went to school with. His Mum was always very friendly, but used to say, "Billy you'll be in trouble when you get home!" She knew I'd run away from my afternoon nap. Mrs Hedges, across the road¹², her son Malcolm went to school with us. On the other corner was Mr Evans¹³, he was a man there on his own. He had the only other car in the street. Back towards the Rec – the Recreation Ground that runs down through the middle, Phyllis McAllister, who I

⁹ The centre was located in the heart of East Victoria Park, backing onto the Sussex Street Reserve. See *Beyond Matta Gerup: a history of Victoria Park*, by Susannah Thompson, Town of Victoria Park, 2012, pp 115-119.

¹⁰ Florence Agnes Bake died in Victoria Park, aged 96 on 1 October 1975.

<http://www2.mcb.wa.gov.au/NameSearch/details.php?id=KC00049417>

¹¹ 45 Sussex Street.

¹² 34 Sussex Street.

¹³ 35 Sussex Street.

was madly in love with¹⁴ as a boy. Had no idea whatever happened to Phyllis McAllister, but anyway she was my sweetheart.

HC The grocer, Mr Riemans at number 9.

BICKERTON: Oh the little grocery shop, yes. It was right on the corner of the Recreation Ground, or the Rec as we used to call it. I never knew what that meant, but anyway... until I got that bit of paper and I realised it was the recreation ground.

HC Was that the shop where most people did their shopping?

BICKERTON: No, no. I don't think I ever went in that shop, but it was there and it was quite active. I saw people... My mum used to shop down on Albany Highway. There was Peter's green grocery and the butcher's shop next. Aitkin's Grocery on the corner of Basinghall was where my mum did her shopping.¹⁵ No, I don't know much about that shop at all.

HC There would have been deliveries, would there not? The baker? The milkman?

BICKERTON: Oh yes of course. Milk and bread was delivered to the front door. Some houses still had the dunny man come in the back lane.

HC What was the atmosphere like in the street like Bill, was it a friendly street?

BICKERTON: Oh absolutely

HC Did people pop in and see each other?

BICKERTON: Yes. I think probably because the men were away – I don't recall any men in the street at all, other than Mr Evans. All the men were away at the war. The women, they sort of looked after us. We knew them all and it was not unusual to, say, go into Malcolm Hedge's place¹⁶ and his mum would give us a glass of milk and a biscuit or a cake. It was just like one big, very friendly, community. We all knew one another, everyone was friendly and happy and nice. But there was that undertone because it was war years and there were no men around. I think money was very, very tight, very tough. Everyone had a ration book. I remember my mum would occasionally give me – not the ration book, but the ration coupon, to go down to Aitkin's grocery and get a little packet of butter and that was the week's supply of butter. Woe betide me if I

¹⁴ 29 Sussex Street.

¹⁵ See Attachment Two, a plan of the East Victoria Park Infants and Primary Schools and surrounding area 1943-1950, drawn up by Mr Bickerton, which shows locations mentioned.

¹⁶ 34 Sussex Street.

didn't get home with that in quick time before it melted. My mum was very strict, but she was a wonderful woman, an incredible woman, I love her to bits.

HC How did she discipline you then?

BICKERTON: A smack around the backside, yes. Always. [Laughs]

HC Did you get that for going through the window?

BICKERTON: I can't remember. I think it was a bit of a joke actually. Everyone knew about it. I was the only one that thought it was a secret! [Laughter]

HC When you were a boy, going to school, what sort of activities did you have with your friends, what sort of games did you play together when you were a bit older than playing in the back garden? Did you go down to the river for example?

BICKERTON: No, no. At the top end of Sussex Street, when Sussex Street crosses over Berwick Street and then continues, right up the very end was the pine forest – I think the university or something is up in there now. My parents had friends up there – Chivers was their name, Fred and May Chivers. They had a house up there. We used to go up there to visit them and we'd walk; it was only ten minutes' walk. We lads used to love to go up into the pine forest. There was a swampy lake in the middle of the pine forest and there were lots of birds and stuff like that.

Oh, I'll tell you one interesting thing also about Sussex Street, was periodically an Aboriginal man would come around selling clothes props. It was just a long stick, a quite stout pole, with a 'V' on the top – a forked stick on the top. Women used to buy them to use them to prop their clothes line up because the clothes lines were long lines out in the back yard and with the weight of the clothing they would sag. So you put this prop under the line to hold the washing off the ground. I remember often seeing an Aboriginal man walking around with two or three of these big props over his shoulder and he would sell them for a couple of shillings. Yes, that was quite a highlight.

HC Any other Aboriginal people about?

BICKERTON: No, not that I recall – and I have no idea where that particular fellow came from or where he lived.

HC What about things like cubs and scouts?

BICKERTON: I was a bit young for that. I became very, very involved in scouts when we moved out to Queens Park in 1945.

HC Guy Fawkes night and things like that?

BICKERTON: Not till later. In those early days there was nothing like that. I think that was all related to the war and we weren't allowed to. I can remember we had to blackout the house at night. The lights were turned down to a minimum and all the blinds were drawn and that sort of thing. So there was a real regime of fear and obviously things that needed to be done that were probably issued by the government.

HC What sort of things did the family do in the evening?

BICKERTON: Play cards, very often cards were played. The older ones, Mum and her siblings played Bridge. Then we had little games like Snakes and Ladders and those little board games, if we were lucky. We had no money; I recall there was never ever any surplus money. We made things. We had a chequerboard and you used bottle-tops; stuff like that.

HC That's very innovative! Was church important?

BICKERTON: No, not at that point. Later on, yes, very much so. We went back in when we moved out to Queens Park, but in Vic Park I don't even know where the churches are in Vic Park to be quite honest. I don't think there were any churches in that immediate area that I recall. But no, no, it wasn't – and that's not to say that my folks were not very aware of that and it certainly became a very important and disciplined part of our life. I was baptised into the Church of England – my parents were both Anglicans.

HC What about boyhood chores – did you any particular jobs to do?

BICKERTON: Oh gosh! [Laughs] Yes. I had to cut the kindling; I had to help in the house; I had to wash the dishes. I had to do simple chores to help Mum in the kitchen – absolutely! And I still do it to this day. As soon as I get out of my bed I have to make my bed. Yes, and personal hygiene and that sort of thing was extremely important; that was really an important part of our discipline.

HC Pocket money?

BICKERTON: Oh no! No! [Laughs] No, I think Mum was scratching to have enough just to feed us. I remember we ate a lot of pumpkin and cabbage and stuff.

HC What sort of things did she cook?

BICKERTON: She made all sorts of wonderful things. Stew was more often than not. We ate a lot of rabbit. There was a little shop down on Albany near the Ice Works factory just further along from Mint Street¹⁷. He sold - I remember, because I used to

¹⁷ Victoria Park Ice and Cold Storage Works , 862 Albany Road, Victoria Park. [Wise's Western Australian Directory 1944].

have to go down and get them – he sold two skinned rabbits for one shilling and threepence. So we had a lot of rabbit stew and a lot of baked and braised rabbits. Quite liked rabbit. And of course in those days the rabbit scourge was... so there were plenty of rabbits around – not much meat. She was just a great cook; she made do with all sorts of stuff, so we had sweets; we had golden syrup dumplings and dumplings in the stew and all that sort of stuff.

HC Now you've given me a plan of the layout of the school, both the infants and the primary schools and I think the dates you put on it were 1943-1950, so we've got that¹⁸ but if you were just standing in front of the school and you were describing it, what would you see?

BICKERTON: Well the Infants School I would look at that from the street at the back, Moorgate Street. So the entrance to the school was about midway on Moorgate Street, between Basinghall Street and Sussex Street. There was a little tuck shop directly across and a girl by the name of Margaret Finlayson lived there. I remember her mum. Those kids that had a penny to spend could go over there and get a lolly and so on. That was the entrance into the Infants School. That school was to the left and it was a red-brick building in a 'U'-shape facing down. The block was sloping so the buildings were at ground level on Moorgate Street, but down the other end of the buildings they were elevated and there was an opening – there was space under the buildings. The building was in a 'U'-shape, with ramps up. All the classrooms were around, all looking into this central quadrangle. Down the back was a big shed, quite large, probably about five metres by three metres. That was our lunch shed and it had benches inside. That's where we had to go and sit and eat our sandwiches at lunch time. There was a little bit of a sealed courtyard area and then there was a big sandy area. The toilets were way down the back of the block, so it was a pain in the neck if you were busting to go to the toilet at school. You had to walk all the way across to these... One end was boys and the other end was girls. Across the back there was a big drain with a brick wall and a huge big plane tree. The favourite trick of the bully-boys was to get the nuts from the plane trees and rub them and make itchy powder and run up and stick it down the back of your shirt. I was never a bully-boy and I got picked on quite a bit. I remember two or three times running home crying my eyes and telling Mum, "I need to have a shower." I'd take my shirt off and there was all this prickly stuff in it. It was dreadful, it really was quite itchy – they called it itchy powder. That was the Infants School and that's where Miss Hannant was the principal. I don't recall any of the other teachers. I do remember that that elevated end of the school you could actually walk upright in under the building. Somebody up on the back wall had drawn like a ghostly figure and we kids were really frightened to go in there. We thought there was some sort of nasty spirits in there or something. So then you went down to that lunch room and then there was an alley way through into the Primary School. The Primary School was also

¹⁸ See Attachment Two.

in a 'U'-shape but the 'U' was on a different orientation, with the quadrangle in the middle. That was all on ground level; again there was a bitumen area. There was a big canteen. I never figured out what this was all about, but it was called Oslo lunches – have you ever heard of that? Oslo lunches. It was like a salad. It was supposed to be the healthiest thing going¹⁹. I think they used to give us a free Oslo lunch. We used to get free milk, a little glass bottle of milk at playtime in the morning. So there was this canteen which was staffed by mothers. They used to make lunches and we could all line up and get a lunch. Again there was a big lunch shed, open on the front, closed in three sides, with benches all around.

HC Did you avail yourself of the Oslo lunches?

BICKERTON: Yes I did.

HC Did you take anything from home?

BICKERTON: Yes, there was always – which I'll never forget – a homemade fig jam sandwich – I got sick of it, homemade fig jam. I've got an idea that Oslo lunches were free because we never had any money. That was just unheard of, to have any money in your pocket. Remind me to tell you a little story about ten shillings and threepence.

HC Tell me that now if you like.

BICKERTON: Oh okay, but I'll finish about the school first.

HC Okay.

BICKERTON: Then there was the quadrangle, a sealed area. Then there was this huge, big sandy area. There were air raid trenches in there. They were parallel with Albany Highway. They were about 600 millimetres wide and about a metre deep, dug in the sand. They were sandbagged up so they didn't collapse. Once or twice a week the school bell would ring and our teacher would line us all up and we had to march in single file, holding the neck of the shirt of the boy or girl in front of us; so we were all attached to one another. The teacher would lead us out and lead us down, in single file, like a snake, into the air raid trench. Then they would blow a whistle and we all had to turn around and face in one direction and then sit down on our bottoms in the sand on the bottom and crouch over and put our hands over our heads. Then a second whistle was blown and you had to make sure your tongue was not between your teeth. There was something else they made us do; there was something physically we had to do. I can't remember what. Anyway, so yes, that was that. Then we would just sit there for a quarter of an hour and then the whistle would blow or the bell would go.

¹⁹ A combination of cheese and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread, accompanied by milk and fruit, invented by Norwegian Professor Schiotz. It was claimed that children who ate this combination were shown to be healthier after six months. <https://australianfoodtimeline.com.au/oslo-lunch/>

HC So you never took anything out with you, no bag, no anything?

BICKERTON: No, no. Bobby Butcher and I, we got into trouble because we decided one time that... When the whistle blew to go back to class we stayed in the trench until everyone had gone. Then we sneaked out the back fence into Basinghall Street. I don't know what we were going to do, but... My dad was a very sick man, he had lung problems. He had this dreadful cough. He used to ride a bicycle from Sussex Street to the munitions factory where he was employed. Bobby Butcher and I had sneaked out of the school and through into Basinghall Street and we were sitting under a tree there, deciding what we were going to do for the afternoon. The next thing I heard my father's cough and the next thing I got the biggest whack across the ear you could ever imagine. "Now you get home sonny boy and I'll deal with you when I get home tonight!" I was in big trouble. I never wagged school again in my life. The punishment was a smacked bottom.

Ten and threepence. On the footpath outside the gate of the primary school, opposite Peters Greengrocery. I was walking along there and I found a ten shilling note with a threepenny bit and it was all rolled up in a little ball. Ten shillings and threepence in those days was a lot of money. It was probably the equivalent of \$50 now. Anyway I couldn't believe that I found this ten bob. So I took it in to my teacher. It was of such significance - you know I think about this a lot - it was so significant that this teacher went and spoke to the headmistress and came back and took me by the hand and we walked all the way up to the Victoria Park Police Station, which was way up, almost up to the Broken Hill Hotel, not quite that far up, on the right hand side. There was the post office and the police station. The police sergeant congratulated me and thanked me for being honest and took all the details. He said, "If it's still here in a week, it's yours Billy." So after a week I ran helter-skelter as fast as I could to the police station. It was still there. I got the ten bob, ten and threepence. I took it home and Mum took it off me. [Laughter] It was probably a fortune to her too, because nobody had any money.

HC So she never treated you or anything like that?

BICKERTON: No. I was complimented for being honest.

HC But no financial reward. Have you got any memory of your very first day at school, Bill?

BICKERTON: I don't believe so, Heather. No. I do have a very strong recollection of my first day at Kent Street and that's a pretty scary prospect.

HC Why's that?

BICKERTON: I don't know. A whole lot of new faces came from all the schools. Kent Street was the only high school south of the river in those days. So they came from

Como and South Perth and the old Vic Park School down at Cargill Street. All out our way, I mean at that stage I lived at Queens Park, there was ten of us used to ride our bicycles from Queens Park, all the way into Victoria Park to Kent Street. It was a pretty scary prospect not knowing where to go, what to do, who to report to. We didn't get any information in advance other than be at Kent Street High School on the 2nd February, or whatever it was. But anyway that sorted itself out. I was a good student, I always got excellent results.

HC What sort of experience was school generally for you?

BICKERTON: I loved school, I loved school. I was a good student; I always got top marks.

HC Your favourite subjects?

BICKERTON: Maths. Maths and English, but good at everything I did. I am not boasting I was just most fortunate that I loved learning. I spent a lot of time studying. It was my dad's greatest disappointment that I didn't go to university. He had me all set up to go to university, but in Year Four, Kent Street, I made up my mind that I was not going to go to university, that I wanted to be a tradesman. So one day I didn't go to school, I rode my bike to Welshpool and went looking for a job. I went to Chamberlain Tractors. The foreman in there said, "No son, I can't help you, but you ride your bike over the back there, there's a big new factory in there called Tomlinson Steel Limited." I went in there and it was large operation, operated by Ernie Tomlinson and his brother, Allan. Their father had had a foundry, in fact I worked at the foundry, in Wellington Street, opposite the Royal Perth Hospital. There were ten of us started our apprenticeships with Tomlinsons in 1954, '54-'59, a five-year apprenticeship.

HC What was your dad's reaction to that then?

BICKERTON: Oh he was very hostile actually and he initially refused to sign the apprenticeship papers. By that time I was a fairly headstrong young fellow and I said, "Well if you won't sign the papers, I'll run away." He did, he signed the papers.

HC What made you feel so strongly about an apprenticeship, Bill, as opposed to...?

BICKERTON: I don't know, Heather. I went back and did tertiary education. I am very well-qualified now, plus I have a very good... I was commissioned officer in the Australian Army. I worked hard and studied hard and went back and got all my qualifications later on.

I wanted to work in the engineering industry, that's why I went to Chamberlains. I am glad I didn't work at Chamberlains because it was very routine, repetitive work, whereas Tomlinsons was amazing.

HC What was the attraction of steel and engineering then?

BICKERTON: I think the engineering mathematical side of it. I was very good at marking out and designing. I became a design draughtsman with Tomlinsons. I just loved designing steel structures and boilers and oil refinery equipment and tankage and all that sort of stuff. I just thrived on it.

HC Let's get back to East Vic Park. Tell me about the daily routine there; did you have assembly first thing in the morning?

BICKERTON: Yes absolutely. We had to stand and sing *God Save the King*. When Queen Elizabeth was crowned in 1953 we were all given a Bible, a blue Bible, endorsed by Queen Elizabeth. I don't where that is, it's here somewhere. Yes, so we had to stand at assembly and the flag was raised and hand on heart and sang *God Save the King* and then *God Save the Queen* later on. The headmistress would then come out and give us an address for the morning. It was always just a few words of wisdom about being good students and behaving ourselves and so on. Then off to class.

HC Were there any special days like Anzac Day or Arbor Day, or anything like that?

BICKERTON: Oh we observed all those things certainly. Anzac Day probably didn't feature to the extent it does nowadays because the men were all away at the war, so there really wasn't a lot of... I don't think it had become the traditional, or recognised situation, that it is nowadays. I am very much into it because I am ex-serviceman, I am well decorated. Certainly we did. The Queen's birthday, that sort of thing we recognised and acknowledged all of those things.

HC What about sport at school?

BICKERTON: I was never much of a sportsman. The sports ground for the Infants and the Primary School was what is the Rec, the Recreation Ground there on Sussex Street, which was a bit of a limitation actually because it's got a dip right down in the middle of it. I don't know if they've filled that up since, but it used to be quite marked. So if you hit the cricket ball, it would bounce back and hit you in the eye. [Laughter]. I was never much of a sportsman, other than at Kent Street – I played hockey for Kent Street against other schools - and I played hockey for the State schoolboys' team, with Ron Glencross. I was in school with Ron. Ron was a very famous hockey player from Kent Street. But no, sport never ever really featured much in my life. I liked hockey and I continued to play afterwards.

HC Let's talk about the teachers, and in particular Alice Mary Hannant. You described her as a beautiful and regal lady. Tell me about her²⁰.

BICKERTON: Yes she was. I have a very clear memory... I didn't even know what her first name was.

HC Alice Mary.

BICKERTON: But I have a very clear picture of her. Hair up in a bun, full length... I was going to say a brown gown, but it doesn't do it justice. It was a floral, full-length gown she wore, with a high collar, with a lace... a high collar with a 'V'; you could see a lace throat. A high rigid collar, like we had in the Army in our mess dress. Full length sleeves and that's I recall - she always dressed like that.

HC When you say full-length do you mean right down to the ankles.

BICKERTON: Right to her ankles, yes, and brown shoes. I remember that very clearly. To me she was just a very lovely friendly person. She always greeted me and she often invited me to come and talk with her and if she was walking around in the playground she would always come up and put her hand around my shoulder and say, "Hello Billy, how are you going?" We just became, if it's the right term, good friends. I continued to visit her during my high school days. I used to often go down to the school to see her at lunch time, ride my bike down. Then later on when she retired she bought a beautiful, very pretty little cottage in a lane in Darlington, on the side of a hill there. I can't remember the address. I could probably find it if I googled that area. It was a very pretty cottage and she had a lovely, lovely garden, a very pretty flower garden in this little cottage. I used to go up there and visit her two or three times a year. She was always so happy to see me and we would sit out on the front verandah and she'd make a cup of tea and biscuits. She was always happy to see me.

HC What sort of colouring did she have – what colour eyes did she have and hair?

BICKERTON: She had brown hair; there was a touch of grey through it. I don't know what colour her eyes were. She had nice skin. She was a very attractive woman. Course I looked at it very differently as a kid.

HC Tell me about her personality?

BICKERTON: Oh she was just super friendly. I don't know whether she had a sense of humour; I never saw her exhibit that in any way. She was just a very friendly, approachable person. I don't think I ever saw her get cross with anyone and yet she

²⁰ See also See *Beyond Matta Gerup: a history of Victoria Park*, by Susannah Thompson, Town of Victoria Park, 2012, pp 114-115.

was very highly respected by everyone. My mum just thought she was just something else and spoke very highly of her. I do recall that Miss Hannant encouraged the parents to come and see her. The dads were all away, but I know my mum used to often... I used to often see my mum come to the school and go into her office. I never got into trouble, so it wasn't for that reason.

HC How did she instil discipline then?

BICKERTON: I don't recall she ever did. Well certainly I never witnessed anything. I don't recall her using a cane or anything like that. That was common in those days, to get the cane. I got that a few times from other teachers, but I don't recall her ever, ever displaying any disciplinary action of that nature.

HC Did she do any teaching?

BICKERTON: No, no. She was purely the headmistress. Her office was in the middle of the school and all the classrooms were either side.

HC Did she run the assemblies?

BICKERTON: Yes, absolutely, oh yes. She was always present at the assembly. She stood up on the platform in front of her office and we were down in the quadrangle. The school flagpole was there and one of the students went up and raised the flag in the morning.

HC What sort of things would she say at the assembly?

BICKERTON: We were kept reasonably well-informed about the war; she kept us as informed as little kids needed to be about the war and when we could expect our dads to come home – although my dad was home – when the dads would be coming back and that sort of thing. But mostly about respect for your teachers, work hard, that was the general theme – apply yourself, be a good student and you'll be a good mum and dad and all that sort of thing. Respect your parents.

HC Do you know if she had any involvement in the local community?

BICKERTON: I don't know. I have no idea, Heather. I knew nothing about her life outside of the school until those later years when I used to visit her.

HC When you went to visit her at Darlington, what sort of things did you talk about?

BICKERTON: Oh gosh, all the world's problems! The outcome of the war because that was still very topical. She was very interested in what I was doing; she used to ask me all sorts of questions about... because by then I'd started my apprenticeship. She was very interested in that and she encouraged me in that. She was very instrumental in encouraging me... she said, "You know, when you complete your apprenticeship, then

you must go back to school. You are an intelligent boy and you must go back and get those qualifications, that your dad wanted you to do." She encouraged me all the way on that. During that period I was called up as a National Serviceman in the Royal Australian Navy. I visited her once in my naval uniform and she was just tickled pink. She thought that was wonderful; I remember she took a photo of me. She encouraged me. She was a person that was keen to see us all succeed; that was her goal in life.

HC Do you think she had the same impact on other students?

BICKERTON: I am sure she did, I am sure she did. I was not unique in that situation at all. I made the effort to continue the friendship later on and I don't know that anyone else ever did that; I don't know. Her goal appeared to be to make sure we all succeeded.

HC In fact she died at age 96, in 1979, in Como actually.^{21 22}

BICKERTON: Ninety-six, gee whizz. I wish I'd known; I'd have kept in touch.

HC When did you lose touch?

BICKERTON: Probably when I was about twenty-one, yes. Then I started travelling. I've been a traveller all my life; I've not spent much time in Western Australia at all.

HC Did you correspond?

BICKERTON: No. Not after or during that period when I was visiting. I would just rock up and be there. I had other friends named Davidson that lived in Darlington and whenever I was going up to them – they formed an important part of my youth – so if I went up to visit them I would always call in and see her.

HC A Miss Phillips was another teacher²³.

BICKERTON: Miss Phillips was in the other school, the primary school. A little short lady, with a very strong Welsh accent. I think she was a regular teacher. She was very disciplined; in fact she was quite strong and she used to smack us. But she had a wonderful voice; she was in charge of the choir, the school choir and we used to practice after school; we had to stay after school. We had to have Mum's permission in writing to do that. There were about twenty of us in the school choir. We were pretty good. She was a jolly good singing teacher and once a month she used to herd us all onto a tram, out the front gate and to the ABC studios which were in St George's

²¹ See Metropolitan Cemeteries Board Records at:

<http://www2.mcb.wa.gov.au/NameSearch/details.php?id=KC00061418>

²² See Attachment Four which covers the career of Miss Hannant.

²³ This was probably Constance Phillips who taught at Victoria Park East Infants and Victoria Park Primary School from 1934-1967. *The Education Circular*, Western Australia WA State School Teachers 1900-1980 at <https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?keyword=Victoria+Park&page=38>

Terrace, near where Government House is, there somewhere. We used to go there and sing and it was recorded and played on the radio. This was the East Vic Park Primary School Choir. She'd get up there and warble away. She taught us all these Welsh songs. One sticks in my mind called the Wee Corbies, that turned out to be the little blackbirds.²⁴ [Laughs] Yes, the Welsh National Anthem and all sorts of good songs. I don't remember them much now.

HC Your mum and dad must have been terribly proud, to listen to you on the radio.

BICKERTON: Yes. Well I had a good voice. My voice was trained actually. As a result of that Mum enrolled me with a Jewish lady named Madame Rosenthal, who had a studio in Nicholson's, which was a big time music store, just down from the Perth Town Hall. I used to get the tram and get off at the Town Hall, from Vic Park, after school and then walk down just a 100 metres down Barrack Street.²⁵ They were a big-time music store, they sold pianos and guitars and banjolins and all sorts of stuff. Madame Rosenthal had studios upstairs and I used to go there a couple of times a week and warble away [Laughs] doing the scales and the tones. I did singing part-time at hotels and stuff later on, for some years.

HC Did you go into the city much?

BICKERTON: No, not a lot. Went through the city a lot because my grandma on my mum's side lived in Subiaco, in Gloster Street, Subi. We used to get the tram all the way through from Vic Park, right through, up through Hay Street. We'd stop at the children's hospital on the corner there and then down to Rokeby Road and up Rokeby and Grandma would meet us there.

HC What were the trams like?

BICKERTON: They were great. I mean they were big and noisy and clang, clang, clang. I can still hear the... The man had like a button on the floor that he would press with his foot to make the bell go and he had a winding thing that made it go slow or fast. There was always a conductor on the trams, he came along and took your money and gave you your tickets. Occasionally the thing would come off the wires up above. You'd hear this bang. There were like two wheels that were on wires to get to the electricity for the tram and occasionally it would come off. This man had a long pole with a hook and the tram would stop and this man would run out and pull this thing down and put it back on the wire and off we'd go again.

HC What was the Causeway like?

²⁴ Possibly a traditional Scottish Song called *The Twa Corbies* (crows).

²⁵ Nicholson's was at 90 Barrack Street.

BICKERTON: The Causeway was one lane each way with a tramline in the middle. It was a hump, humpy brick, timber-brick.

HC Any other memories of Miss Phillips before we leave her?

BICKERTON: She was very disciplined. We really did used to get into trouble with her, although I liked her, but yes, she was very strong in her discipline.

HC Did you learn a musical instrument as well as sing?

BICKERTON: Oh! I don't want to talk about that! [Laughter] My mother – I don't know where she inherited a banjolin. She decided I was going to learn to play the banjo. I hated it. I used to break the plectrum and drop it inside the drum and do all sorts of stuff. I didn't want to play that jolly banjo. But, my greatest regret, I would have loved to play piano and even now... in fact I've just bought an electronic piano for Julia's foster son. I am going to sit down and do a few lessons. I've always seen myself as a piano player.

HC A whole new career for you! Any other teachers stand out in your mind from those days?

BICKERTON: Primary school, no, not that I recall. Kent Street, yes, I remember lots of teachers there.

HC Tell me about Kent Street.

BICKERTON: Okay. Well, as I said earlier, Kent Street was the only high school south of the river at that stage. The next one that was built was Armadale. My younger sister, she went to Armadale, so she went in the opposite direction from where we lived, where Helen and I came into Vic Park. We used to catch the train from Queens Park to Carlisle and then the Carlisle bus service ran a bus up Mint Street, up Basinghall Street to Berwick Street, then along. We got off at the little tuckshop corner on Berwick Street/Kent Street. It was a very fine red brick building.

Eric McGrath was the headmaster, a wonderful, incredible man, an ex-goldfields teacher of many, many years. An elderly man. He didn't stay very long. He was there all the years that I was there, but I've since read that he retired and a man named Colgan took over. Some of the teachers I remember – a very controversial fellow, who the girls particularly didn't like because he was a bully. But I liked him because I loved maths. His name was Vince Heinrichs. Vince was an incredible maths teacher; he taught all maths, trigonometry, algebra, geometry, straight maths. I loved it; I loved mathematics, so Vince and I were good mates. If you look at the Kent Street High School Facebook, particularly the girls didn't like him, disliked him intensely, because he was a bully. If you didn't do the work properly, or you were a bit dumb he would really hop into you. There was a very nice man by the name of Frank Gannon who was

a World War II veteran and very badly shell-shocked; he was a very sick man. He taught English. He was a nice guy, but very sick. John Bremner was the science master and he was also the captain of the school cadets, of which I was a member; I was a sergeant in the school cadets.

We used to parade on Tuesday afternoons after school. There's an interesting thing. I used to ride my bicycle to school, can you believe with a .303 rifle slung over my back. Yes, all of us, yes. We were issued with .303 rifles and we took them home, with the bolt still in it, yes. So I used to ride my bike from Queens Park to Kent Street with a rifle over my back, to and from, in a uniform. We used to march down Kent Street. There was an Army drill hall halfway down to Albany Highway. I loved school, it was great. I wasn't that much into sport, as I said, although they had excellent sporting facilities at Kent Street. Some of the good sports people that I remember were Bill Towers and his sister Coralie. Coralie played international women's cricket and hockey. Ron Glencross and his brother, who played international hockey.

It was a very high profile school, a very highly respected school. The quality of education was second to none. One of the reasons why I went on to do an apprenticeship was that they had a very high standard of teaching in metalwork and woodwork, both of which I did. But the academic subjects – English, maths, history, science, physics... I did French one term at the end of which the French mistress, whatever you like to call her, the teacher, called me in and said, "Billy, I think you better do science next term!" [Laughs] I was hopeless. Although in my working life I've worked in many, many, many countries all over the world and I have a smattering of all sorts of languages – Arabic, all sorts, but I was never a linguist.

HC Thinking back to East Vic Park, are there any fellow students that stand out in your mind from those days?

BICKERTON: I mentioned earlier Bobby Butcher; I mentioned Phyllis McAllister who lived in Sussex Street. I mentioned Margaret Finlayson who lived at the little tuckshop there. Oh, Malcolm Hedges across the road in Sussex Street, Harold Armitt, next door, and his sister Doreen. Johnny Maloney. Johnny Wallace. Tommy Dunstan I could probably reel off dozens if I thought about it.

HC Did you kids get together for birthday parties and things like that?

BICKERTON: Nothing much like that; we didn't have anything much like that, Heather. That sort of thing just... There was no money for anything like that.

HC What happened on your birthday then and at Christmas?

BICKERTON: Mum always made a birthday cake. Christmas was always quite the occasion. There was always the traditional Christmas pudding with the threepenny bits and the sixpenny bits in it, which Mum kept in a little linen bag. She boiled them

afterwards and put them in this little bag for next year. My father never missed, every year, I will never forget as long as I live, halfway through the Christmas pudding and custard dish, he would go [makes coughing noise] and he'd say, "Oh my goodness!" and he'd have two shillings in his hand. He did it every year. We'd all say, "Oh come on Dad, not again, no not again. There wasn't any two bob in there Dad!" But he did it. Birthdays, hmm. Certainly we were aware of them, but there was nothing very traditional or anything.

HC Did the tooth fairy come?

BICKERTON: Oh yes absolutely, yes! That was a penny under the pillow; we always put the tooth under the pillow. Fruit cake and a glass of milk for Santa Claus.

HC What about if you had to go to the doctor in Vic Park?

BICKERTON: Oh Dr Meagher. Now I went to Dr Meagher even as a young tradesman. His surgery and house is on that drawing.²⁶ He was next door to the primary school, on Albany Highway, between the boundary of the school and Sussex Street. I still have the clearest vision – a huge, big, two-storey, Victorian-style home with very steep gables and ivy growing on the front and big trees and a big garden, front garden, fronting Albany Highway. There was a big fence across the front, with a gate. You walked up a long concrete pathway, up to this magnificent big two-storey house. That was Dr Meagher. He was traditional in Vic Park, everybody knew Dr Meagher. He had his surgery there, that's where that was²⁷. Right up until I was... I got hurt when I was doing my apprenticeship and I had to go... and that's where they took me, to his place. So that was... I knew him from when I was four or five years old up until I was twenty years old.

HC What sort of man was he?

BICKERTON: A wonderful, incredible man and very highly respected. He was very British. He was British trained; I remember his certificates on the wall in his office. Always dressed beautifully in a tweed jacket and tie. Yes, very, very highly respected. I've got an idea he had some sort of recognition from the Queen or something, but he was very British.

HC Is there anything else – any other building – on that plan you made that you would like to talk about?

²⁶ See Attachment Two

²⁷ Dr T W Meagher, medical practitioner is listed in Wise's Post Office Directory, 1946, at 787 Albany Highway, Victoria Park.

BICKERTON: The Ice Works, let's start down there.²⁸ On the front of the Ice Works was a little – we called it a butcher's shop, but he only sold rabbits. That's where we used to get my two rabbits for one shilling and threepence; Mum used to send me down there. The Ice Works, the trucks could drive through the side. There was a huge big place there and they used to make blocks of ice which were about 1.2m long by 600ml by about 250ml deep. They used to saw them into three pieces so the block of ice was about that big. That was the block that the ice man brought wrapped in a hessian bag on his shoulder to put into your ice chest at the house. That was that big factory there. Constantly you could hear the saws cutting the ice – hmmm – and these big blocks of ice sliding down the chute. Then the men would load them into these sealed trucks and take them to deliver because everyone had an ice chest, none of us had a fridge in those days I remember that very well. There were trucks constantly coming in and loading up with blocks of ice for delivery.

The movie theatre, corner of Mint Street and... the flicks as we called them. The picture theatre on the corner of Mint Street and Albany Highway, on the southern corner. A big old place. If we were really good we would be given sixpence to go to the pictures on Saturday afternoon. It always started by the National Anthem - you had to stand for the National Anthem. Then there would be a cartoon and then there'd be the next serial of *Tarzan and the Apes* or *Superman*, or one of those things. Then there'd be interval and those kids that had a penny to spend would go and buy a lolly or an ice cream.

HC Who did you go with?

BICKERTON: Usually with my sister actually. Auntie Joan, my mum's youngest sister, who was not... she was a teenager then and she used to take us to the pictures. Also she used to take us to the pictures at Subiaco when we visited grandma.

I've told you about Peter's Grocery – in fact he was a little bit of an entrepreneurial type, the old Peter. He was an Italian man. It was an open-fronted shop. You didn't walk in through a door into the shop, traditionally as they did in those days; they were all single shops. His had big shutters that he pushed to one side and it was like double-shop width, facing straight onto the footpath on Albany Highway, directly opposite the school. He carried a big range of fruit and vegies and stuff. I remember Peter, he'd say, [with accent] "Hello, how are you?" We'd all go in and he'd give us apples and give us fruit that was ready to... a bit going off and that sort of stuff. A wonderful old fellow. Also there was a truck used to come around Sussex Street, an open-backed truck with a canopy over it, selling fruit and vegies. He would ring a bell as he drove around. There were lots of those sorts of things.

²⁸ Victoria Park Ice and Cold Storage Works , 862 Albany Road, Victoria Park. [Wise's Western Australian Directory 1944].

HC Any Chinese market gardens?

BICKERTON: All at South Perth, along the river. From where the Mends Street ferry the other way from Mill Point where the old mill is, there is low, swampy ground, there were huge, big Chinese market gardens, all along the river bank, along there. They used to come with their horse and carts as far as Vic Park. The pieman used to come with a horse and cart, ding-a-ling-a-ling-ling – “Mum, can I have a pie?” “No!” [Laughter] I remember when I was a little fellow – we had family in Kalgoorlie and the Kalgoorlie pies were very famous when I as a little fellow. Mum used to take me up there on the train – she never took my sisters she only ever took me. We’d hear the pieman ringing his bell and the clip-clop of his horse coming up the street – “Mum, can I have a pie?” Every now and again she’d agree, but I had to share the pie with her. [Laughs]

HC What sort of pie was it?

BICKERTON: Meat pies, meat pies, yes.

We had a huge big clothing emporium there just opposite Sussex Street. Then there were private houses along there. On the other side on the corner of Sussex Street there was a filthy dirty old service station, a bloke used to repair cars there and there were old broken-down cars and grease and oil and dirt and fuel. It was an awful place. Then along from that was a huge, big, military disposals place. I can’t remember their name, but it was a great place to buy bags for school, for hiking when we joined the scouts later on, and gas masks and all that sort of stuff. There was a dentist on the corner of Sussex Street and a pharmacy next door to that, or chemist as it’s called here.

HC Where did you go to the dentist?

BICKERTON: Perth Dental School in Wellington Street at where is now Royal Perth Hospital. Heather, that was just awful. The drills were operated by foot pedal, rrrrr, rrrrr, rrrr. Oh, and the agony and the pain and the terrible noise of thing crunching around. The dentist pedalled it with his foot; there was no such thing as an electric drill. Oh gosh it was awful! That’s why people hate the dentist now, it’s just an ongoing thing, and yet now it’s... I’ve got an appointment at 1.30 this afternoon. I don’t mind going now, it’s fine. What else have we got here?

Aitkins Grocery on the corner of Basinghall Street. Oh there’s an interesting one. That was a huge, big general grocery store. All the local ladies went there to buy their groceries and their flour and stuff.

HC And that’s where your mum went?

BICKERTON: Yes. This little shop here next to the school was a cobbler. That’s where you took your shoes to be repaired. It was an interesting place. I used to go in there. I

got to know the man quite well. He had a big belt with all these sanders and grinders and brushes and stuff rotating. I remember it click, click, clickity-click. Yes, he cut leather and he tacked it on and he polished the shoes. Nobody ever bought new shoes, just went and got new soles, put new soles on them. Next to that was a little post office. That's about all I think.

HC Now in 1945 when you were about seven the family moved to Thomas Street in Queens Park, why did they do that?

BICKERTON: My father purchased five or six acres of land there, bush. I remember he used to... On weekends he used to ride bicycle out there and used to dinky me on his bike. He had a little shed there on the block and he had an axe and a saw and stuff; a little lock-up shed here. We cleared the block. Then they got a builder to build quite a modest little house there at 16 Thomas Street. The rest was bush. That was just fantastic for us kids growing up. That was where we had our cubby houses in the tree and the old man had his ducks and his chooks and we had a cow which muggings Billy had to milk morning and night before I went to school and when I came home, in freezing cold and the rain! [Laughs]

HC Did you miss Vic Park?

BICKERTON: Oh it was an important part of my life. I am not sure I missed it. I missed the friends that I had there, yes. School was finished, I completed primary school there, so that was an era that was done and completed.

HC Yes, and you talked about cycling to Kent Street. So really that primary school time was your main experience really at Vic Park.

BICKERTON: At Vic Park, yes. Well when primary school finished is about the same time as the old man build the house.

HC That was also the end of the war and there was no longer a need for munitions, so what was he doing to support himself?

BICKERTON: He joined a company in East Perth called the Cyclone Company and they made fencing – I think they are still in existence if I remember. He originally joined them as a delivery truck driver. Then for years until he retired he was the purchasing officer for the Cyclone Company. They were right next to the East Perth train station. I remember he used to catch the train and walk across.

HC Did he grow flowers and things like that at Queens Park?

BICKERTON: Yes he did. At one stage he decided to grow gladioli commercially. That was a dismal failure because the block at Queens Park was too wet. It needed draining and it was drained eventually. It was too wet and the gladdies just didn't do any good. But he did grow good vegies there and he had a big run of chooks and ducks.

HC It sounds like an idyllic place for a child.

BICKERTON: Oh perfect, yes. I have a lot of memories. Five acres is quite a big block and he'd only annexed enough to build the house so the rest was all natural bush. There were orchids and wildflowers and lovely trees to climb. Yes, it was great. Snakes and lizards and all sorts of stuff. Yes, it was good.

HC You gave me outline of your career after you left school, starting with the five-year apprenticeship at Tomlinsons. I'll append that to your transcript,²⁹ but would you like to say anything about your career, because it sounds like it's been incredibly varied and interesting.

BICKERTON: I never worked as a tradesman as such – or spasmodically a couple of times. I used it as a stepping stone into a higher regime of the engineering industry. I finished my time in '59, then I went to work as a tradesman in the goldfields; I worked on the Lake View and Star Mine on the Chaffers shaft in Boulder. I worked here for quite some time; did a lot of odd jobs around the place. Then I decided to, as a young journeyman, to head east. I got as far as Whyalla and I got a job there. Whyalla was in its heyday then and they were looking for engineering tradesmen. So I started work with them. That's when I met the young lady who was to be my wife, Sylvia, she lived in Port Lincoln. So then my whole life changed from thereon because then Sylvia and I got engaged and then a couple of years later we got married. As soon as we got married we went to New Guinea and we were in New Guinea for the next twelve years. That's where our children were born. That was a whole new era of life for me. Initially I went there as a tradesman – there were limitations on advantages for tradesmen. For example we didn't get a government house, which meant you lived under a tree! [Laughs] Though it wasn't quite as bad as that. But you jumped leave houses which was not at all what I wanted as a young married man. So the answer was to get a job on staff – I was working for the Commonwealth Government. New Guinea in those days was a mandated territory of Australia, it was the territory of Papua/New Guinea pre-independence, managed and funded by the Australian Government. So I got a job as an engineering draughtsman. Then I worked my way, way up to senior technical officer positions. Hydro-electric investigations – oh gosh I could talk to you forever about all that stuff.

HC You did tell me earlier that you have written...

BICKERTON: I've written it all. It's all there. If it's needed I am quite happy for the library to have a copy.

²⁹ Attachment Three.

HC For the purposes of the interview the Victoria Park story is the focus, but I am sure Rosemary Ritorto would be interested in the book and I will let her know about it.

BICKERTON: That led me into a position of having very wide and very varied experiences in all sorts of areas and eventually... My wife Sylvia – we were married for 40 years – unfortunately Sylvia got cancer. We were living in the Middle East then actually and couldn't get her out. She had surgery at the Sheikh Rashid Hospital in Dubai. We were caught up there for a long time, couldn't get out, she was too sick. Eventually I got her back and we went to Queensland to live and then she passed away. I had already started working overseas doing aid work. My first aid job was in East Timor with Care Australia. Then I just went on, that became my career for right up until just three or four years ago. For many, many years I worked as an aid worker – Care Australia, Save the Children (US), Save the Children(UK), Catholic Relief Services. I had very high positions with Catholic Relief, although I am not a Catholic. That doesn't matter, it's the experience that counts.

HC You mentioned earlier that you went back and did some tertiary study, what did you do?

BICKERTON: I did engineering obviously, civil engineering. I did it by correspondence when I was in New Guinea, through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Also then when I came back to Australia... When New Guinea took its independence we all had to leave, because the federal government no longer operated up there. I was very, very fortunate. This was at the beginning of the construction of *HMAS Stirling*, on Garden Island at Rockingham. It was right at the very beginning of that. I had worked myself into a very high position – a senior management position – with the federal government in New Guinea. Most people were either paid off; there was no job for them, they were just paid off and sent back to Australia. I was lucky enough to get a transfer back onto this project here in Western Australia, where I worked for ten years as a senior officer there, both in construction and I got very involved in the environmental aspect of the work and my boss, a fellow by the name of Frank Statham, who was the Director of Works here, he encouraged me to get involved in the environmental work. So I went back to Mount Lawley Technical College and I did a Diploma in Horticulture specialising in West Australian flora and used that to rehabilitate the construction areas with native vegetation on Garden Island. Myself and a fellow by the name of John Grasby and George Lullfitz. George owns a big nursery up around Wanneroo, we became the gurus of rehabilitation with native vegetation in Western Australia back in the seventies and eighties. George produced all the plants for us up at his nursery and John Grasby from the Department of Agriculture and I were the gurus of that work. Also the prevention of the spread of jarrah dieback or phytophthora, it's scientific name.

HC Well just looking back at Vic Park all those years ago, what is your happiest memory of Vic Park?

BICKERTON: I think just my general childhood. It was fun. I mean we didn't have anything. There was no such thing as money or expensive clothes. Half the time we didn't even have shoes to wear. I was just a happy kid. I had good parents. My sister and I were very good mates, had good friends. The whole experience was just a whole lot of fun and good times.

HC Would you say it was a good place to have a childhood then?

BICKERTON: Yes, very much so. Excellent, yes. I am not sure it would be the same now. I mean it's very built up and it's almost in the city.

HC I was going to ask you what your impressions of it now are.

BICKERTON: Sussex Street is completely different now. The library is there and all those public buildings and so on. I haven't been in there much. Just recently my partner Julia and I had to go up to Perth for something. On the way back I said to her, "Let's call into Vic Park." So we stopped in the car park of that big shopping centre there where the school used to be. While she was in the shops I could see across through the opening and see the Rec. The two big fig trees are still there, they were next to that little shop that you mentioned - by Mr Rieman's shop. We used to climb those trees and hide up there; we'd hide from the schoolteacher up in the branches of this big old fig tree. I don't have a specific incident or situation that I could quote, I just loved living in Vic Park. But I was happy kid and I was a very well satisfied kid. I had good parents and we were looked after as well as we could be in the circumstances. We had nothing. I've got a photo there - it's at the library - that I submitted, taken in 1943 at the school. I look at it and I think my goodness. This horrible old roll-neck blue jumper that somebody knitted. It was shapeless and horrible and that was my best clothing. [Laughs] We had nothing, we had nothing.

HC But did that matter?

BICKERTON: Well we didn't know whether it mattered, Heather. We had no reference points on that sort of thing; we just went to school. More often than not we didn't have shoes.

HC That sounds a pretty blissful childhood, Bill. That's all I've got to ask you specifically, is there anything else you'd like to add?

BICKERTON: No, I've enjoyed discussing all that stuff. And it's good... Do you know what I value more than anything else - and this is quite personal - that at the age of 81 I am still able to comprehend and remember. That my brain is still as good as it ever was. That's saying something because I deal a lot with elderly people because I am a

volunteer with HACK [Home and Community Care] here and I take old people up to Bunbury. A lot of them are ten years younger than me and they've lost it. It's gone. It's damn shame because they've all got their memories like I have and you have, but the information has been lost. So I think I was a very, very fortunate young fellow to be quite honest. I haven't talked anything about my days in the boy scouts – that was just the most amazing experience.

HC That was after you left Vic Park.

BICKERTON: Yes, at Queens Park. We had a very, very fine scout master, a fellow by the name of Arthur Varvell. That became our whole life, it wasn't just scouts it was a hobby group and we built aeroplanes and trains.

HC Why was he so special?

BICKERTON: It was an opportunity for us little boys to have something constructive and Arthur was a wonderful teacher. Arthur was a farrier, he shod horses, in fact later on when I was about fourteen I used to deliver bread by horse and cart. I remember once a month I had to take all the harness off the horse and just put a bridle and bit and ride it bareback up to Arthur's blacksmith shop to get my horse shod. Oh it was a new opportunity to learn incredible stuff. We used to camp up in the bush near Lesmurdie.

HC Thank you very much Bill, it's been a most interesting interview.

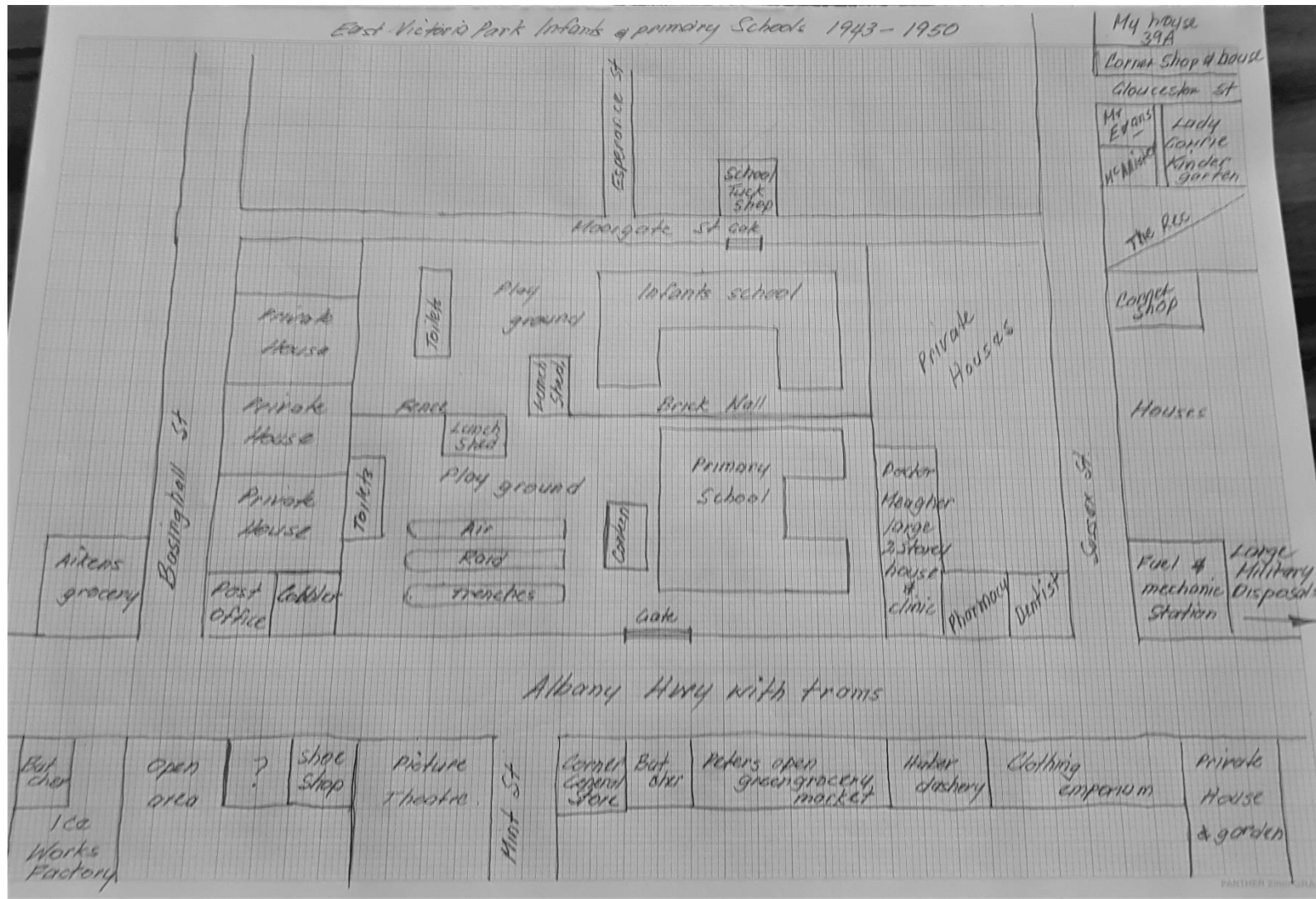
BICKERTON: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

Sussex Street, Victoria Park, 1946
 [taken from Wise's West Australian Post
 Office Directory 1946]

SUSSEX STREET	
Right side fr Albany rd	
1 Gilmour Dvd*	
3 Peters Mrs Emma	
5 Mackay Jno D	
7 Harris Mrs Jane	
7 Harris Bros, carriers	
9 Riemann, Ernest H. mix bus	
21 Colton, Joe	
23 Sinden, Clarence	
25 Welch, Edward	
27 Battersby Edwn	
29 McAllister Mrs Dora	
31 Hart Don	
33 Williams, Wm	
35 Evans J H	
... Here is Gloucester st ..	
39 Armit Fred	
39a Bickerton Jas L	
41 Bake Miss Flo*	
43 Black Arth J	
45 Maloney Cyril*	
47 Bousfield Ron W	
49 Everard Jno	
51 Bousfield Robt Wm	
53 Palce Chas	
55 Wainwright Saml	
57 Charlton Matt	
59 Whelan --	
61 Miller Fredk	
63 Walton W*	
65 Wood Alf	
..... Berwick st	
75 Vidacovich, Mrs Mary	
77 Prosser Wlfr	
79 Smith Mrs M*	
81 Gorrings, Mrs Doris	
83 Craddock, Frank C	
..... Gascoyne st	
85 Tilson, Wm F	
85 Saunders Jno J	
87 Hodson Rob G*	
89 Ginbey Mrs Clarice	
91 Felstead Perc	
93 Rainsford Jno	
97 Clarke Fredk	
97 Norman Chas R	
99 Burt Mrs W M	
101 McAlpine Wm	
105 Jarvis Jas	
109 Parmenter Saml T*	
111 Smith Bartlett	
..... Devonish st	
117 Pesukich Alex	
127 Towers Geo	
129 Luck Hy W	
131 Pereira Geo C	
..... Jarrah rd	
Left side	
4 Colt Mrs Ugenia	
6 Leighton Mrs Mary A	
6 Ahearn Mrs E	
8 Buscombe Mrs	
10 Prosser Fredk	
12 Lockie W S, bldr & plmbr	
14 Meecham --	
..... Dundas st	
16 Carrier Arthur Jno	
18 Allison Cyril	
20 Turner Mrs M E	
22 Sharp Clar	
24 Shaw, Mrs Susan M T	
26 Halle, Thos Hy	
..... Moorgate st	
28 Cross Chas A	
34 Hedges Mrs E	
36 Sykes Mrs Annie	
38 Knight, Stanley	
40 Rang Thos	
42 Greig, Horace	
44 Everard Leslie	
46 Anderson Ern V	
48 Baston --	
50 Wiffen Mrs E	
..... Hedland st	
54 Bradshaw Mrs Nellie	
58 McFarlane --	
60 Fairclough --	
62 Gough Mrs Edith	
	64 Heal Stewart
	66 Hook Mrs Emily
	68 Phillips Mrs A
 Berwick st
	70 Wilson Mrs A
	72 Johnston, Jas B
	74 Hardwick Har
	76 Bennett Mrs Florrie
	78 Rudland Jacob
 Gascoyne st
	88 Hickford Edwd
	100 McLoughlin Mrs J
	100 Bungate Roy F
	102 Martin Jas A
	104 Towler Ern
	106 Fairclough Robt
	108 Stagg Fredk A
	110 Wilks Mrs D
	112 Bell --
	114 Broadway Wlfd
	116 Latimer Leon W
 Devonish st
	118 Townson Wm
	122 Adams Mrs Ellen
 Jarrah rd
	136 Milton Wm, fuel dir

ATTACHMENT TWO - Plan of the East Victoria Park Infants and Primary Schools and surrounding area 1943-1950, drawn up by Mr Bickerton



ATTACHMENT THREE – PRECIS OF MR BICKERTON’S CAREER

Five-year apprenticeship as a Boilermaker Welder with Tomlinson Steel Pty Ltd in Welshpool, much to the anger of my Father. I was an excellent student and Dad wanted me to go on to University but I was having none of that.

Continued my studies and achieved qualifications in Engineering and Horticulture later on as a mature student.

worked all over Australia

spent decades as a Humanitarian Aid Engineer in many 3rd world countries including East Timor, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Aceh/Sumatra Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and more.

Senior Environmental Officer and Construction Supervisor on the construction of major defence projects including HMAS Stirling on Garden island, WA, RAAF base Tindal, NT, Ayers Rock (Uluru) National Park, NT and much more.

A decorated civilian and ex Serviceman having served as a National Serviceman in the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian and New Guinea Army.

A qualified Justice of the Peace.

ATTACHMENT FOUR – TEACHING CAREER OF MISS ALICE HANNANT

Hannant, Alice	Bunbury II	Assistant Teacher	1914
Hannant, Alice	Bunbury II	Assistant Teacher	1915
Hannant, Alice M	Parkerville VII	HT	1917
Hannant, Alice M	Boyanup VI	R.H.T	1918
Hannant, Alice M.	Boyanup VI.	R.H.T	1919
Hannant, Alice M.	Greenmount VII	Head Teacher	1920
Hannant, Alice	Subiaco I	1st Female Assistant Teacher	1921
Hannant, Alice	Subiaco I	1st FA	1922
Hannant, Alice	Cottesloe North IV	Head Teacher	1923
Hannant, Alice	Perth Infants II	TH.T.	1924
Hannant, Alice	Perth Infants II	Temporary Head Teacher	1925
Hannant, Alice	Perth Infants III	Head Teacher	1926
Hannant, Alice	Thomas Street Infants II	Head Teacher	1927
Hannant, Alice	Thomas Street Infants II	Head Teacher	1928
Hannant, Alice	Thomas Street Infants' II.	Head Teacher	1929
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park, East, Infants' II.	Head Teacher	1930
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park, East Infants` II.	Head Teacher	1931
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I.	Head Teacher	1931
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park, East, Intants I.	Head Teacher	1933
_Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1934
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1935
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1936
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants	Head Teacher	1937

Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1938
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1939
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1940
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1941
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1942
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1943
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1944
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants	Head Teacher	1945
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East I	Head Teacher	1946
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants I	Head Teacher	1947
Hannant, Alice	Victoria Park East Infants II	Temporary Head Teacher	1948

Taken from: *The Education Circular*, Western Australia WA State School Teachers 1900-1980 at <https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?keyword=Victoria+Park&page=38>
https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?starts_with=H&page=71

SELECTION OF ARTICLES FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS ON TROVE ON MISS ALICE HANNANT AND HER TEACHING CAREER

Bunbury Herald (WA : 1892 - 1919), Tuesday 3 September 1912, page 4

Local and General.

... Bunbury was well (represented at the fourteenth annual conference of the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia which took place in Perth last week. The local delegates were Messrs. Paisley and Leach (Bunbury), Mr. Harmer and Miss Hunter (Donnybrook), Mr. Williams (Boyanup) and Miss Hannant (Ferguson). The conference was voted a great success in every way.

South-Western News (Busselton, WA : 1903 - 1949), Friday 7 February 1913, page 3

Miss A. Hannant, late of Ferguson School, has been appointed to Stirling.

Southern Times (Bunbury, WA : 1888 - 1916), Thursday 29 May 1913, page 5

EMPIRE DAY. AT STIRLING.

The national day of the British Empire was celebrated at the Stirling Estate School last Friday.

Mr Jas. H. Forrest, J.P. delivered a stirring address to the children upon the part they played in the responsibilities of Empire, and received an emphatic "Yes" when he asked them if they would always do their duty to the Empire. A programme of sports was carried through, the children competing in every event, with enthusiasm. Messrs S. C. Rose, J. H. Hansen, F. A. Roberts, and other gentlemen supervised matters generally, and Miss Hannant helped the children to have a good day. As might be anticipated, the refreshment canteen was in great demand, and large quantities of good things were disposed of.

In the evening an enjoyable dance was held and both the children and grown ups indulged in the light fantastic. Miss Hannant, the head teacher, put the children through some fancy dances, including "Sir Roger de Coverley" and "The Corkscrew". The way in which they acquitted themselves spoke well for their teacher's (Miss Hannant) careful training. During the evening Master Dunkley recited a topical piece which found great favour with those present. Mr Jimmy Scott contributed "My Gippsland Girl." Messrs Douglas Scott and Charles Rooney provided excellent music, and a very pleasant gathering was brought to a close "akint the midnight 'oor."

Bunbury Herald (WA : 1892 - 1919), Tuesday 23 December 1913, page 1

STIRLING SCHOOL PICNIC

The annual picnic was held at the Stirling State School on Friday, 19th inst., but unfortunately the day was unsatisfactory for pleasure seekers and it happened a start was not made till the afternoon. Miss Hannant, the teacher, supplied some excellent amusement and had a programme made up which showed that a vast improvement has been made, during the last 12 months. The following programme was gone through:— Song, 'Sweet and Low,' Choir; recitation, 'The Little Fish' J. Norton; 'song, 'The Travellers,' A. Rose. J. Rose, R. Roberts and Choir ; recitation, 'The Slave's Dream, W. Norton; song, 'The Harvesters' , M. Roberts and Choir; recitation, 'Incident of French Camp,' L. McKenzie; song, 'In Old Kentucky,' S. Roberts and Choir; recitation, 'Ride from Ghent to Aix,' Harry Dunkley; song 'Old Folks at Home,' M. Hausen and L. McKenzie song, 'In the Moonlight,' Choir. It is quite evident that all the children came with intent to sing. After someone remarking that it was time to be 'Milkin' the cows' the day was concluded with singing of the National Anthem. During the day many children received, prizes for their improved work.

Bunbury Herald (WA : 1892 - 1919), Tuesday 1 December 1914, page 1

Annual School Concert

A GREAT SUCCESS.

The Lyric Theatre proved altogether too small on Friday night on the occasion of the annual concert given by the children of the Senior State School.

The audience was both large and enthusiastic, and most deservedly so, for the programme presented was one of the best of a fine record of previous years. The programme comprised Mee Paterson's operetta, "Sherwood's Queen," dealing with the times and exploits of Robin Hood. There is plenty of scope for pretty scenery and costumes, fine dances, and good songs, and this was taken full advantage of. The host of children appearing on the stage was splendidly drilled, and entered into the spirit of the play with the keenest zest, and the teachers had the full satisfaction of securing most generous applause for a most meritorious performance.

Some idea of the scope of the production may be gained from the following synopsis:- The play opens in Sherwood Forest with Robin Hood's foresters — under the able lieutenant, Little John — and Maidens discovered in groups. Whilst singing a song of jubilation, they hear in the distance the sound of a horn. Robin Hood enters and the foresters prepare to; hunt the fallow horn. The hurried arrival of Marian and Alice, who have been rescued from pursuing soldiers by Friar Tuck, turns the foresters' thoughts towards revelry. Whilst so engaged a hurried signal is given, and there enters in great distress a widow whom Robin promises to aid. Round their leader the foresters march away to attack the Sheriff of Nottingham.

In the second act the foresters return triumphant from Nottingham, bringing with them the widow's three sons whom they have rescued from the sheriff. Robin Hood warns the brothers that the sheriff will spare no effort to re-capture them, and advises them to remain in the shelter of the forest. The brothers express their gratitude to Robin Hood and resolve to follow his advice Little John acquaints them with their duties and they are duly admitted and welcomed to the forest band. The gipsies cause some slight disturbance, but harmony is restored and the long delayed revels begin. Foresters sing ' Now Wend we Together,' 'The Mighty Norseman,' 'Wait for the Waggon,' 'The British Flag,' and ' John Peel.' The Maypole and Ball Dancers entertain the revellers, and the play closes with the bridal chorus of Maid Marian and Robin Hood. Those taking parts were:— Robin Hood (Miss D. Harland), who made a -striking leader of the band; Maid Marian (Eileen Cooke); Alice, Marian's friend (Gwen Whelan), Little John (Alan Rose), Friar Tuck (Eric Caporn), Will Scarlet (Victor Murray), Widow Annie (Evans Cuthbert), Cedric and Wilford, widow's sons (Fred Chapman, Norman Buswell, and Frank Benson), Alan-a-Dale (Jack Snowden), Jester (Michael McGeary). These were aided by bands of foresters, maidens, gipsies, butterflies, ball, and maypole dancers.

Among the dances the ball drill and dance and the maypole dance were especially fine. A song by Master Jack Vick, 'The Old Oak,' was well sung, and was encored. A tableau of Brittainia roused applause and enthusiasm, and Miss Eva Brittain, who made an imposing Brittainia; recited with good effect 'The Day,' being called to repeat the last verse. Both choristers, and audience joined in singing 'Rule Brittainia.' The bulk of the work of preparation fell on Miss Marjorie Siggs, assistant and sports mistress, who trained the children for the dances and ball drill, assisted by Miss Chrystabel Stephens (first assistant and sports mistress). Miss Alice Hannant, assistant and choir mistress, and Mr. R. G. Oldfield, first assistant and science master, did the bulk of the choir and vocal training. The accompanists were Misses A. Hannant and D. Harland and Miss A. Brittain.

All helped towards the success of the production, which, it is estimated, will realise some £45. It is on the cards the production will be repeated, many requests having been made.

Southern Times (Bunbury, WA : 1888 - 1916), Tuesday 21 December 1915, page 5

Bunbury State School

PARENTS DAY AND PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

On Thursday of last week parents and friends of the children of the Bunbury School were afforded an opportunity of observing the school at work in the various branches of the curriculum. Open invitations was extended to the parents, School Board and prominent citizens of the town, and about 200 or more availed themselves of the invitation. The pre-arrangements were systematically carried out so as to give as wide a scope for observation as possible. On entering the schools the visitors were shown into the room in which sewing and Red Cross work was displayed. The desks were occupied by about 100 children each engaged in sewing, under the supervision of Miss Stephens and McWean. During the hours in which they were at work they made 165 swabs and 25 handkerchiefs. The Red Cross work was done during the year by the senior girls who were permitted by the department to suspend the ordinary curriculum for the purpose.

In the IV a room under the supervision of Miss Fowler, the children were engaged in manual work. The walls were decorated with specimens of mapping from the various standards, and these together with the cardboard work were keenly appreciated by the parents.

At the manual centre the VI Standard boys were at work and specimens of the boys work done during the year were hung about the room. The way in which the centre was crowded manifested the keen interest of the visitors in this branch of the work.

In the second standard room Miss Hepburn gave a writing lesson to a large section of children. The various types of scrip work, viz., writing, written arithmetic, mapping, composition, were arranged on the walls and the visitors were thus able to observe development of the work through the school.

The combined Va and VI were combined in the hall and under the direction of Miss Hannant were engaged in drawing. The results of the lesson were keenly awaited by the parents and the very best work was put upon the wall for the observation of those present. The science work done by the VII and VIII boys under (the supervision of Mr. Stewart was a great surprise to most present who had, no idea that the curriculum of the primary school included such work as this. At 2.40 p.m. the visitors congregated in the hall to hear the fine singing rendered by the V Standards under the baton of Miss Hannant. "Under the Greenwood Tree," "The Angel" and the "Recessional" called forth hearty approval.

At 3.30 p.m. sharp the children were quickly brought from their rooms to the hall for the prize distribution which was performed by the Rev. A. Buchanan, chairman of the School Board: When the prizes had been distributed, the children were dismissed into the playground and speeches and afternoon tea followed. The chairman called upon Rev. Canon Adams, Mr. Fraenkel and Mr. Paisley to express the thanks of the parents to the school for a most enjoyable afternoon. These gentlemen congratulated the headmaster and his able staff upon the success which the school had achieved. The headmaster in replying on behalf of himself and the staff first expressed his thanks to all parents for gifts of refreshments, and more for their presence there that afternoon.. He said he took the large number of visitors as an index of the confidence which they had in the staff and himself. He felt he could accomplish much because he had this co-operation. He trusted that next year the school would gain even greater distinction than in the present. All credit was due to the genuine efforts of the late headmaster. Mr. Blair, who, all knew, had enlisted in his country's service. In conclusion he said he would be only too pleased to meet the parents and discuss the education of the children with them or to answer any questions about the training.

The Rev. Mr. Buchanan moved and Mr. Moor seconded, a vote of thanks to the chairman, speakers and school for a very pleasant afternoon. Afternoon tea was served by the senior girls under the direction of Miss Mauger and Miss McWean.

Space will not permit a full list of the prizes, but we mention the chief.—

Dux of the School : Gertrude Eckersley.

Dux of the Standard VII : Sydney Priestner.

Most popular prize : Eileen Hayes.

Modern School Entrances : Gwen Monkhouse. Myrtle White.

The headmaster wishes to acknowledge the kindness of Messrs Fraenkel, Paisley and Fiddes in donating prizes to the school, and thus swelling what must have otherwise been a slender list.

Bunbury Herald (WA : 1892 - 1919), Wednesday 29 August 1917, page 3

On Thursday evening last, the 24th inst, the Boyanup School Grand Opera Coy gave a successful rendering of 'Princess Ju Ju' in aid of the Patriotic Fund.

The stage effects were essentially good, the scene representing a Japanese Village lighted with lanterns kindly sent by Mr Draper.

A crowded house enjoyed the historic abilities of Miss Iris Kent as Princess Ju Ju, and Miss.- Annie Scott as the Emperor Hokipok ... (to be continued in our next). Their acting was deserving of special mention. The minor parts were safe in the hands of Misses N Reilly, A Trigwell, G Mahlberg, L Back, E Hurst, A Fowler, R Back, D Kessell, and Masters J McGowan, V Page, R Hurst and R Ecclestone.

Songs and recitations were effectively rendered by the Misses Edna and Ethel Kemp, and Masters J Page, F McDonnough, C Reilly, F Fowler and L Payne. Supper followed a most enjoyable entertainment and the evening was concluded with a dance.

Over £12 was realised as the result of the evening's programme and thanks are due to the Head Teacher, Miss Hannant, and her assistant, Mrs Sainsbury, for the: good work accomplished. Mesdames R Payne, A J Payne, Smedly, T Smith, A Hurst, Stephens and the Misses Trigwell and Ecclestone actively co-operated in making the evening the success it was.

South Western Times (Bunbury, WA : 1917 - 1929), Saturday 9 August 1919, page 1

BOYANUP

We are pleased to chronicle a ceremony conducted by the residents of Boyanup on Monday afternoon. This took the form of tree planting to the memory of the fallen soldiers and the consummation of peace.

For some days past an energetic committee has labored with untiring efforts in ploughing and making ready a portion of the main street for the reception of trees. Despite the inclemency of the weather a large number of people were present from the town and surrounding districts. The foremost portion of the ceremony was the planting of 11 oak trees in honor of the following soldiers who have made the supreme sacrifice: — V. -Emmett, D. Scott, E. White, E. Duce, W. B. Ecclestone, T. Fowler, L. F. Trigwell, L. J. White, C. P. Hurst, C. G. Gibbons, A. Cope. The school children, under the charge of Miss Hannant, sang "Lest we forget." The Rev. Scott-Clarke added to the proceedings by delivering a few well-chosen words in honor of those whom they were that day endeavoring to commemorate.

A move was then made to that portion of Preston-road when as a conclusion to the peace celebrations ten currajong trees were planted, the honor of planting being given to the various school children who had acquitted themselves in recent examinations. Amongst the arrivals at Boyanup from the metropolis on Tuesday were Messrs. E. P. (Joe) Ecclestone and Jack Ecclestone, sons of Mr. W. J. Ecclestone. Both these lads are looking well and none the worse for their brush-up with Fritz. We offer our sincere congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Ecclestone on the safe return of their three sons. (Bob returned a few months back.)

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 26 November 1920, page 6

STATE SCHOOL TEACHERS : EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK : THE WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT.

The whole of yesterday was devoted by the Public Service Appeal Board (Mr. Justice Northmore, Rev G Nisbet ?? and Mr W Darcy to hearing further evidence in support or the appeal by the State School Teachers' Union against (a) the differentiation in salaries of male and female teachers having the same qualifications; and (b) the minimum salary of a classified teacher.

... The woman's point of view was first stated by Una Florence Genevieve Brockway, head teacher of the Princess May Girls' School, Fremantle. She said that the examinations for men and women were mainly the same at the Claremont Training College, except for the fact that a compulsory subject for women, was needlework. That found its counterpart in the men's course in relatively simple algebra. For a woman to pass in algebra, however, did not nullify her need to take needlework. The percentage of women who failed in the stiff examination in needlework was higher than that of the men who failed in algebra. Witness knew of young women who made their own clothing and millinery, and who could not pass the C2 examination in needlework. ... The results achieved by women were quite as good as these secured by men-in fact, witness could quote instances where children taught by women had come out with much greater credit in public examinations than those taught by men ... The women, apparently, have got all the credit; and the men the cash. (Laughter.) ... Therefore she believed that her salary should be such as to enable her to live decently after she left the Education Department by reason of the strenuous nature of the service. While women did excellent work-work as good as that of men -their bodies were worn out before those of the men. It was absolutely necessary for the well-being of the State, witness added, that there should be in the employ of the Education Department a number of women of mature age, possessing womanly tact and sympathy and the power of motherhood; even though the actual physical state of motherhood did not exist, because those women were given work that no man could do. After hearing supporting testimony from Alice Hannant, head teacher of Greenmount State School and Barbara Sunderland, head teacher of Fremantle

Intermediate School ,and supplementary evidence by Raymond D. Bradshaw, secretary of the union, the Board adjourned to 10.30 a-m. today.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Tuesday 18 October 1921, page 8

TEACHERS' SALARIES. : Aids to Education. : Appeal Board Evidence.

Yesterday's session of the Public Service Appeal Board comprising Mr. Justice Northmore (chairman), Mr M. F. Darcy (Teachers' Union). and Mr. Lloyd. Bloxsome (Education Department) was almost entirely confined to the hearing of claims made on behalf of teachers in schools in No. 6 and No. 5 classes. Mr. H. P. Downing, K.C, with him the Assistant Public Service Commissioner (Mr. C. A. Munt) appeared for the Public Service Commissioner, and Mr. J. Hammill represented the applicants. In opening, Mr. Hammill intimated that he would proceed with class 6 schools, and called Llewellyn Humphrey to support the claim for an increase of salary from f270 to £350. Witness stated that the average attendance at -sixth class schools was over 20 and under 50. A probationer teacher was one taken on by teachers when the attendance exceeded 30. A probationer was not necessarily a trained person. A monitor was a person who held a leaving certificate. A probationer would affect the work of a teacher by making it harder for, as the probationer was untrained, the whole of the work had to be watched keenly.

His Honour: Is it harder with or without a probationer? Witness: That is problematical. One might have a good or bad probationer. Continuing, he said that the department had been asked repeatedly by conference and had refused to take the responsibility of preparing probationers for their monitor's examination. He did not mean that if the monitor failed the teacher would be penalised. Witness then detailed "preparation" work. and produced in explanation a" number of maps which, he said, he drafted himself and which the children filled in with the names of the towns they had been taught. His Honour (looking at a map of Australia): What is that? Is it a new comet? Witness: That is a river. It is nearly as big as the Murray. I see there are two towns in the sea. Those are islands off Tasmania. (Laughter). Here is another river. Perhaps it is the Snowy. Do you teach the children "The Man from Snowy River?"--Yes. 'That's good. Witness then displayed a board marked off in squares, and which he termed "an aid to arithmetic." His Honour: It looks like a draught board. Witness exhibited a set of pictures which he said were used to illustrate a children's story. His .Honour: What is that? Witness (showing the first picture): 'The Three Bears.'" (laughter). The other drawings depicted incidents of the well known story. His Honour: What is the object of it? Witness: If you merely tell the children about it they will forget it. But would it matter if they did? What would be the good of telling them the story if you are going to let them forget it? Herbert Fieldman of Byford, stated that he held a B1 certificate. Mr. Downing: But you got that by war service. His Honour: I do not know why you should make that statement. Mr. Downing: I do not make it. His Honour: But you did make it. Whether he got it by a fluke or any how, he has it. Witness added that when

he left for the war he had two subjects to take. He did not think the department could question his scholastic ability. He was about to take his degree, for which he had been studying at night. His Honour: The remark was uncalled for. I do not see where the point comes in and such remarks always cause these long explanations. Witness continued that he did not think that the work of teachers was valued, adequately. The other day he heard two lawyers arguing about the rate of interest. They would earn more in half an hour than a teacher would in a day, and, said witness, they have to know only books. Every teacher had to study the character of every child. A teacher who. taught ten children should receive more than the two lawyers. It was a question of the value of the work to the community.

Alice Mary Hannant first assistant at the Subiaco school, stated that she had had six years' experience as head mistress of sixth class schools. She was giving evidence representative of the women teachers of the schools of the class. The present salary was £250, and they claimed £297. Precisely the same standard of efficiency was expected of women teachers as of men. Witness had been in sixth class schools at Stirling, Mundaring Weir, Greenmount and Parkerville, and a fifth class school at Boyanup. In all schools, her predecessors had been men. Ernest Edwards, the holder of a B1 certificate said that he was the headmaster of the Applecross school (fifth class). The average attendance was 55 and the. average attendance of fifth-class schools? was 50 to .85. Senior Inspector .T. A. Klein also tendered evidence, after which the proceedings were adjourned to 10.30 a.m. to-day.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Tuesday 10 July 1923, page 6

ARBOR DAY AT NORTH COTTESLOE.

Mr. Ewing Present.

The Parents and Citizens' Association of North Cottesloe, although only formed two months ago. decided to commence their public activities by holding an Arbor Day celebration. This took place on Saturday afternoon. An energetic band of workers had been busily engaged during the past month preparing the school grounds, which were virgin bush, for the planting of 100 trees by the children attending the school. These trees .were presented by the Cottesloe Council. A large gathering was present, including the Minister for Education (Mr. J. Ewing. M.L.C.). and Mrs. Ewing. and the members of the Cottesloe Council.

Cr. Birkbeck referred to the splendid work done by the various committees in such a short time, and the enthusiasm shown by all parents in the district for the welfare of the children. He moved a hearty vote of thanks to the Minister for Education for attending, that being his first public appearance in the metropolitan area since taking office.

Mr. J. Duffell, M.L.C. in seconding the vote of thanks, pointed out to the children how necessary it had become to plant trees in Western Australia, as the timber forests were being rapidly reduced, though it was not likely that the trees planted that day would ever be needed for timber. They would, however, beautify the grounds and provide useful shade for the children during the hot summer months. He gave great praise to Miss Hannant, the head teacher, and the members of the association for the splendid work they were doing for the welfare of the children, and was confident they would have every assistance from the new Minister for Education. He added that Mr. Ewing had succeeded a great educationist, and he knew, that he would do all he could to carry on the splendid work that Mr. Colebatch had performed while in office.

Mr. Ewing, in replying, said that he felt it a privilege to be in charge of such an important department as that of education. He spoke of the great advantages enjoyed by the children of the present generation, and said that the educational system of Western Australia was a very excellent one. It would be his duty and his pleasure to do all in his power to further advance, the interests of education in Western Australia. The children living in the metropolitan area had greater advantages than those living in the country districts, but the recent introduction of high schools and rural schools in the country was, he felt, a move in the right direction, and it would be his endeavour to see that educational facilities were made as equal as possible. He complimented Miss Hannant on the splendid appearance of the children and the very useful work she was doing. He spoke also of the excellent work being done by the Parents and Citizens' associations throughout the State. These associations brought the school in closer contact with the home to the advantage of both. The North Cottesloe Parents and Citizens' Association had done admirable work in a short space of time, and on behalf of the department he thanked them, and assured them of his sympathy with their activities. It seemed to him a good augury that the sun which had been hidden of late should be shining so brightly upon that afternoon's gathering. The Mayor of Cottesloe (Mr. Gibbons) said that the council took a great interest in these associations, and was willing to assist them in every possible way.

Mr. Klein (district inspector of schools) spoke highly of the work of the association, and said that he saw how necessary it was for the school to be extended into the higher standards, as it was a great drawback for a child when it reached a certain standard to have to be sent to an entirely new school. They had there a highly competent head teacher and staff and he would see to it that representations were made in that direction. He could see no reason why it should not go to the sixth standard.

The Minister, Mr. Duffell, the Mayor, and Mr. Klein each planted a tree, and the children, who were anxiously waiting, proceeded to the important business of tree planting.

Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954), Thursday 26 June 1924, page 30

A SCHOOL CHILD WELFARE SCHEME.

The methods of Mr. Wackford Squeers were far removed from those of Miss Hannant - a headmistress with a heart - in charge of the James-Street Infants School. Out of true womanly goodness of spirit she has taken upon herself the task of organising a scheme by which each child may receive a half-pint of milk daily at the commencement of the luncheon recess, in the form of hot all milk cocoa.

Absence of kitchen conveniences and proper culinary utensils necessitates a good deal of inconvenience, as the milk has to be heated and the cocoa boiled in a rather primitive fashion in oblong-cut kerosene tins on one of the class-room fires. A nominal charge of 1d. per cap is made, and the eager rush of thirsty babes for the comforting fluid, with their pennies rattling in the pannikins or cups they must bring from home, indicates the success of the idea, which is a boon to those children who bring their lunch. Pannikins and pennies are seldom forgotten, but there are cases where the production of either is impossible. That makes no difference - the hot drink is given without the penny in one of the scheme mugs. A little more thought could be exercised to their children's advantage by parents - a proper half-pint enamelled mug is preferable to a tin pannikin for a child's use, although anything with a handle on it is infinitely better than a handleless cup or an ordinary empty tin, too small to hold more than half the quantity considered necessary for the well-being of each child, not to mention the discomfort and possibility of accident by attempts to hold and carry anything containing very hot liquid without a handle. Many children are told to come back and have their tins or tiny cups refilled, but that causes extra work on Miss Hannant and those of her assistant teachers unselfish enough to give up a great part of their own luncheon time for this very good work, which was begun at a suggestion from Dr. Roberta Jull, school medical inspector.

The children who receive the cocoa are to be regularly weighed, and it is hoped an improvement in the physique of some who appear to be in need of milk nourishment will be noticed. Miss Hannant distributes four gallons of milk each day, and she has been fortunate in finding a milkman philanthropic enough to supply her at a reduced rate.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 28 November 1924, page 6

PERTH INFANTS' SCHOOL.

An exhibition of needlework and toys made by children at the James-street Infants' School was opened on Wednesday afternoon by Mrs. Cecil Andrews. Miss Hannant and her staff of teachers are proud of their scholars and school and not without reason — the display of work produced by mere babes, comprising daintily executed articles of handmade clothing for quite big children, little ones, and dollies, as well as

specimens of coloured chalk drawing, paper work, etc., was more than creditable to the pupils and teachers; and in the various classrooms decorative effects have been attained that are conducive to brightness and of great intellectual value. In each room a feature is made of a distinctive frieze, and these in many cases are the work of the children themselves. Afternoon tea was served at tables decorated with yellow broom, in a large class-room with a sectional frieze of particular interest depicting the progress of a day in the life of a child from dawn to dusk. In other rooms various countries are represented by emblematic and conventional designs. And this valuable decorative scheme does not overlook the emotions — joy, gladness, maternal affection and flower love are realistically and artistically portrayed — the higher cultivation of the mind is assisted by impressions received by the eye. Most of the pretty and useful articles made by busy little fingers were on sale at ridiculously low prices in aid of school improvement funds, and a collection of calendars and Christmas cards, mostly studies of wild flowers, exquisitely painted in water colour by Miss Hannant, were quickly sold. A short programme of action songs and old-fashioned rhythmic dances carried out by the children of the various classes, was much enjoyed by visitors and relatives, as well as the performers themselves, judging by their happy faces.

Sunday Times (Perth, WA : 1902 - 1954), Sunday 20 December 1925, page 7

PERTH INFANTS' SCHOOL Sale of Work

Recently a most successful exhibition and sale of work was held at the Perth Infants' School. James-street. The Mayoress of Perth (Mrs. J. T. Franklin) who-performed the opening ceremony, was the recipient of a lovely bouquet of roses and maiden hair fern. Mr. Wallace Clubb (Senior inspector) in his address, spoke of the , excellent work done by the school during the past year and complimented the head mistress (Miss Hannant) and the staff on lthe success of. their efforts. The school hall was artistically decorated and the various stalls displayed the fine work done by the scholars. On the Fancy Stall (Miss Hannant) were dainty embroidered frocks, hand shopping bass, quaint lamp shades and some beautiful hand-pointed Christmas cards. Miss Wellwood and Miss Lamprey were in charge of the Hand-work Stall, which displayed calendars, letter racks with pretty designs in water colors. and all sorts of toys such as elephants, lucky black cats, etc. The .Needlework Stall (Miss Gibbs), comprised pretty play aprons for kiddies, ladies' fancy aprons, kimonos, bonnets, handkerchiefs and dolls' apparel. Miss Lehrback was in charge of the Raffia Stall, on which were showing shopping baskets, work baskets, plaited raffia mats and many other useful articles. Afternoon tea was served in one of the adjoining rooms, the tables being decorated with carnations and fern. Miss Knight was in charge of this stall, and was ably assisted by Misses Dyer, Richardson and Horsfall.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Thursday 1 September 1927, page 13

TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

LAST DAYS BUSINESS. Examination by Inspectors.

... Miss Hannant moved that inspectors should not make suggestions concerning school apparatus involving expenditure unless the department was prepared to supply the material required. Miss Priest seconded the motion, which was carried.

Sunday Times (Perth, WA : 1902 - 1954), Sunday 16 October 1927, page 36

RECITAL FOR BOY SCOUTS

... Much of the success of the recital given recently in aid of the funds of the West Perth Boy Scouts was due to the generous support of admirers of the Scout movement and the welfare of the Boyhood of Australia. One of the many donations were artistic programmes for the vice-regal party and the Mayoress of Perth. Hand-painted with West Australian flowers and ; kookaburras, they were the work and gift of Miss Alice Hannant, of the Education Department.

West Australian, Sat 1 February 1930, p 20

School changes ... Class 2: Miss Alice Hannant, Thomas Street Infants' to East Victoria Park Infants'

Daily News Sat 1 March 1930, p 3

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Saturday 20 December 1930, page 16

CHRISTMAS TREES : Seven Hundred Children at School.

Seven hundred happy children of the East Victoria Park Infants' School took, part on Thursday afternoon in the annual break-up, and Christmas tree party. A large number of parents and friends were present. The children sung a number of Christmas songs and two little plays were given by the infants— 'Choosing the 'Toys'-' and 'Christmas Morning'. Messrs H S. Raphael, M.L.A; and F Stubbs, acted as Father Christmas, and distributed gifts to each of the infants. The Victoria Park Band rendered musical selections.

The head teacher (Miss A. M. Hannant) said that over 1,200 gifts had been provided by the parents and teachers, and she greatly appreciated their generous response. A big parcel of toys which had been left over would be sent to charitable institutions. She mentioned that- one father made 24 bats, which he presented, and a mother gave 105 home-made articles. In conclusion she mentioned that the school was the largest infants' school in the State. **Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950), Friday 30 October 1931, page 3**

BRIGHTER SCHOOLS

Self-Development Cult: ENCOURAGING ABILITY '

Today was a red-letter occasion in the lives of pupils and teachers at East Victoria Park State school, the largest primary school in Western Australia. The senior section of the . institution, under the headmastership of Mr. G. W., McLean. houses about 800 pupils,

and the education of the same number is supervised by Miss A. M. Hannant, and her first assistant, Miss Harbeck, in the junior section.

Since the beginning of the year the curriculum of the school has included a policy under which pupils have been afforded an opportunity of expressing individuality, and indication of the development that has taken place in this direction was seen at East Victoria Park school this afternoon when an exhibition of work of the primary section was thrown open for the inspection of parents and friends of pupils.

It was a really remarkable display and reflected the highest credit on pupils and teachers alike. Each class room held special interest and the activity eloquently expressed the pupils' individuality.

This swing over to individuality in the education of children is the sequel of an international conference held in Denmark about two years ago. It gives children an opportunity of freely expressing themselves along the lines of their ability. For instance a boy who might be just an ordinary scholar so far as mathematics, history, geography and such subjects are concerned, might reveal outstanding ability in essay writing. His teacher, noticing this bent, gives him every encouragement to freely express himself in writings, selection of literature, and such like. The same rule applies to children who reveal to their teachers an outstanding aptitude for drawing, painting, oratory, dramatic art. nature study, wood and metal work, and so on. Mr. McLean, headmaster of the senior section of the school, unhesitatingly declares that he has discovered that when children are allowed to pursue their particular line of ability, not only has there been a raising of the child's self respect, but there has been increased efficiency along other lines. A child who might become a shining example to the school as an essayist, naturally took a fine pride in his work, whereas if he was held back from his line of ability as he would have been under the old class system of training, superiority and inferiority complexes developed which might perhaps spoil his whole outlook on life.

Miss Hannant waxes enthusiastic concerning the advantages of the new curriculum. She points with justifiable pride to the various class rooms which fairly radiate with happy contentment. She states that even the most backward child possesses a line of ability which if studied and encouraged can be developed into something approaching brilliancy. 'It makes our lives much happier, and the children's more so,' said Miss Hannant, 'and our main concern now is to curb their enthusiasm.'

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Tuesday 3 November 1931, page 12
INFANTS' WORK.

East Victoria Park School

A fine display of school crafts delighted those who attended the annual parent afternoon at the East Victoria Park Infants' school on Friday.

The Chief Inspector of Schools (Mr. J. A. Klein), who opened the proceedings, asked the parents to co-operate with the school teachers in not repressing their children, but in giving them every opportunity for self-expression. The school, he said, was doing its part in this respect and was endeavouring to give the children freedom in their work, together with the opportunity of developing individuality.

Several items were given by the pupils' percussion band, and community songs were sung by the 723 children present.

Following the opening ceremony, . the visitors, of whom there were about 1,000, inspected the classrooms and watched the children at their work. They were greatly interested in the display and paid special attention to the large Noah's Ark and its animals (all built and painted by the children), an Australian sheep and cattle station, and a beautiful home of seven rooms.

The head teacher (Miss A. M. Hannant) said that early in the year she had organised the school on different lines from former years. The children had been carefully graded according to their abilities, and the fifteen rooms of the school had each been given separate interests, such as art work, the development of English, marquetry, fretwork, nature study, embroidery, toy making and research work on Australia. The scheme had been a great success, and she thought that such training must result in cultivating - the tastes of the children and quickening their love for order and beauty in life. The scheme owed much of its success to the loyal co-operation of members of the staff all of whom were now convinced that specialised work made for better discipline and more efficient tuition, besides being more interesting to the children.

Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950), Thursday 2 February 1933, page 5

BACK TO SCHOOL : Vacation Ends Today ENROLMENTS LESS

Pupils, pupils everywhere, and not one smeared with ink! Such might describe the scene at many metropolitan schools today, when children assembled in their thousands after the Christmas vacation. In their spruce outfits they answered the school bells which rang today for the first time this year. And it was a particularly busy day for teachers. While it was too early today to secure accurate figures as to the number of enrolments, it was indicated that, contrary to most expectations, enrolments generally were below those of last year

...

VICTORIA PARK INCREASE

Mr. G. W. McLean, headmaster of Victoria Park Boys' School, said that there had been an increase of 126 pupils to date. The increase represented many from the adjoining infants' school. There had been an enrolment of 43 pupils from outside districts

(including country towns), representing an increase of 11 on last year's figures. Pupils enrolled at the school last year totalled 756. A fair increase for 1933 was indicated.

GIRLS DECREASE Miss A. M. Hannant, headmistress of the Victoria Park Girls' School said that for the first week of 1932 there were 780 pupils enrolled. Today's figures showed a total of 689 only. This decrease, she said, could be accounted for by the fact that a certain number of infant boys had been transferred to Mr. McLean's school.

New pupils totalled 104 as compared with 147 last year.

Miss Hannant said that when the school was erected it catered for 200 pupils, that number increasing by about 100 each year. Last year the figures equalled those of 1931 and she considered that the school had reached its maximum capacity. She attributed the decrease to the fact that a number of families had removed from the district in the current year.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Saturday 7 December 1935, page 10

"720 JOYS" : Sir James Mitchell at Infant School.

The Lieut.-Governor (Sir James Mitchell) and Lady Mitchell were so delighted by the concert and play given by the children of the East Victoria Park Infant School last week that they said they wished to see those who took part at their work in school. The visit was made yesterday morning, in company with Mrs. E. A. Coleman, wife of the inspector of schools for the district, who was away in the country. Miss A. M. Hannant (the headmistress) welcomed the guests and escorted them through the school with its bright and airy classrooms and very wide verandahs built on three sides of a quadrangle. The East Victoria Park Infant School, it is stated, is the largest of its kind in the State and gives education to no fewer, than 720 little children.

The 14 classrooms were filled yesterday with groups of healthy, well-mannered, neatly dressed children calculated to rejoice the heart of any teacher. The atmosphere of the school was one of joy and brightness and it was obvious that, in addition to the light and sunshine made possible by the plan of the building, inculcating an appreciation of beauty and culture formed a very real part of the training of the children. There was control without fear, with the attendant spirit of quietness, contentment and lack of nervous strain.

Especial interest attached to one classroom where the individual development class was carried on. Miss Hannant an enthusiast in her work, who knows every child and keeps in touch with practically every mother, speaks with enthusiasm of the progress

made in this particular room, where the programme was suggested by Mr. Coleman. The children work at their own rhythm and the results of their work are carefully placed against their names on a chart. The child, for instance, who is quick at learning English, may go on at his own pace, and not have to wait for the child who can successfully learn, only at a slower rate.

It was most interesting to see the 700 small people march out of their respective rooms and take their place in the verandahs to listen to a few words spoken by Sir James Mitchell. To Lady Mitchell and to himself, His Excellency said, they were 720 joys, as each child was a joy to them. They were, as children should be; happy and smiling, because if they were happy, they were good. And their school life should be a happy life. Wherever he travelled over the State, His Excellency continued, he always made a point of visiting the schools and seeing the children, because they were the most important of all. He wished them all — teachers and children — a happy Christmas and New Year and offered congratulations to their teachers upon their splendid entertainment and upon their appearance and work.

The singing of the National Anthem, the planting of two trees, one by His Excellency and the other by Lady Mitchell, escorted by the two baby classes who watched the little ceremony with delighted attention, a butterfly ballet and morning tea brought the much appreciated visit to a conclusion.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Thursday 28 July 1938, page 6

VARIED ACTIVITIES.

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The Infant Health committee, Victoria Park East, held a "lucky charm" carnival at the Victoria Park Town Hall on Saturday which was successful, socially and financially. Lucky charms, black cats, etc., decorated the hall and the holders of winning lucky numbers received a ticket each in the W.A. lotteries. Dances, novelties and streamers added to the entertainment. The committee responsible for the evening were Mesdames T. W. Meagher (president), L. W. Martin and L O. Thorburn (vice-presidents), Misses G. Sporer (honorary secretary) and A. M. Hannant (treasurer), Mesdames Taylor, Cornish, Williamson, Jennings, Kent, Eddington, Pollard and. Miss Malony.

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West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 1 April 1938, page 6

INFANT HEALTH. : New Victoria Park Committee.

With a view to forming a local committee in Victoria Park to co-operate with the Children's Protection Society in the conduct of an infant health centre in that district, with sub-centres at Rivervale, Carlisle and South Belmont, a meeting was held at the Adelphi Hotel yesterday afternoon. The chairman of the Children's Protection Society (Rabbi D. I. Freedman) was in the chair and also present were the member for the.

district (Mr. H. S. Raphael, M.L.A.), the principal of the Kindergarten Training College (Miss D. B. Colley), Sister M. Darling and the secretary of the Children's Protection Society (Miss Ray Donovan).

In outlining the objects of the meeting, the Rabbi said that the committee it was hoped to form would function in much the same manner as the very active infant health committee at South Perth. Later other district committees would be formed, but Victoria Park had been selected first as one of the oldest centres and because its work was growing so rapidly. Once the committee was formed the Children's Protection Society trusted that it would work together for many years in an endeavour to make Victoria Park the model infant health district.

Mr. Raphael promised his co-operation in the project, although he had already committed himself to assist with the establishment of a free kindergarten at Rivervale. The following officers were then elected: -President, Mr. T. W. Meagher; vice-presidents, Mesdames I O. Thorburn and L. W. Martin; secretary, Miss G. Sporer; minute secretary, Mrs. S. E. Manners; treasurer, Miss A. M. Hannant; executive committee, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Jennings; Mesdames R. N. Read, E. C Neck, E. C. Skene, L. Leithhead and M. V. Revel. The first meeting will be held at the Victoria Park Infant Health Centre at 8 o'clock next Tuesday evening when all interested are invited to attend.

West Australian Saturday 6 May 1939, p 21

FREE MILK FOR CHILDREN.

A meeting under the auspices of the Free Milk Council was held at the East Victoria Park school last Tuesday, with the object of forming a committee to assist in raising funds to provide free milk in the local school for under nourished children whose parents receive less than the basic wage. Mr. H. S. Raphael, M.L.A., presided. Among the speakers were Mrs. E. Cardell-Oliver, M.L.A., Mrs. R. Robertson, Miss Hannant and Mr. L. Atkinson. It was pointed out that, although 600 children had received free milk in the metropolitan area last year, there were still many who needed this nourishment but could not be supplied through lack of funds. A committee was formed with the following office-bearers:-President, Mr. H. S. Raphael, chairman, Mr. H. R. Hanton, secretary and treasurer, Miss Hannant.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Saturday 1 July 1939, page 8

Bridge Evening.

A bridge party organised by the Victoria Park Branch of the Free Milk Council to raise funds for the provision of free milk to under-nourished children in the local school, was held at the Carlton Club on Wednesday.

Mr. H. S. Raphael, M.L.A., president of the branch, welcomed those present and announced that a bridge evening would be held at the Carlton Club on the last Thursday of each month. He spoke of the need for assistance and asked for the

continued support of the players. Prizes which had been donated by several firms were distributed by Miss Hannant.

Among those present were: Mesdames A. R. Robertson, McGuire. Ferstat, Ellemar. T. R. Buddee, R. Bond, Revell, H. H. Hoare. O. Williams, G. Baker. Jose Leithhead, Temby, Jenties, Mitchell, G. Norvell, L. Braddock. W. P. Holmberg, B. A. Toole, Hazell, McBride. Kevan, Loughton, Filmer, Taylor, Rietschel. Mack. Marriott. Howard. A. Butler, W. Howard. Misses Marriott. Shaw. D. Rietschel, Messrs. McGuire, W. Ferstat, Taylor, Filmer, T. R. Buddee and Sanderson.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Thursday 17 August 1939, page 4

Victoria Park Gathering.

The fortnightly bridge party organised by the Victoria Park branch of the Free Milk Council was held at the East Victoria Park Infant School on Thursday last. The room was decorated with a profusion of Iceland poppies, Geraldton wax plant, nemesia, roses, and other spring flowers. The evening was most successful and resulted in a substantial increase in the funds of the committee. Prizes were won by Mesdames Revell and McBride, Miss Stewart, and Messrs. Mouncey, Wilkinson, and Munroe.

Among those present were:

Mesdames Hoover, Buchan, Mack, Hoare, Mack, Meachem. Hazell, Dillon, Spencer, Barrett, Leithhead, Baker, Reeves, Godecke, Barratt; Misses Hannant, Maloney, Wilde, Holmes; and Messrs, Hazell, Robinson and McBride.

West Australian, Tuesday 16 December 1947, page 18

HEADMISTRESS RETIRES

Tributes To Miss A. M. Hannant

The retiring headmistress of the East Victoria Park Infants' School (Miss A. M. Hannant) was honoured with two presentations at the school yesterday afternoon. A wallet containing £34, the gift of the 500 children attending the school and their parents, was presented on their behalf by the Director of Education (Mr. M. Little), and an armchair from members of the staff was presented by the district inspector (Mr. C. N. Radbourn).

Miss Hannant has served with the Education Department for 36 years, the last 18 years of which she has been headmistress of the infant school. During the whole of her service, she said, she had not lost a day through sickness. Mr. Radbourn said that Miss Hannant had worked her way up in the department from a one-room school. She had laid a good foundation in the school and would be missed by the children and members of the staff.

Miss Hannant thanked those who had gathered for the occasion and expressed her pride in the school's record.

Among those in attendance were Mr. W. R. Read, M.L.A., and Mrs. Read, and the headmaster of the senior school (Mr. L. Atkinson). Guests were received by the senior assistant at the school (Miss L. Green).

LIST OF REFERENCES USED

BOOKS

Susannah Thompson, *Beyond Matta Gerup: a history of Victoria Park*, Town of Victoria Park, 2012.

The Western Australian Directories [Wise's] 1936 – 1946.

NEWSPAPERS

Various Western Australian newspapers on Trove from 1912 to 1947, as listed in Attachment Four

WEBSITES

<http://miasbakery.com.au/the-mias-bakery-story/>

Metropolitan Cemeteries Board Records at <http://www2.mcb.wa.gov.au/>

<https://australianfoodtimeline.com.au/oslo-lunch/>

The Education Circular, Western Australia WA State School Teachers 1900-1980 at <https://www.carnamah.com.au/teachers?keyword=Victoria+Park&page=38>

William (Bill) Lloyd Bickerton, was born in 1938, one of three children of James Lloyd Bickerton and his wife Dorothy Jean Nugent. They married in Claremont in 1936, subsequently opening a small delicatessen shop in Albany Highway, Victoria Park.

The family then moved to 39a Sussex Street, remaining there throughout the years of the Second World War. Although enlisted in the Army, James Bickerton suffered lung and respiratory problems. He trained in the manufacture of munitions, becoming a supervisor at Welshpool munitions factory and built a house in Thomas Street, Queens Park. The family moved there in 1945.

Bill Bickerton started school at East Victoria Park Infants School going on to East Victoria Park Primary School and spent his high school years at Kent Street, travelling by bicycle or bus from Queens Park. He had an apprenticeship with Tomlinson's Steel that was followed by a varied and distinguished career, taking him to many parts of the world. A precis of his career can be found at Attachment Three.

Family background and the initial move to Victoria Park are discussed in the interview. Family life and childhood at 39a Sussex Street in the stringent war years are covered in some detail. With many men away at the war, those living in Sussex Street were predominantly women and children; there are word pictures of the house, garden, neighbours and the streetscape.

Interview – 1:44:38

