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Full transcript of an interview with

HERBERT STANDISH

on 28 August, 11 & 25 September & 9 October 1990

By Beth M. Robertson

Recording available on CD

NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPT

This transcript was created by the J. D. Somerville Oral History Collection of the State Library. It conforms to the Somerville Collection's policies for transcription which are explained below.

Readers of this oral history transcript should bear in mind that it is a record of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The State Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the interview, nor for the views expressed therein. As with any historical source, these are for the reader to judge.

It is the Somerville Collection's policy to produce a transcript that is, so far as possible, a verbatim transcript that preserves the interviewee's manner of speaking and the conversational style of the interview. Certain conventions of transcription have been applied (ie. the omission of meaningless noises, false starts and a percentage of the interviewee's crutch words). Where the interviewee has had the opportunity to read the transcript, their suggested alterations have been incorporated in the text (see below). On the whole, the document can be regarded as a raw transcript.

Abbreviations: The interviewee's alterations may be identified by their initials in insertions in the transcript.

Punctuation: Square bracket [ ] indicate material in the transcript that does not occur on the original tape recording. This is usually words, phrases or sentences which the interviewee has inserted to clarify or correct meaning. These are not necessarily differentiated from insertions the interviewer or by Somerville Collection staff which are either minor (a linking word for clarification) or clearly editorial. Relatively insignificant word substitutions or additions by the interviewee as well as minor deletions of words or phrases are often not indicated in the interest of readability. Extensive additional material supplied by the interviewee is usually placed in footnotes at the bottom of the relevant page rather than in square brackets within the text.

A series of dots, ... indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

Spelling: Wherever possible the spelling of proper names and unusual terms has been verified. A parenthesised question mark (?) indicates a word that it has not been possible to verify to date.

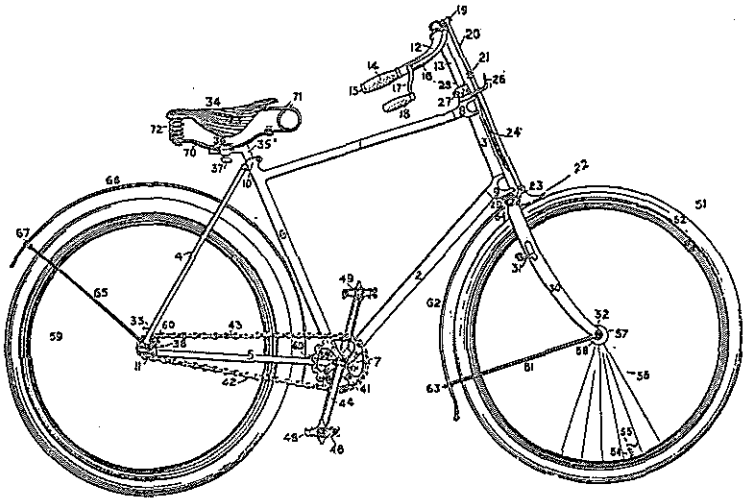
Typeface: The interviewer's questions are shown in **bold print**.

Discrepancies between transcript and tape: This proofread transcript represents the authoritative version of this oral history interview. Researchers using the original tape recording of this interview are cautioned to check this transcript for corrections, additions or deletions which have been made by the interviewer or the interviewee but which will not occur on the tape. See the Punctuation section above.) Minor discrepancies of grammar and sentence structure made in the interest of readability can be ignored but significant changes such as deletion of information or correction of fact should be, respectively, duplicated or acknowledged when the tape recorded version of this interview is used for broadcast or any other form of audio publication.

Bert Standish, 1991

The Standish Family c1924 photographed in the back yard of their Phillips Street home. Back row l-r: Alf, Minnie, Ted, Bill, Dot, Roy. Front row l-r: Bert, Mother (Catherine), Father (Robert), Vi and Fred. The trellis used as a training aid is visible.

Anatomy of the Bicycle.

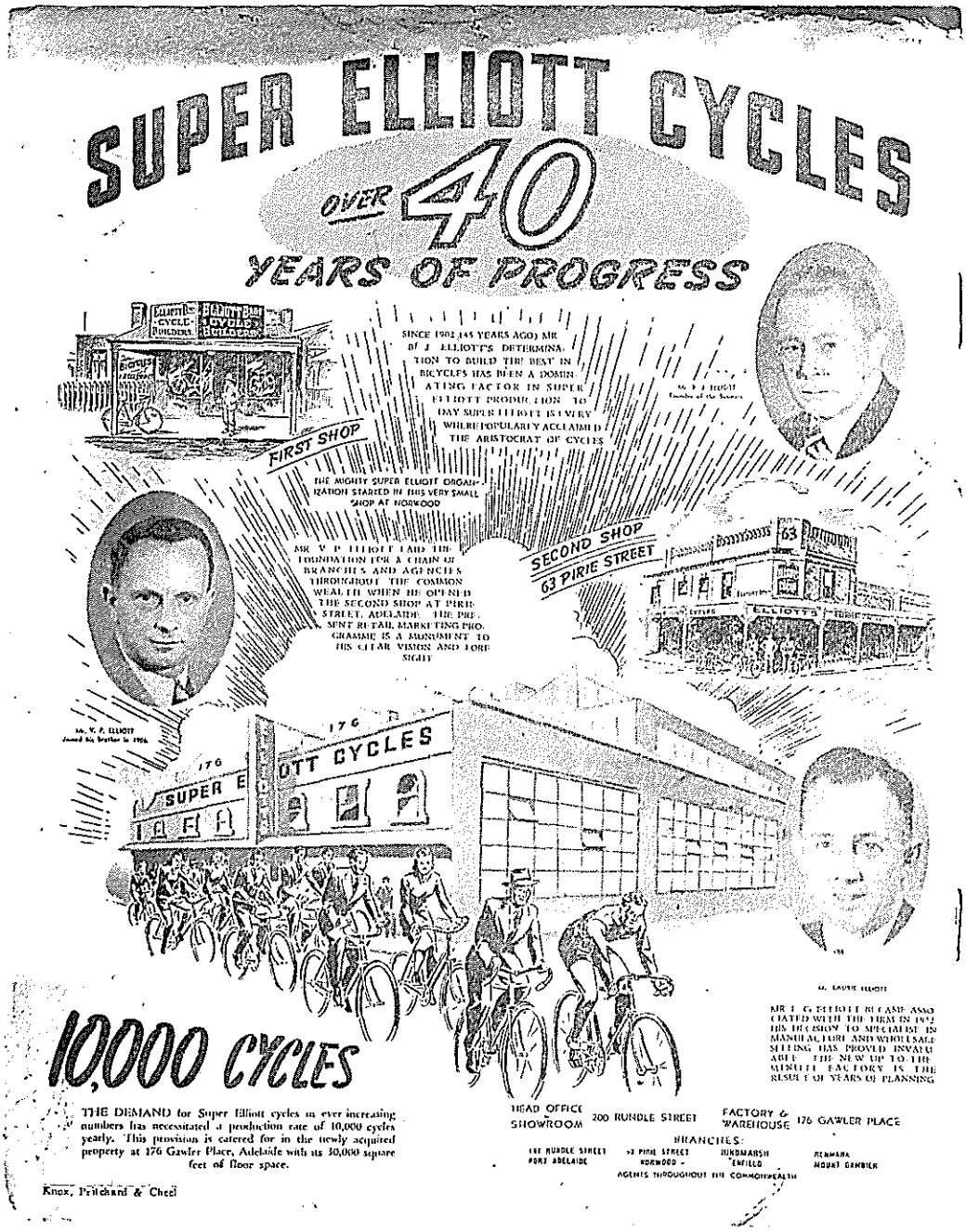


The following caption accompanied this illustration, which appeared in a newspaper some time after the introduction of the modern Safety.

This description applies to an ordinary diamond frame wheel. There are many extra attachments, and different makers have different ways of putting a wheel together, so that they may differ in one or two minor details. The description given, however, is in the main correct. It includes mud-guards and their fittings, which are used but little here, but are on all wheels made in England. They are used generally on drop-frame wheels in this country.

1. Upper main tube.
2. Lower main tube.
3. Front frame tube.
4. Back stays.
5. Back forks.
6. Centre stay.
7. Crank bracket. Contains cones at outer ends, crank axle, with ball-bearings and adjustment clip bolt.
8. Upper ball head race, or cup.
9. Lower ball head race, or cup.
10. Saddle post adjustment clip.
11. Back fork end.
12. Handle-bar.
13. Handle-bar stem.
14. Handle.
15. Ferrule, or nickel tip.
16. Brake lever.
17. Brake lever crank.
18. Brake lever handle.
19. Brake plunger connecting bolt.
20. Brake plunger.
21. Brake plunger adjustment nut.
22. Brake shoe.
23. Brake shackles, bolts and nuts.
24. Brake spring.
25. Handle-bar clip and ball head cone.
26. Lamp bracket.
27. Lock nut for handle-bar clip.
28. Ball head adjusting nut.
29. Front fork crown, with brake lug in front.
30. Fork sides, right and left.
31. Coasters.
32. Fork ends.
33. Step.
34. Saddle.
35. Saddle post.
36. Saddle clip.
37. Set screw.
38. Chain adjustment bolt.
39. Crank axle.
40. Detachable sprocket wheel.
41. Sprocket bolts.
42. Chain.
43. Detachable link in chain.
44. Crank.
45. Cotter pin nut and washer for detachable crank on other side of machine.
46. Pedal.
48. Pedal pin.
49. Nut and washer.
51. Steering wheel.
52. Tire.
53. Rim.
54. Air valve.
55. Valve cap.
56. Spokes.
57. Hub, which comprises outside shell with bushes, axle, and ball bearings.
58. Washers for fixing to forks.
59. Driving wheel.
60. Driving wheel hub.
61. Front mud-guard stays.
62. Front mud-guard.
63–4. Front mud-guard screws.
65. Back mud-guard stays.
66. Back mud-guard.
67. Back mud-guard screws.
69. Back mud-guard screws.
70. Saddle frame.
71. Front saddle spring.
72. Rear saddle spring.
73. Leather top, with tension adjustment screw in front, underneath.

The `modern Safety' bicycle, as developed in the 1880s. See illustration following p. 178 depicting the typical bicycle of the 1970s. (from Wheels and Wheeling: The Smithsonian Cycle Collection by S H Oliver and D H Berkebile, Washington, 1974)



Back cover of Super Elliott catalogue, Adelaide, 1948, showing Vic, B J and Laurie Elliott

FRAME SIZES.

Frame sizes alter notoriously with the prevailing fashions. A short while ago, it was considered the "thing" to have it as small as possible. Nineteen and 20 in. frames were all the vogue and "As little bicycle as possible" was the parrot cry. The idea was that a small frame was lighter and more rigid and therefore faster. Experience, however, taught that they were very erratic in their running and steering over anything like a bumpy surface, while the head bearings simply would not stay properly adjusted. The result is that the pendulum is now swinging the other way and frames of anything up to 24 in. are becoming increasingly popular. Frame size, by the way, is the distance from the centre of the bottom bracket to the centre of the seat lug measuring along the seat tube. Hence, the inside length of the rider's leg must always be the deciding factor in determining his frame size. For example, a 5 ft. 6 in. person would probably find it difficult, if not impossible, to get a comfortable position on anything bigger than a 20 in. frame. A 6 ft. 3 in. rider on the other hand would require an excessive amount of seat pillar and handlebar extension on a similar size. The larger the frame the heavier the machine, of course, but there is no doubt that the longer "head" is conducive to steadier running and stering. Besides, a very long seat pillar is bound to whip sideways when the rider is really thrusting. Frame size, then, is a purely personal matter, but no rider should require one bigger than 24 in.

The frame is by far the most important part of the bicycle. On its rigidity, correctness of design, and construction depends the safety of the rider. The size and shape of the frame has a decided influence on the running of the bicycle over bumpy or rough surfaces and, hence, on the comfort of the rider. If it is out of track it makes the machine a positive death-trap on wet, greasy roads, besides causing the tyres to wear quickly and unevenly. In fact, a study of one's tyres will soon indicate whether one's machine is in track or not.

It is a cardinal mistake to have a frame made of such light tubing that there is a loss of strength and rigidity. The frame is a dead weight, not a moving weight, and consequently a pound or two extra weight in the tubes does not matter very much. Some well-known riders even go to the extent of having liners put inside the tubes where they join on to the bottom bracket and consider that the extra weight is more than compensated by the total absence of any "whip." In this connection we consider that far too much importance is placed by the average clubman on the filing down of the lugs. It is a distinct advantage to have the lugs filed to fit and a neatly filed and cut away lug is a delight to behold and an indication that care and craftsmanship has been employed in the building. But they can be filed too much, and we have seen frames that have "gone" at the lugs for no other reason.

GEAR TABLES.

½-inch pitch					1-inch pitch				
No. of Teeth on Front Chain Wheel	No. of Teeth on Back Sprocket.				No. of Teeth on Front Chain Wheel	No. of Teeth on Back Sprocket.			
	14	16	18	20		7	8	9	10
40	80	70	62	56	20	80	70	62	56
42	84	73	65	59	21	84	73	65	59
44	88	77	68	62	22	88	77	68	62
46	92	80	72	64	23	92	80	72	64
48	96	84	75	67	24	96	84	75	67
52	104	91	81	73	26	104	91	81	73

A Gear to suit any Cycle or District.

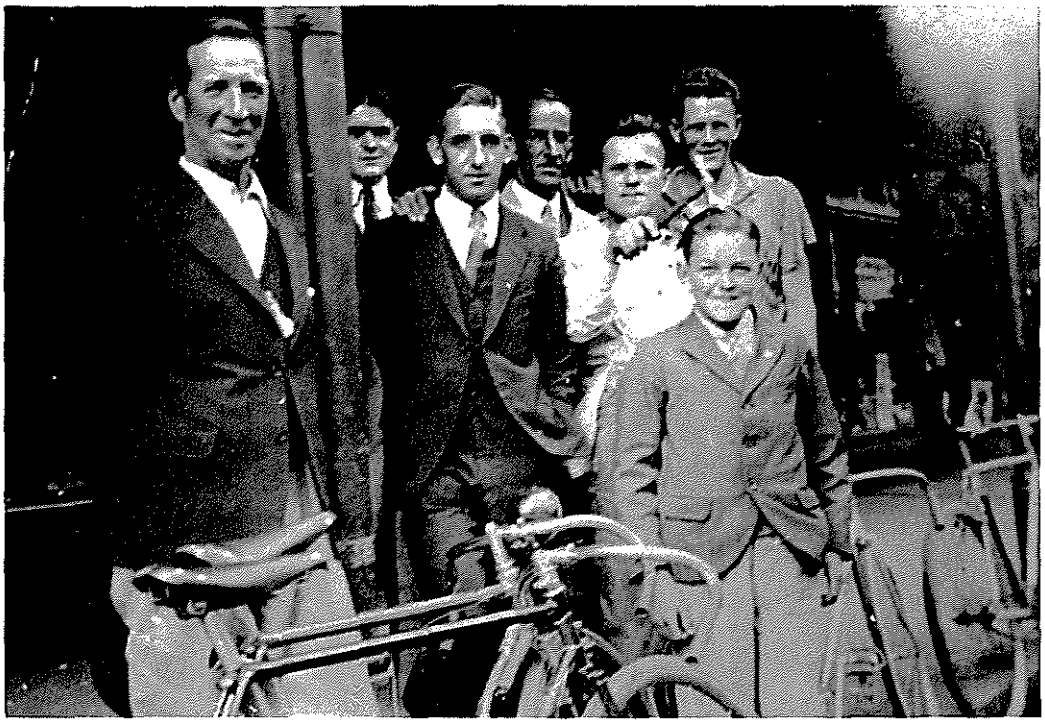
We build up to Quality, not down to Price.

Gear Tables (from Bullock Cycles Ltd Catalogue, Adelaide, 1939-40)

Bert Standish after winning the Dunn Sash, 1926, at a meeting of the Mount Gambier Cycling and Athletic Club. Mr Dunn, who donated the sash, ran the local piecart

Cyclists at Thebarton Oval, Easter Saturday, 1925. Bert Standish is standing front row centre with arms folded. Note that the cyclists' names are not in the correct order, and some are spelled incorrectly

The start of Bert Standish's second to last race, Whyalla, 1945. Bert is the second cyclist from the right. His starter is Jack Cockshell from Terowie. The winner, Bangtel (?), is third from right



Elliott Bros employees outside the shop at 147 Rundle Street. From l to r: ?, Lyell Rogers, Bert Standish (manager), Monty Haywood (debt collector), Andy Anderson (mechanic), Cyril O'Leary and `Chips' (messenger boy)

PAGE 5

Event No. 19—

Birdwood Park Open Mile—Final.

To Start at 4.10.

1st..... 3rd.....

2nd..... Time.....

Event No. 20—FIRE BRIGADE EVENT.

Two-Men Marshall. To Start at 4.25.

First.....

Event No. 21—

Casterton Austral—FINAL.

To Start at 4.40.

1st..... Time.....

2nd..... 3rd.....

Event No. 22—RELAY RACE. Teams of Four.

FINAL. To Start at 4.50.

1st.....

2nd.....

Event No. 23—

C.C.C. Open Five-Mile Scratch Race, of £10.

First £5; Second £2; Third £1. Lap Prizes amounting to £2. To Start at 5 o'clock.

30 P. Badenoch	2 H. C. Standish
15 A. S. Bailey	24 M. Peden
7 T. B. Saunders	3 R. J. Buchanan
3 J. R. Bawden	10 A. Marks
30 H. Kuhl	29 A. Ilsley
11 L. Dethmore	8 E. Deane
12 J. Blair	14 H. B. Cameron
17 D. Cameron	46 A. Mott
28 A. Courtney	4 R. McLeod
1 C. Liddle	9 G. A. McLeod
5 L. C. Stevens	33 F. Fisher
21 J. Fisher	22 F. R. Gove
35 A. Vorwerk	51 E. Toohey
50 L. Tricke	

1st.....

2nd.....

3rd.....

Time.....

PAGE 6

CYCLISTS' NAMES AND NUMBERS.

1 Liddle C.	27 Richardson, P.
2 Standish, H. C.	28 Courtney, A.
3 Bawden, R. J.	29 Ilsley, A.
4. McLeod, R.	30 Badenoch, F.
5 Stevens, L. C.	31 Smith, S. A.
6 Buchanan, R. J.	32 Norris, V.
7 Saunders, T. B.	33 Fisher, F.
8 Deane, E.	34 Campbell, W.
9 McLeod, G. A.	35 Vorwerk, A.
10 Marks, A.	36 Lehane, F.
11 Dethmore, L.	37 O'Neill, T. B.
12 Blair, J.	38 Hein, L.
13 Baxter, C.	39 Kuhl, H.
14 Cameron, H. B.	40 Hinton, J.
15 Bailey, A. S.	41 Smith, R.
16 McDonald, H.	42 Vickery, R. M.
17 Cameron, D.	43 Brown, J.
18 McDonald, K.	44 Smith, V.
19 Mason, H. R.	45 Cook, S.
20 Atchison, E.	46 Mott, A.
21 Fisher, J.	47 Durbidge, H.
22 Gove, F. R.	48 Sealey, C.
23 Lynch, L.	49 Baugh, A.
24 Peden, M. S.	50 Tricke, L.
25 Cox, C.	51 Toohey, E.
26 Brant, A.	

Grand Palais at Night.

"Casterton News" Print.

CASTERTON CYCLING CLUB

— GRAND —

INAUGURAL CARNIVAL

At the ISLAND PARK,

Saturday, March 3, 1928

At 2 P.M.

OFFICIALS:

Referee—A. J. M. Hocking.
Stewards—W. S. Peden and H. Cox.
Judges—Q. H. L. Pentland, Chris Miller, R. McCallum
Starter—W. R. McLean. Assistant—A. Haig.
Timekeeper—S. J. Fry.
Handicapper—J. Cross (L.V.W. Official).
Lap Scorer—W. E. Clayfordson. Assistant—E. J. Ley.
Scratching and Penalty Steward—J. R. Bryan.
Training Shed Stewards—L. Meagher and N. Menzel.
Number Steward—J. Chapman.
Umpires—J. R. Bryan, G. Bullen, F. Osborne, J. Dorward, J. Lamberne.
Clerk of Course—L. Norwood.
Hon. Secretary—Chas. McFarlane.

Official Programme

SIXPENCE.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

1. The decision of the Judges shall be final in all cases.

2. The public will not be allowed inside the arena.

3. All competitors for cycling events must pass the Judges to show their colors and numbers before starting, in order to avoid confusion.

4. All competitors must come to the post on the ringing of the bell, or sound of the bugle, and races will be started regardless of absentees.

5. The Committee reserve the right to revise any heat before the start

6. All protests to be handed, in writing, to the Secretary within 15 minutes of the finish of the race. Protests to be accompanied with a fee of 5/, such

PAGE 2

fee to be retained by the Committee if protest be deemed frivolous.

7. The right is reserved of altering this programme or of postponing the meeting in the event of the weather proving unfavorable, or other causes; or withdrawing any event should the entries for such not be sufficient in the opinion of the Committee.

8. Scratchings to be handed to Scratching Steward five minutes before time of heat or final.

9. The "Home Stretch" is from the Blue Flag, and riders are warned to conform to racing rules regarding same.

10. L.V.W. Rules strictly adhered to.

Glenelg Encourage Mile, of £8.

First £5; Second £2; Third £1. First two in each heat to start in final at 3.5 p.m.

Event No. 1—
First Heat at 2 p.m.

	Yds.
12 J. Blair	50
17 D. Cameron	70
23 L. Lynch	90
27 P. Richardson	90
34 W. Campbell	100
37 T. B. O'Neill	110
45 S. Cook	130
48 C. Sealey	150

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 2—
Second Heat at 2.5.

	Yds.
13 C. Baxter	60
16 K. McDonald	80
25 C. Cox	90
28 A. Courtney	90
50 L. Tricke	100
36 F. Lehane	110
43 J. Brown	120
44 V. Smith	120

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 3—
Third Heat at 2.10

	Yds.
14 H. B. Cameron	60
19 H. R. Mason	80
26 A. Brant	90
31 S. A. Smith	100
40 J. Hinton	110
41 R. Smith	120
46 A. Mott	140
47 H. Durbidge	140

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 4—
Fourth Heat at 2.15.

	Yds.
16 H. McDonald	60
20 E. Atchison	80
24 M. Peden	90
32 V. Norris	100
35 A. Vorwerk	110
42 R. Vickery	120
49 A. Baugh	150

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 5—FIRE BRIGADE EVENT.

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Birdwood Park Open Mile, of £12.

First £6; Second £3; Third £1. First two men in each heat to compete in the final at 4.10.

Event No. 6—
First Heat at 2.35

	Yds.
1 C. Liddle	scr.
6 R. J. Buchanan	60
51 E. Toohey	70
12 J. Blair	80
15 A. S. Bailey	90
22 F. R. Gove	110
28 A. Courtney	110
34 W. Campbell	120
36 F. Lehane	130
39 H. Kuhl	130

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 7—
Second Heat at 2.40

	Yds.
2 H. C. Standish	scr.
5 L. C. Stevens	40
7 T. B. Saunders	60
16 H. McDonald	90
21 J. Fisher	110
29 A. Ilsley	120
50 L. Tricke	120
35 A. Vorwerk	130
38 L. Hein	130
41 R. Smith	140

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 8—
Third Heat at 2.45

	Yds.
3 R. J. Bawden	scr.
8 E. Deane	60
9 G. A. McLeod	70
11 L. Dethmore	80
19 H. R. Mason	100
23 L. Lynch	110
37 T. B. O'Neill	130
45 S. Cook	150

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 9—
Fourth Heat at 2.50.

	Yds.
4 R. McLeod	scr.
10 A. Marks	70
20 E. Atchison	100
18 K. McDonald	100
24 M. Peden	110
25 C. Cox	110
30 F. Badenoch	120
40 J. Hinton	130
47 H. Durbidge	150

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 10—RELAY RACE. Teams of Four.
First Heat to Start at 2.55.

Event No. 11—

Glenelg Encourage Mile—Final.

To Start at 3.5.

1st..... 2nd.....

3rd..... Time.....

PAGE 4

CASTERTON AUSTRAL, of £27.

TWO MILES.

First £20; Second £5; Third £2. First two in each heat to start in final at 4.40.

Event No. 13—
First Heat at 3.15

	Yds.
2 H. C. Standish	scr.
7 T. B. Saunders	90
9 G. A. McLeod	110
15 A. S. Bailey	140
22 F. R. Gove	185
29 A. Ilsley	200
31 S. A. Smith	200
38 L. Hein	220
42 R. Vickery	235

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 14—
Second Heat at 3.25.

	Yds.
3 R. J. Bawden	scr.
8 E. Deane	90
51 E. Toohey	100
12 J. Blair	125
17 D. Cameron	135
21 J. Fisher	185
30 F. Badenoch	200
39 H. Kuhl	220
43 J. Brown	235

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 15—
Third Heat at 3.35.

	Yds.
1 C. Liddle	scr.
6 R. J. Buchanan	90
13 C. Baxter	140
19 H. R. Mason	170
23 L. Lynch	185
26 A. Brant	185
34 W. Campbell	200
50 L. Tricke	200
44 V. Smith	235

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 16—
Fourth Heat at 3.45.

	Yds.
4 R. McLeod	90
11 L. Dethmore	125
14 H. B. Cameron	140
20 E. Atchison	170
24 M. Peden	185
25 C. Cox	185
32 V. Norris	200
40 J. Hinton	220
46 A. Mott	250

1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Event No. 17—
Fifth Heat at 3.55.

	Yds.
5 L. C. Stevens	65
10 A. Marks	110
16 H. McDonald	140
18 K. McDonald	170
27 P. Richardson	185
33 F. Fisher	200
41 R. Smith	235
47 H. Durbidge	250

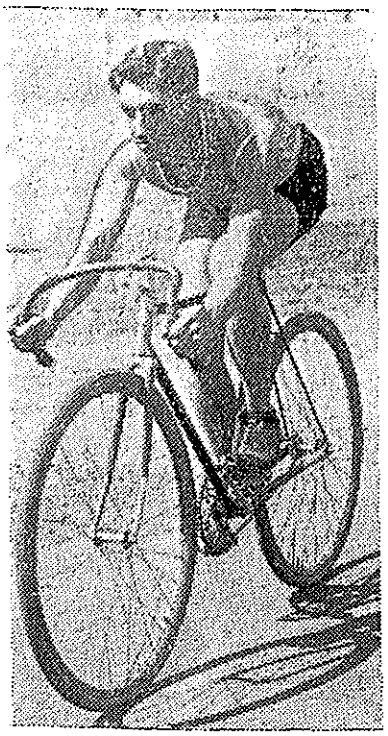
1st.....

2nd.....

Time.....

Programme of Casterton Cycle Club Inaugural Carnival, 3 March 1928

HOME AGAIN.



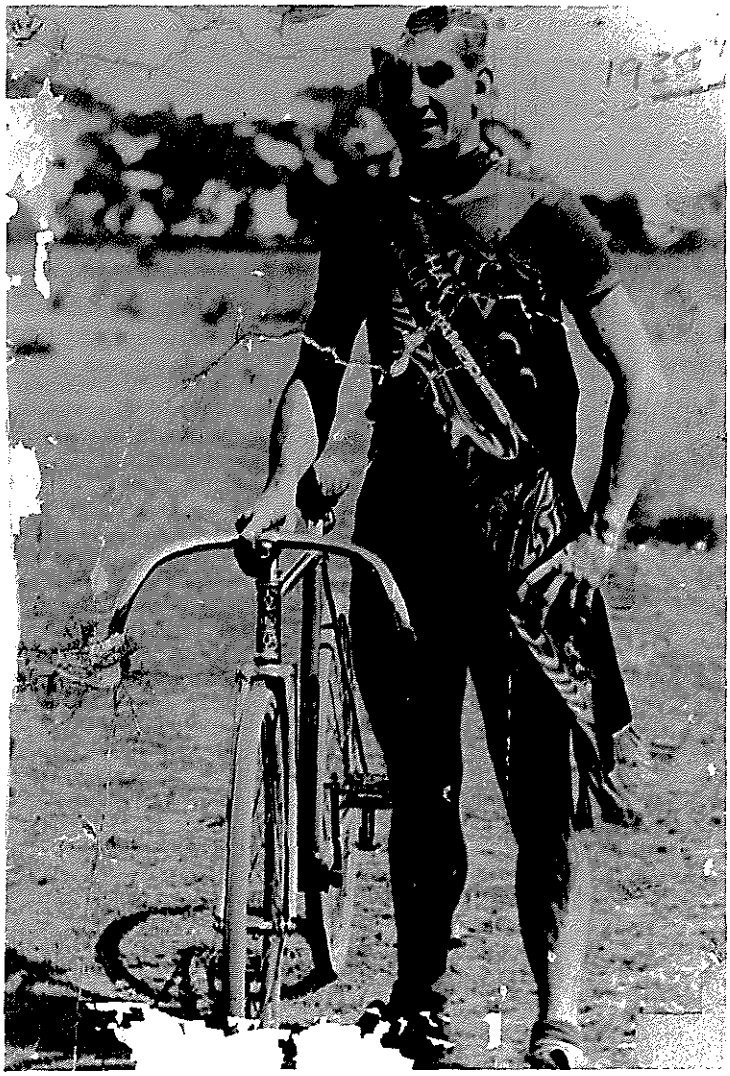
BERT STANDISH,
brilliant S.A. wheelman, who recently made a successful tour of the South-East.

30-3-1928

SUCCESSFUL TOUR OF SOUTH-EAST.

Bert Standish, the well-known S.A. cyclist, has just returned from a successful tour of the South-eastern district. Casterton was also visited during his sojourn, and at that place he was opposed to some of the Victorian top-notchers. Pitted against a team of five Victorians, Bert gave a good account of himself, securing second in the Scratch Race against a field of 27 starters. The winner was L. C. Stevens, who pulled off the big Austral Wheel Race in Melbourne last year. At the Electric Light Meeting at Mount Gambier he secured a third place from 5 yards, and conceded 70 yards to the limit man in a field of 29. The race was won by S. Dennison, with the local champion, J. R. Bawden, occupying second place. On the same night a series of Match Races were conducted, with Bert Standish pitted against J. R. Bawden, with the result that Bert cleaned up two out of the three races, and was declared the winner of the Match Race. At the following meeting he won the 5 Mile Scratch Race, with J. R. Bawden again taking second place to the Adelaide boy.

Bert Standish also holds the Grass Track Record for the Motor Paced Mile, in 1 min. 52 secs. Good work, Bert. Keep it up, and let the South-easterners and Victorians know that Adelaide is still about the place.

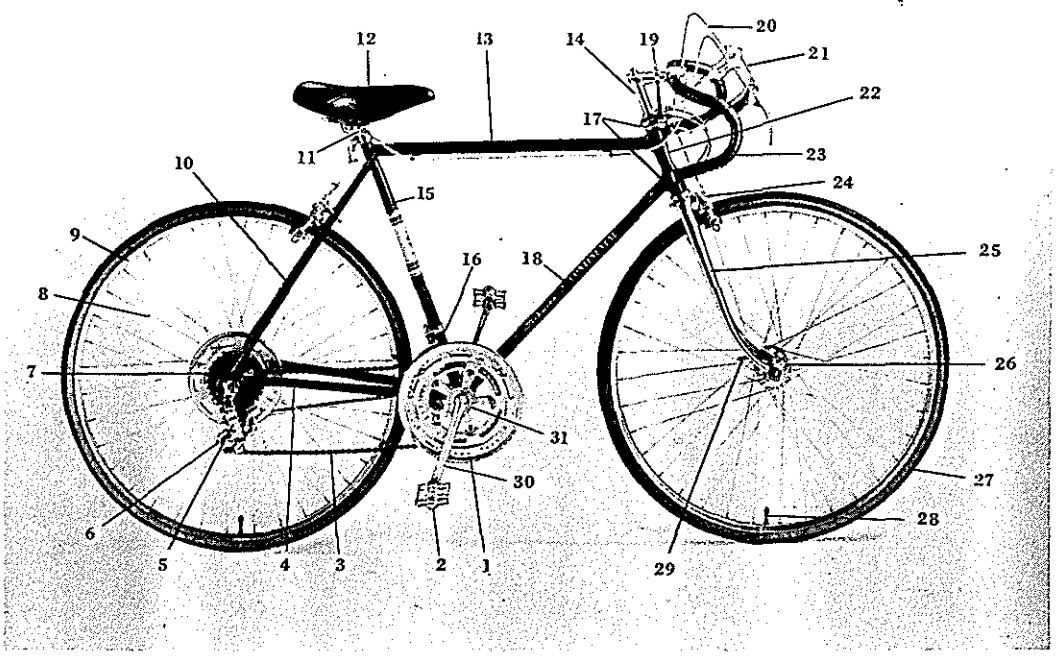


Bert Standish after winning the half mile race at a meeting of the Kilkenny Amateur Cycling Club, 1935

Masie and Bert Standish, Sydney 1952

Bert's Bike Shop, 236 Unley Road, Unley, 1963

Bert Standish riding for recreation. Top: visiting friends at Glenelg c1947. Bottom: a holiday trip to Melbourne c1952



For purposes of comparison with the early diamond-frame Safety, the nomenclature of the 1971 Schwinn 10-speed Continental is shown. Photo from Schwinn Bicycle Co.

1. Chainwheel (or front sprocket)
2. Pedal
3. Chain
4. Chainstay
5. Rear *derailleur*
6. *Derailleur* tension roller
7. Freewheel gear cluster
8. Spoke
9. Rim
10. Seat stay
11. Seat post
12. Saddle (or seat)
13. Top tube
14. Handlebar stem
15. Seat mast (or tube)
16. Front *derailleur*
17. Headset (top and bottom)
18. Bottom tube (or down tube)
19. Gearshift lever
20. Brake cable
21. Brake lever
22. Steering head
23. Handlebars
24. Caliper brake
25. Fork
26. Hub (high-flange type)
27. Tire
28. Valve
29. Quick-release lever
30. Crank
31. Bottom bracket, or crank hanger (behind sprocket)

Typical men's bicycle of the 1970s. See illustration following p. 20 depicting the original `modern Safety' bicycle of the 1880s

Cycle firm opens its 7th. store

Standish Family 22 feature

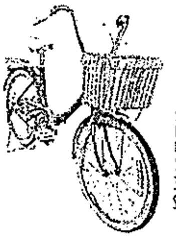
For almost 30 years the Standish family has been assisting South Australian cyclists in choosing bicycles and assuring them of a reliable after-sales service.

Three generations are actively involved in the Standish Cycle Company which now has seven stores with the recent opening of their newest store at Noarlunga Colonnades.

KLEMZIG

First in South Australia

THE NEW STANDISH FAMILY 22



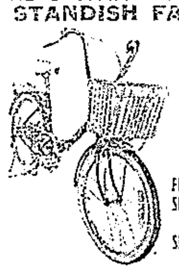
APPROVED TO AUSTRALIAN STANDARD 1927

SPECIAL Introductory Price
SHIMANO
3 SPEED $159
Shimano
Coaster $149

ROGER STANDISH
348 NORTH EAST ROAD, KLEMZIG
Phone 261 1696 (Bus Stop 23)

MILE END

THE EXCITING NEW
STANDISH FAMILY 22



APPROVED TO AUSTRALIAN STANDARD 1927

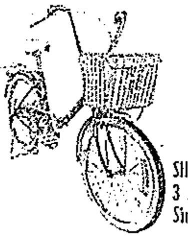
FITTED WITH
Shimano
3 speed $159
SINGLE SPEED $149

GRAMHAM STANDISH
199 Henley Beach Rd., MILE END
PHONE 43 5435

UNLEY

Proud to introduce

THE STANDISH FAMILY 22



APPROVED TO AUSTRALIAN STANDARD 1927

SHIMANO EQUIPPED
3 SPEED $159
Single Speed $149

STANDISH BIKE SHOP
236 UNLEY ROAD, UNLEY
Phone 71 9733

Family tradition of top service

Family cycling has become increasingly popular in South Australia with the desire for healthy exercise free from the rigors usually associated with fitness and at the same time a cyclist enjoys fresh air and the countryside.

With family cycling in mind, Standish Cycles of South Australia have released a new model bicycle designed to suit a variety of ages.

The new family bicycle is complete with a rear luggage carrier and an exclusive specially designed front basket.

Two models are available.

For the younger cyclist there is a single-speed coaster brake version, and for the more eager cyclist who wants to make life a bit easier there is the Shimano 3-speed model.

It needs no special ability to operate and the gears can be changed even when stationary. This is a great boom for town riding.

The new Shimano 3-speed has a simplified design — cartridge type — loading in a cassette form for easier maintenance.

With safety in mind, Standish cycles have taken particular care during manufacture to adhere to the requirements of the Australian standard No 1927 under a scheme of supervision and control.

This has meant, among other things, the testing of frame strength, capping the ends of the mudguards with plastic and the fitting of cats' eye reflectors and a bell with a special plastic lever knob.

The owner of a new Standish family cycle receives an owners' manual in a wallet with servicing and touring information.

Standish cycles are proud to have been the first in Australia to apply an Australian Standards Mark No 1927 to a bicycle.

Standish Cycles have received their licence from the Standards Association of Australia.

It will apply to their approved model bicycle, the Australian Standard Mark No 1927.

The Standish 22 Family Cycle is the first model to receive the Standards Mark.

The Australian Standard No 1927 was considered necessary because of the large amount of faulty bicycles and poor assembly methods used in the manufacture of bicycles, most noticeable in the eastern States of Australia.

Federal Parliament passed legislation making it mandatory for all bicycles to comply with the Australian Standard before January 1, 1980 but because of different interpretations of the Standard and some minor technical problems, an extension was granted until October, 1930.

Standish Cycles tackled these minor problems and overcame them one by one, enabling them to obtain the licence to apply the Australian Standards Mark to their approved bicycles.

Although the cost of testing a bicycle is $625 for each model, Standish Cycles will still be more competitively priced than many of the other brands from larger companies as they plan to absorb much of the added expense in the interest of safety for cyclists.

The general purpose of the "Australian Standards Mark" is to provide an independent assurance, reinforcing the claim by the manufacturer, that articles comply with an Australian Standard.

The scheme under which Mark is applied is administered by the Standards Association of Australia. It includes regular audit inspection and testing, but with emphasis on the maintenance of an adequate system of quality control by the manufacturer.

The Standish family cycle

Beat the petrol crisis

One answer to the petrol problems is pedal power — and what better way to get around than on a Selecta 12.

The new model cycle, released by Standish Brothers, of South Australia, bicycle importers, manufacturers and wholesalers, has a number of exciting new features.

It has a completely new bicycle gear-changing mechanism, unique to Standish in SA, according to a company spokesman.

"The Centeron Self-Centering Mechanism, by Shimano of Japan, is a revolutionary idea and its development disregards previous concepts of Derailleur gear changing," he said.

"With the design, they have been able to incorporate 12 gears instead of 10, with an extra sprocket on the rear wheel.

"This gives a higher gear ratio, which previously has been difficult to obtain."

Thus, pedalling is easier and need not be as fast.

Shimano's new Centeron Mechanism uses chain tension to automatically centre each gear change for you.

The result is faster, quieter, more precise shifting.

The Selecta 12's chain wheel, by Shimano, also has a number of outstanding features.

It is light, strong and easy to change. With clever engineering, only one screw holds the sprocket in place.

The bike is available in three colors, red, white and blue, all with a pearl fin[illegible]

STANDISH CYCLES LEAD THE WAY IN S.A.

APPROVED TO AUSTRALIAN STANDARD 1927

The new family cycle has been manufactured to comply with the requirements of the Australian Standard 1927 under a system of supervision, control and testing operated during manufacture in accordance with the certification mark scheme of the association under licence No. 537.

Following the remarkable success of the Standish Selecta 12 sports cycle, Standish cycles are proud to introduced their new family cycle with many new safety design features for 1980.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE
SHIMANO 3 Speed $159
SHIMANO COASTER $149

STANDISH CYCLES WEST LAKES MALL PH 356 5492
STANDISH NOARLUNGA COLONNADES PH [illegible]
CITY CYCLES 1[illegible] GAWLER PLACE ADELAIDE PH [illegible]

Newspaper advertisement (reduced size) for Standish Cycles, early 1980s

J D SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION, MORTLOCK
LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIANA: NO. OH101

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J D SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION, MORTLOCK
LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIANA: NO. OH101

Beth Robertson interviewing Mr Bert Standish in his home on 28 August 1990 for the Somerville Oral History Collection of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana. This is the first recording session and the interview focuses on his childhood and youth up until he entered the cycling racing and business world in 1923.[1]

TAPE 1 SIDE A

Well, if you could just start by telling me your full name.

Herbert Charles Standish.

What have you been known as?

Bert.

Have you ever had any nicknames?

No. When I was a kid they used to call me Dishy - Standish - as kids go to school. It was Dishy, but when I left school, well that went too. It was always Bert.

What about when you were in the racing game?

Always Bert - never known as anything else. See my initials would be H C Standish as you would see in some of those programmes, but Bert Standish - I was always known as Bert Standish. That's the reason that at the shop I made it 'Bert's Bike Shop'. So that was always that way.

Can you tell me the date of your birth?

Twentieth of June 1905 I was born. That's what I say but I was registered on 27th June 1905. Being born in the country, the family always said I was born on 20th June but evidently Father registered me on 27th June.

Where were you born?

At Hamley Bridge.

How long had the family been there?

There was three of us born there, so I should say roughly eight or ten years. That's judging by two years between us. There was my sister, then two years after there was me, and then there was two years after

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1. Note that Mr Standish has always had a persistent cough. Although often in evidence on the tape recordings, coughing has not been indicated in the transcript.

my younger brother, so that's six years, isn't it? Give a year or so either side. About ten. I should say about eight to ten years.

What was the reason for the family being at Hamley Bridge?

The railway. My father was in the railway. He was yard foreman or something else they called him. Of course Hamley Bridge in those days was a transport/trans-shipping station. They'd go as far as Hamley Bridge, then the branches would come away. Well they'd take it away from one station - - -. Take it off this track and put it on that track. So Hamley Bridge in those days, what I can make of it, was a sort of a junction.

What are some of your early memories as a little boy in Hamley Bridge?

Nothing. Yes. See there? [shows scar].

Yes, on your knee.

Do you know what that's caused through?

No, big scar.

And the shape of it? They always say that's bike riding. No. When I was three year old I fell over on a bit of a Nugget tin. See the impression of the Nugget tin.

The shoe polish?

The shoe polish tin. See how it goes around like that. But of course I don't suppose it was ever stitched, I don't remember much about it, but they took me down to the chemist or something and fixed it up. It was never stitched or anything. So I've had that scar all my life. They said that it might affect my knee as I got older, but I'm still going. Doesn't make any difference.

So how old were you when the family left Hamley Bridge?

Oh, I would have been about five - five or six. I never went to school at Hamley Bridge, so I started school when I come to Adelaide.

Do you remember the move down to Adelaide?

No. I can remember the house we lived in, but don't remember anything of shifting or anything else like that.

What was the reason for the move?

Oh, Father and the railway - railway shipment.

What did he come to when you came to Adelaide?

Who, my father?

Yes.

He was a signalman. He was in the - when he come here - he was a signalman in the signal station at the intersection of Mile End and Henley Beach Road, Mile End. He was there until he retired. So he was a - - -. No, no. Yes, he was a guard when he first come down here, that's right. He was a guard. Well then he graduated to a signalman.

What was your father's full name?

Robert George. R G Standish, yes.

What about your mother, what was her name?

Catherine Jane.

And her maiden name?

Phillips.

What did you know of her background?

Not a lot. She come out from Cornwall when she was three year old. She lived at Goodwood, and Dad lived at Thebarton and he used to go courting Mum from Thebarton to Goodwood and get chased home by the Goodwood mob. (laughs) So people were no different then to what they are today, or today as what they are then. But he used to have to go courting her at Goodwood - he had to go a roundabout way because the Goodwood mob wouldn't let the Thebarton mob come into the district.

You were saying last time we talked that you thought she'd done perhaps some tailoring or dressmaking?

Yes, she'd done a bit of tailoring. I don't know how much of it, but she was handy that way because us kids - see there was nine of us altogether - - -. Well from my end of the tail - see I'm on the tail end; there were only two after me - well Mum used to get Dad's old railway uniforms, cut them and pull them to pieces and make suits for us kids. But she was very handy with the needle and sewing like that, so there must have been some background of tailoring in her.

What sort of suits did they make? Were they comfortable to wear?

Short trousers - short trousers and, I don't know, sort of a blousie sort of a thing. I don't know. I haven't got any pictures of it.

Do you remember whether you felt badly about being in cut down clothes?

No. No, never thought anything of it. Of course they were more or less Depression days. See, that'd be more or less the start of the Depression days. See, well 1905 - that'd be 1910. Well, when she was cutting down for me, was five, say round about ten or eleven, well be about 1910.

Certainly in wartime too.

Yes, wartime and - - -. So that kept me out of the army, you see. I was too young for the first war and too old for the second one.

Let's talk a little bit about your mother and father. How would you describe your father? What sort of a personality?

A real good down to earth man. A real man. You couldn't say - - -. He was just what a father should be. He was always very proud of his family, and he used to - - -. Because I can remember, as we got older, he used to go - - -. You know, went out with my older brothers and they used to think they were all brothers. He's similar to me - carried his age well. But of course later years he had - a real asthmatic. Of course in those days there wasn't the treatment for asthma as what there is today. And of course that affected his later life. See, when I grew up with my father, he was very asthmatic. He was a different sort of a man you see. He couldn't do with me what he would have done with my older brothers. Because he could go around with my older brothers, as brothers, but with me, when it come with us younger ones, well, he was a sick man.

Did that affect his work?

Well, yes and no. He worked in his group. What I can remember mainly, in the signal cabin. They worked as a group and these other chaps would help him - shelter. No, he wasn't a fit man. Of course there wasn't the pensions and the handouts what they get today. If you were sick, you went to work. If you couldn't go to work, you stopped home - that's all about it. But he was a good hard working chap - very tall, but very devoted to his family. [break in recording]

We were talking about your father. Did he have to retire early because of ill health?

No, he struggled along till he was sixty-five.

What sort of a living do you think he made in terms of raising a family of nine?

Oh, real old fashioned father. As I said, he just worked for his family and that's it.

How would you describe the family in economic terms? Was it a bit of a struggle?

No. Although I more or less grew up in the Depression days, I knew nothing of the Depression. Dad was in constant work, Mum was a good housekeeper. If she made some jam, it was copper full of jam in the old copper. And she was a good cook, and the old wood stove was going all day, every day. She was a real fair dinkum old fashioned sort of mother.

You've mentioned of course that you're the seventh of nine children. Were your brothers grown up and away from home when you were a boy?

More or less. I don't remember a lot of them being home, although two of them would have been home, because I know the last place I've got much remembrance of was over in Southwark. When I look back it was like a rabbit warren. I used to sleep out in the front verandah and two of my brothers slept in one room - Alf and Bill - and my sisters, they lived, three of them, would sleep in another room, Mum and Dad in the next room. (laughs) But my eldest brother, I didn't see much of him at all in his young life, because he was in the railway and all over the place. My next eldest brother, he wasn't home much. I don't remember him being home at all when I was a kid. He was married and settled down. Well then Alf come along. Well I remember him because he didn't get married till later in life. He went to the Second World War and he never married until well after that. Next brother, well, I don't remember much of him being home. So from there on, well, only my sister - my eldest sister. Well she went away in the country working, so I didn't see a lot of her.

What was she doing?

Housework in the country. She was working for years, I can remember - - -. Yes, I can remember her, because she was the boss of the family. She was the one - she could put us all in order. But she worked for years with A W Barlow, the shoe people. She was there for a long while and they had some movement there, come to think of it, but she went away to the country, to Jamestown and from there she got married. But I didn't see a lot of her, only she was the oldest one of the lot and she used to keep us kids in order. She was the boss.

Let's talk a little bit more about the household. You're saying that you remember the Phillip Street house in Southwark quite well quite well. You were saying you moved down when you were four or five to Thebarton, living in Ross Street.

No, since then I've thought. First we come into - living in a house in - - -. What road is it? Beans Road. But we weren't there very long. How that's come back into my mind, my son, he's on the Thebarton Council now and he's asked me about similar to what you were saying there the other week. There's a house that we lived in when we first come down. It was on the corner of Dove Street and Beans Road. They're talking about making that into an Aboriginal house now, and it come up at the Council and he said, "Didn't you live over round there somewhere?" and I said, "Yes," I said. He asked me about it. Course I could remember then because it was a big house, because as I say there was a big family. There was a block of land alongside of it and just over the side of the road was old Richardson's pughole which today is - - -. What is it, Lady Gowrie Kindergarten Home or something? And the old Salvation Army that got burnt out a few months ago. It was right in amongst all that.

How long were you in that house?

Not very long I don't think. Then we shifted over to Ross Street and was there practically all my school days.

Tell me a bit about that house. Do you remember the number of it?

Number 3.

How would you describe the house in your memory?

Just an ordinary double fronted house - still there. It's still there.

What sort of a block did it stand on?

Oh, fairly big block - a big block. My brother, when he come back from the World War One, he had a fruit and vegetable business because his mother saved his money up, and he was a bit of a larrikin from what I could make of it. Could never keep a job, so when he come back, his mother had saved his money up and he bought a fruit and vegetable business as a covered in van with two horses, and he was horse mad. As I told you, he was the clerk of the course of the trots for years. So he had these horses. He always had horses - at least two horses - in the yard, and this covered in van, so that's how big the back yard was.

Were the horses stabled?

All stabled, yes. He generally had about three stables. He always had a spare horse. He'd have two for the van and one spare one.

What kind of a horse?

Just medium.

Medium draft?

Medium draft, yes - just solid horses. Of course that was my first job.

Well we'll talk about that later on. Did that leave you room for the family to use the backyard in any other ways?

Oh yes. As a matter of fact at the back of that block there was another big block, that was more or less an empty block for years, and we used to run our fowls out in there. We used to always get out in the back block as kids. Used to have to marshmallows - they'd be that high. Used to get out there. And behind that there was the Thebarton Catholic Boys' School, and of course the kids of the village, on our side, we'd get there and we'd have a go at the kids from the school at the back. (laughs) We'd always have an argument with the Catholic boys and the Thebarton school boys. (laughs)

What sort of things did you say to each other?

Oh well, nothing to say much, because we didn't get close enough. We used to use all my brother's old fruit up, pelting them with fruit. (laughs) But it was just kids playing, because then we'd only be about eight or ten or the likes of that. And then we used to get - - -. It

wasn't very far away from the Richardson's pughole. We used to spend a lot of time down the old pughole until they filled it up.

Was that considered a dangerous place to go?

No, it was a good place as far as kids were concerned. We used to get there and we used to play where they used to dry the bricks off. We used to run up and down the - - -. See they were big long sheds. We used to have races up and down the sheds. And of course it was fairly deep, until Burford's - - -. Burford's had a big fire in town and when they cleaned all the rubbish away from that, they put it in this pughole, and of course that messed us up to a certain extent. But it was a big pughole - it wasn't a small one. But it gradually got filled up. Of course they dug a lot of it out. They dug a lot of clay out of that pughole to lift the Port Road from the railway bridge up to Newmarket Bridge - the Newmarket Hotel. Where the dip used be, they took a lot out of those pugholes there - clay and dirt and rubbish there - and they put it there and lifted that road about four or five feet. They used to have a bypass round that while they were digging this big hole in this pughole and carting the dirt up there to lift the road.

I'd like to talk more about roads later on, because I think that's an important part of cycling - conditions of the roads. So we'll talk a bit more about that later on. But to talk a little bit more about your childhood home. You say the family ran chooks. Was that just for family use?

Oh, just out the yard there. We were just an ordinary family, but in those days, see, nearly everybody had half a dozen or more chooks.

What about fruit trees, vegetables?

Oh, generally had some fruit trees in the yard. But I don't know if we ever had vegetables - might have. See, when we shifted from there to Phillips Street when I was round fourteen - thirteen or fourteen - well that's how I spent my time in Ross Street from around about, say, six - six to thirteen or fourteen.

Is that the house you're remembering as a bit of a rabbit warren - the Ross Street one?

Yes.

Is that where you slept on the - - -.

Yes, it was only double - - -. No, no, Phillips Street one I slept on the front verandah.

What about Ross Street?

No, we had the kitchen - - -. Kitchen was there, one bedroom there and there was another bedroom there and there was another bedroom there and there was another bedroom there, and Mum and Dad's bedroom there.

So three back on one side?

Yes, all was one side. We were always comfortable. I wouldn't say we were classed as poor, but we weren't rich, but we struggled through. As I say, through the Depression days - - -. They talk about the Depression days. I don't remember the bad days, the Depression days. We were never short of food because, as I said, Dad had regular work and my brothers - my older brothers - well they were more or less established.

When you were at school, with your older brothers working, were they helping out? Like Alf, was he bringing money back into the house?

Oh yes, they must have. What I mean, it didn't worry me, but I suppose they'd pay their board and so forth, but that didn't interest me. All I was interested in - all we were interested in - we got a feed. And as I say, Mum was a good cook and she'd make a feed out of anything. Not like the women of today. If they haven't got everything laid on, they can't do anything. I often wonder how Mum used to get about - - -. We go to the supermarket and we get half a barrel load just for the two of us. I don't know how Mum would get on. Of course in those days the butcher would come to the house, the baker comes to the house, your grocer's shop was more or less on the corner, so when you wanted something you'd go and get it.

What were some of the sorts of meals you remember as your favourites, or as your mother's regular meals?

Well she was Cornish and she'd make Cornish pasties, and they'd be big ones. When Mum made Cornish pasties, she always made two for each of us, one to take to school and one to have for tea.

Was that something she'd cook every week?

Oh, I don't know. It used to come around occasionally. But, as I say, the stove, I know the stove was always going - woodstove because she had a - - -. And hot water was always laid on because she had a big cast iron sort of what you called fountain. It was a big thing about that big. [indicates] Well that was always full of water and was on the stove all the time - there was hot water. Turn the tap on and there was hot water. The eating was different. You know, you'd get stews and the likes of that, but you wouldn't get the meat you get here. I don't remember having chops or steak or anything like that. That sort of food was never thought of. It's a different way of living today. When I stop and think, I don't know in the hell they did live. (laughs) You know, well she'd go and - - -. I suppose in those days she'd buy a half a side of lamb. See the butcher'd come around with whatever you'd want. The same thing, the rabbit man'd come around selling the rabbits. Well, she'd buy three or four rabbits and cook them up.

Did you have a cellar? Was that part of the house?

No.

What would she be keeping the meat in? Would she have an icebox?

No, no icebox. (laughs)

But a meat safe?

I think later years she might have a meat safe, but you more or less cooked it as you got it. A meat safe come along after. I can remember even my early days of a marriage was a meat safe. So in my younger days, well I don't know how she kept the meat. But you more or less - - -. You went to the butcher's each day and got it each day.

Was this part of your household chores? Did you have to run those sorts of errands as a schoolboy?

Yes, my sisters did the washing up and the boys cleaned the yard up - cleaned the fowl house up, flower garden up, and anything like that. And kind of messages. Run the other way - if Mum wanted somebody to go this way, you run that way.

Of course one of the household staples is milk. Did you have your own cow?

No. No, there was a house just up the - - -. In Ross Street there was a house on the corner. It wasn't a long street. But there was a woman there, she used to have three or four cows. We used to go from there in the holidays - school holidays - we used to go from there over to what is now the brewery over in Southwark there, which was called the Walkerville Brewery in those days, and at one o'clock the old grains used to come down there - the old barley. They'd take all the goodness out of it. They'd come down. All the old dairymen used to be there with the horses and carts to get the grain. Well, this old lady used to give us threepence and we'd go over with a little old cart over there and get a bag of grain for her cows. We'd go over there. We had to be there by one o'clock when the grain come down and get your bagful of grain, but we'd get home about five o'clock - take all that time to get home. I think we used to get threepence.

Then of course there were a lot of paddocks there where she used to keep the cows out in the different paddocks and that. And people in those days too - a lot of people, particularly living near the Parklands - well, they used to leave their cow in the Parkland. They used to get a medallion from the council to hang around the necks. So much for leaving your cow in the park. The cow had to have this here big tin placard around its neck. You see people in the morning going up to get their cow, take it home and milk it and take it back to the park.

You mentioned the family did have chooks, and the working horses. Did you have other animals attached to the family?

No. Us kids had a few rabbits - white rabbits. That's where my eldest sister used to go crook. We used to take the rabbits inside and she used to go crook.

Were they as pets or were they destined for the pot?

No, no, pets.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A: SIDE B

Of course there was little shops on every corner in those days. See this little old lady used to have a shop across the road from us in Ross Street. When we went up to Phillips Street there was a butcher's shop one side and a grocer's shop another and a delicatessen down here.

See, they were dotted all round the place. Ross Street, as I say, there was an old lady. She used to serve bits and pieces of a night time or day time - any time. You'd go to old Mrs Foster and you'd get what you wanted there.

Was she the general store?

Oh, she was the store. Then just a few doors up there was another one. Then down around the corner there was another one. See, there was a lot of those little shops. What you couldn't get in one shop, you got in another. You wouldn't find a big shop anywhere - they were all little ones in those days.

Another thing that I wanted to ask you about. You mentioned when we were talking last time that you didn't know your father's parents.

No, never met them.

What about your mother's parents? Were they in the district?

Yes, they lived right in Thebarton - right in the middle of Thebarton.

What do you remember of them?

Not a lot. Our old Grandma was a real old - - -. What you see on the TV now. A real old Grandma, you know, with a scarf over her head and tottering around. She were never - - -. You don't remember her. I don't remember her as a woman that'd get ready and go to town or anything like that. She'd just sit around and poke around the home. My old grandfather, he used to work in the railway, but I didn't remember a lot of him, but he was a big tall - - -. See, well they come out from England in the early days.

Would your family go to them altogether to have a visit?

No. No, us kids'd used to go there and see Grandma and so forth and have a joke with her or something else. We used to play tricks on her.

Were they part of your household in any way? Did they come to you?

No. No, don't remember much about them. Just some of Mum's sisters or brothers might come occasionally, but not a lot. Well, there was no way of getting about. See, you had no motorcars and if you were lucky you had a horse and trap. See, there was no way of - - -. What I can remember now with her brothers and sisters and that, well, a couple

lived at Port Adelaide, another one lived over in Hindmarsh. Well, it was a long way to get to one another.

Did your parents have a horse and trap?

No.

So would they ever hire one or borrow one to get about?

No. How did they used up from - - -? I don't know how they used to get up from Ross Street. At Phillips Street the tram used to come right alongside the door, but at [Ross] Street I think you had to walk across to Henley Beach Road to catch a tram. It's a fair walk. See, so naturally you wouldn't go to town very often. When you come to think of it, I don't know the hell they ever got on. (laughs)

We talked a little bit about your father and how you remember him. What about your mother? How would you describe her character?

A real Mum.

Who was the disciplinarian? You've mentioned your older sister, but between your mother and father, who did the disciplining?

Oh, Dad I think, when he come home. If Mum says, "You're going to get a hiding when Dad come home," you got it. (laughs) See, Mum would never lay a hand on us, but if we were misbehaving ourselves, "When your father comes home I'll tell him". So when Dad came home we made ourselves scarce. But there was no viciousness in it at all. No disciplinarian, no hard stuff.

What sort of things would you get into trouble for?

Oh, anything. I don't know. I never got into a lot of trouble, only just messing about. Nothing the police would to come or anything like that. I remember when we shifted to Ross Street first, the people alongside of us thought, "Here's a family of boys coming - we're going to have big troubles". Anyhow, the old bloke there - old Mr Fisher - I remember one time he said something to somebody or other when he thought they were going to have trouble, he says he'd never found a better lot of boys. Because my elder brothers, they were all a stable type. There was no drinking. There was none of them that I know that was a real drinker. I suppose I was the biggest drunkard in the family and I don't drink. (laughs)

What about your father, did he take drink?

No. The only time - on pay day he might go up to the - - -. He had to go up to the railway station to get his wages. Well he might meet a mate and have a drink, but that's about all. And I remember we had a couple of parties, my brothers and that. One of them, Roy, played a pretty good game of football, and the lads from the football club would come around and they'd take the furniture out the room, and they had the old piano there, but never saw any beer. Never worried them. Because we was only kids, but there was none of the parties like it is now. They'd get there, they'd have all their games of whatever they were playing. They was all in together, the girls and the boys. Because at that time I suppose he'd be in his early twenties, mid-twenties. Well he was playing football and he was a fair sort of footballer. Well, they'd come around with their girlfriends and they'd have a bit of a party. But it was never anything like today.

Which club did he play for?

Welland - Welland Junior Football Club, and the Torrens Side Football Club. They were two Parkland teams. He never played the League, but he was a fairly prominent footballer in the Parkland football.

You were mentioning a little bit earlier how one of your brothers had a big interest in the trotting.

Yes, Alf.

What about putting a bet on things? Was that part of family life?

No. No, we - - -. The family was like me. I don't drink, don't smoke, don't gamble. You could say my family was the same. There was none of them gamblers. They might have a little bit here and there - my brother the trots. Everybody used to think that he knew everything about the trots and they'd all ask him what's going to win and he'd tell them the first horse that come to his head. (laughs) He used to say that. They'd come, "What do you think'll win, Alf?" "Oh, so and so has got a good chance." "Right, Alf Standish says that," away they'd go and back him. Then they'd come up and tell him, "Thanks Alf for putting me on a winner." "Which one did I tell you?" (laughs) He was a hard doer - he was a real hard master. But, no, I don't remember any of my brothers being drinkers or big smokers. Bill smoked but he tossed it

up, and Alf smoked, but Roy didn't and Ted didn't. As I say, we were you'd say a good living family more or less.

What about the church?

It's nice to be able to say that isn't it?

Yes. What about the church going side? Were your parents religious?

Wouldn't know anything about it. No, no. When we lived in Ross Street, we used to have to go right across to Phillips Street to Sunday School. When we went to live in Phillips Street and the church was only from here to the corner away, we didn't go to church. (laughs) That was when we were getting older. When we was little kids - you know, six, seven, eight, nine - every Sunday morning you'd dress up and track off to Sunday School and come back. But no, as I say, the family was rather a model family.

Did you parents ever talk about how they felt about people who didn't live as they did?

No. Never heard them complain that way. They were battling along and - - -. Of course see, now when they come down from the country, well they rented a house. When they went to live in Phillips Street, that's when Alf came back from the war. Well, he got a loan from the government to buy a house. Well he wasn't married so he bought that house there and my mother and father lived in that house till they died. And it was only a little while ago it was knocked over. It was right on the corner of Holland Street and Phillips Street. It was there right until I suppose eighteen months ago that somebody knocked it down and put an office on it. But he more or less - - -. He was a good son. Well, he was typical. He was hard as could be to the average person, but deep down he was a Good Samaritan. If he could help anybody and shut up and say nothing, he'd do it. But if anybody tried to put one over him, no way. (laughs)

Is he, your brother Alf, the brother you think you were closest to?

Well, I'd say yes. Now how would you put it? Well my first job was with him. When I was about fourteen, about time to leave school, I was always weak. The cough that I've still got I had then - I've always had that cough. And anyway I wasn't too good and the doctor - - -. My

birthday came around in about June and so I was crook with this cold. Went to the doctor and he said, "How old?" He said, "Well the best thing is take him away from school and give him a job out of doors". All right, that suited me, so I left school about a week before I was fourteen and I went on a job with Alf on the fruit and vegetable business.

We'll talk some more about that later on, but let's talk a little bit more about your health. As you say, you were called a delicate child. What did that mean when you were growing up? Were you often sick?

Oh, I don't know. I was always on the run and I was always in anything. Now, as I say in the pugholes, we used to run up and down that. [sound of dog barking in background] I wasn't actually a delicate, but all my brothers were fairly big fellows. My younger brother, well he was sixteen stone and I was a bare ten stone. Roy was a fairly big fellow. As I said, he played football - he was a ruckman - so he was a big fellow. And Alf wasn't over tall, but he was fairly well built. Anyhow, you can see it.

Yes, from the family photo.

Yes, you can see there. [looks at photograph which is reproduced over page] was only short - all my brother - but my father was tall and big and all my brothers followed after him.

How did your cough and so forth affect you? Were you, for instance, away from school?

Just in the winter time. I just had a cold and something I suppose in those days. But I've had that cough all my life, and when I took on bike riding they reckoned it was going to kill me, but I'm still going.

Did they give you any indication, when you were a boy, what they thought it might be due to?

No. No, they didn't give you the tests and so forth like they do these days. See, you lived or you died. (laughs)

Did you have any major illness in your childhood?

No. I remember having the mumps once. That wasn't a very major one - I know my chin was out here. No, I had no - - -. Of course, being smaller as the other ones - all my other brothers were fairly solid lumps - see I suppose they thought I was the weak one. But I still

survived and I'm the oldest one living now bar my sister. My sister's two years older than me - we're the only two left.

Do you think it was the cough that worried your mother, for instance?

Could have. But I've had all sorts of tests for it, right down the deep and dark ages. They can always tell, "Here's Bert coming," hearing me cough, and I worked at J N Taylor's for a little while and they always knew where Bert Standish was - they'd hear him cough. And even now if I go out now to the shopping centre or something and I see the wife down I go (coughs) and she'd hear that. I've always got a cough. But I've put it down - - -. I've had all sorts of tests for it and they find nothing wrong, but I'm still going. But I put it down to a nervous cough - nerves. If I get a bit uptight, I'll get a cough. If I get a bit excited or a little bit tense, I'll go (coughs). I do it unconsciously.

Looking back to when you were a schoolboy, were you given medication? Was that part of your childhood?

Not general, no. But I was always on the run.

So it didn't hold you back?

No, it didn't hold me back.

Did it cause your mother to think you should take things a little bit more quietly?

Never took any notice. It's a different life altogether. It seems to me that in those days you lived or you died. (laughs)

Well what I'd like to talk with you about now is about bicycles in your childhood, and starting with, thinking of your father and your older brothers, were bicycles part of their transportation?

No. No, my brother, Roy, he had a bike, but he was motorised. He had a motor wheel set on the back of his pushbike and that was there because he was in the motor trade.

Was that when you were a schoolboy? Did he have a motorised - - -?

More or less, yes.

Was that something of a novelty?

Oh yes. I think that come and went. See it come, and every bike was going to have a wheel on the side - autowheel. But it come back again

here a few years ago, a different thing again. The motor was built into the wheel - a different thing again, but that come and went.

Do you remember what sort of a bike it was you brother had?

Just the same as what they are today.

I mean the brandname?

No, the name didn't mean a thing. [Autowheel HS]

Was it an occasion that you remember when he came home with this motorised bike?

No, just remember him having it.

Was it noisy?

No, just pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. Only a little motor about this big. [indicates size - about six inches across] It was just something. Of course then he - - -. I think he went away and got married or something, so it was finished.

So there weren't bicycles - - -?

Oh yes, bicycles about.

What about in your own household when you were a boy?

Yes, Dad had a bicycle and I learnt to ride on that.

Right, let's talk a little bit about that. What did he use the bicycle for?

Going to work. That would be in Ross Street. He'd go over to Mile End. See, being a guard in the railway then, he'd have to go to Mile End. He'd have to ride across to Mile End on his bike. It was an old bike - Horace we used to call it - great big heavy old thing, but a bike. Coming back to a bike, a bike today hasn't altered from those days in the main principles of it. We can touch on that later, because a bike doesn't alter. They can't alter a bike.

You're saying that his was a heavy old thing.

Oh, it was a heavy bike because, see - great big heavy old thing. I learnt to ride through the bar. How the dickens I did I don't know. Many a time I'd be riding around on Dad's old bike and he was waiting to go to work. (laughs) That's when the troubles used to come in. I wouldn't get back in time and Dad wants to go to work.

He would have been, what, sitting upright on his bicycle?

Oh yes. On his bike he'd sit up - straight handlebars and - - -.

Did he have a basket on it? Would he be taking his lunch?

No, used to have a - - -. I don't know how he used to take his - - -. Most of them used to take a tin box on the back - strapped on the back, most of the railway people. Because I don't know whether there was a carrier on his old bike or not. I know it went through the family one way or the other. I don't know where it finished up in the end, old Horace. An old black thing - a great big high thing.

What sorts of bits and pieces would it have on it? Would he have a lamp of any sort on it?

That I wouldn't know now, but looking back he might have had a carbide lamp or an oil lamp. See, in those days, well, they were the only two lighting sets about. You'd get an oil lamp and put kerosene in it. That'd go out. You'd just still go on. Well then there came more modern ones. There was a carbide lamp. Well that was a carbide - you wouldn't know what that is. It was sort of granulated and you put it in the little thing on the bottom and there was a drip - the water would drip through on to the carbide and generate a gas. It was more of a gas light. They were very good.

Do you think he would have had a need to be lighting his way?

No.

Would he leave early enough in the morning? When would his work start?

When he was a guard you'd go home any time. All depends what time the trains come in, he'd knocked off, and come home. That'd be day-light, dark or anything - middle of the night, any time. Same as he'd be - - -. He might have to go to work at ten o'clock at night. Might have to get on his bike and ride off, but lights - you wouldn't want a light. As a matter of fact in those days on moonlight nights was what they called exempt night. Certain nights of the month would be moon-light night. Well, you could ride a bike without a light. That was police orders, because you could ride by the moonlight. So that'd be about the last quarter and the first quarter. Then you were supposed to have a light. But a motorcar, you wouldn't see a motorcar about the place. The

street lights used to go out at midnight anyhow, if they didn't go out before.

Would he be using his bike every day to go to and from work?

That was his means of getting to and from work.

What about outside of work? Would he be using in the evenings or on weekends?

No. No, he wouldn't have time. When you come to think about it, about all they did was work.

What about your mother, would she have any reason to ride a bike?

No. Although there were, earlier than that - looking back on history in her youth - bikes were in. Ladies used to ride a bike with the big long skirts right down.

What about your older sister when you were growing up? Did she ride a bike?

I don't think she did, but the second sister taught me to ride. She used to run behind me. I don't know whether she could ride a bike - I don't know if she ever rode a bike. I don't remember. Well none of us had bikes apart from Roy had a bike. I don't remember Ted or Bill having bikes. Well you couldn't afford them. A bike was a luxury. See a bike to my father was a motorcar. So that was it. I can give you the history of pushbikes.

Well, we'll do that as we go along. You're saying you don't remember what brandname Horace would have been?

No, no, no. It'd be an imported bike. It was an old English bike come out. Had two bars on it on the top - oh, big heavy old thing.

What sort of tyres?

Just the ordinary - same as we've got today, only a bit heavier I suppose. Same principle.

Required pumping up.

See, actually speaking, the bike tyres that are about today originated in about 1888. See Dunlops first put the first pneumatic tyres out in 1888 and they've been going ever since.

Do you think you father would have looked after all the maintenance that the bike required?

I don't know who did. I know I did in the finish. Get into trouble pulling the bike to pieces and couldn't get it together again. (laughs)

You were saying earlier that your brother Roy was in the motor trade. Could you just tell me a little bit about that? What part of the motor trade?

Spare parts. He started working for - with - Murray Aunger, which was one of the first in motor trade. Murray Aunger was with the old Overland cars. Well he was the father of all the spare parts and all that. And he started working with them, and gradually he got bought out and Roy would go along with them. Whoever bought them out he'd go along with them until he finished up Motor Traders bought them out when he finished up. He went right through.

So he wasn't actually dealing with cycles?

No.

But cycle parts?

No, no. No, pushbikes didn't come into it till I come into it.

Let's talk about when you learnt to ride. How old were you?

Oh, about ten or twelve.

What do you remember about that?

I nearly got killed. I was going up the street and my sister was - I thought - was holding me at the back, and there was an old bloke going along with a horse and cart. I hadn't passed any traffic before so I looked back for Dot and she's not there. I panicked - darn near fell under the cart. (laughs) I thought she was still holding me up and instead of that she'd stopped, and I looked back and of course I wobbled and fell under the cart. The horse was only just walking, so the old bloke - - -. There was an old bloke who had this cart round Thebarton there, and he said, "Whoa" and the horse stopped.

Another time I was - I would be I suppose ten or eleven or twelve I suppose - and I'm coming down what is the South Road now, through Thebarton, near the Thebarton Oval there near Ross Street, and I can remember this point. And in those days the old brick carts used to go from Halletts brickyard up and down that yard, and of course it wasn't

bitumen - it was metal road - and of course it used to get all chewed up in the winter like a soup, see. So I'm coming down. There was this girl that I had a bit of an eye on as a school kid, and I thought, "I'll show her how I can ride," and went around the corner from Taylor's Road, as it was called then, into Ross Street - in the soup and whoosh, away it went. I was spreadeagled all over the place. I didn't stop to see whether she could see how good I could ride or not. (laughs) I was going to show her how I could ride the bike. I was only about - I suppose about eleven or twelve I suppose, about that.

You were saying earlier you learnt to ride through the bars. What do you mean by that?

Well, you know the bike comes down like that, well you ride through the bar. You didn't have your leg over the bar. I couldn't get over the top - I wouldn't reach the pedals. How the hell I done it I don't know. Kids can't ride a bike now [except] little weeny bikes. We learnt to ride on damned big bikes.

So you would have been sort of stuck out the side and trying to keep your balance?

You were out this way and the bike's in here. Of course before you got to that stage you'd go right up the footpath hanging on to the fence - riding the bike hanging on to the fence of everybody's place.

Were you able to adjust your father's bike in any way, such as the height of the seat?

No, it was a big bike, full stop. A big bike because he was a big fellow - very tall fellow. No, well, that was about the end of the bike sessions as far as that's concerned. Then again, when I started work, after about twelve months on the fruit and vegetable business, when I eventually got a job up in town, my father bought me a bike - second hand bike - to go to work on. That was the start of my bike racing.

Getting back to your father's old bike. You're saying sometimes he'd want to go to work and you'd be riding about. Did you use it much?

Only when I could - if I could sneak off on Dad's bike for a ride. But you wouldn't be far away. You'd only be round the corner or somewhere or other.

Did you ever use it to go to school?

No. Oh no, kids never had a bike to go to school. They had to walk to school.

Do you remember any boys your age who had their own bikes to go to school?

No, not those days. Of course that would be more or less in the Depression days. Oh no, if you had a bike in those days, you were somebody.

Did you know any boys who did?

Not really, not when I was at school. It's nearly the other way now, because there's no kid going to school that hasn't got a bike.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B: TAPE 2 SIDE A

We were talking about just the few times that you could use your father's bike. You've told me memories about learning how to ride. Can you remember any other stories associated with that old bike?

Not really. It was just the old bike in the yard. Of course it went all through the family. You know, finished up grandkids and all that. I don't know where it finished up in the end.

You were saying your father was asthmatic in his later life. Did he continue using his bike right up until he retired?

Yes. As a matter of fact I talked him - - -. Coming back to bicycle riding, I've always been a great advocate for very small gears. You don't know what I mean.

Well you tell me.

See, a small gear, you're pedalling like mad, a high gear you're pedalling like that [demonstrates pushing hard]. Well Dad had his bike. Well, Dad couldn't walk from here to the corner, you might say, without stopping to have a breath. So he says he couldn't ride his bike because he couldn't get his breath. So I said, "Well I'll put a very, very small gear on your bike and see how you go". So this is when I first started in the bike trade, so I started to learn a bit about them. So I put a very, very low gear on his bike and when he was on that he could ride that bike for miles, you might say. He'd get on his bike and he'd just pedal along like that, and the people'd say, "Here's old Pop Standish coming along". He'd be just moving along, but he could get there on the low gear.

So he wasn't having to do a lot of pushing?

No, the hard work, and this is where today people are riding bikes - they don't know what they're doing. They could buy a bike to ride it to get exercise and they do right the reverse. They put a high gear on their bike and they're straining. They're not training, they're straining. If you get on a low gear it's like a person, say a weightlifter. He doesn't get the heaviest weight in the gym and push it up. He gets the light ones and gets the exercise, and that's what you should do with a bike. You can remember that. Ride it on a low gear - you're getting exercise - and as you get exercise, you get strength. Then you can put your bigger gear up then.

But people buy a bike for exercise and the first thing they do is ride around on a high gear, and I often see them. I drive along and I'm right behind and I say to the wife, "Look at this mug, he's riding with a big high gear". She says, "How do you know?" You can see his feet going like this [demonstrates] and he's pushing like mad. It's like going out for a ride and you go up to Windy Point. So go for a ride up Windy Point, you're struggling like mad going up the hill. You shouldn't be. If you're going out for a training ride, pick an easy track and a low gear and get the exercise.

Before you put that low gear on your father's bike, did it have any gears?

Oh, there was no gears about in those days. No, it was just straight out bike, but you arrange your gears, by the cogs you've got on your bike. See, what is it again? Now say for instance you have a twenty-seven inch wheel bike, and you've got twenty-seven. You put your front cog - that's up there where the pedals are - - -. There'll be so many teeth on that cog. Well you move say a twenty-seven here, you say a forty-six chain wheel, forty-two six chain wheel. Then you divide that. You multiply the size of the chain wheel by the size of the wheel, then you divide by the size of the number of the teeth that's on your back cog. Well you might have an eighteen tooth cog. Well you divide that. There's your wheel, and you multiply that by that, then you divide by that, and you get your ratio of gears. Well, the bigger the cog at the back, the lower the gear of the bike. So that means your feet are going round quicker and you get there just the same. That's the art of cycling, is pedalling. [See illustration over page.]

So the bike your father had used all his life wouldn't have had gears at all?

No. Nobody would know in those days. The average bike had eighty-four gear on it, full stop - you didn't worry about anything else. So you have a twenty-eight inch wheel, forty-eight chain wheel and a sixteen tooth cog - bang, that was it.

He would have still been working when you altered the bike?

No. No, he retired then. See he retired.

So what did he use the bike for after he retired?

Little bit of recreation, or going to the shop or something. He'd get on his bike just for something to do - go for a ride. Because his kidneys packed up in the finish, see, with the continual coughing and his complaint. See it affects the kidneys. [sound of dog barking in background]

Oh, of course, was it a concern of the family that you might have the asthmatic side that your father had, with your coughing?

No. Different doctors have said they think I've got a bit of asthmatic. I might have a bit but today, what I can see of it, 90 percent of the people of this town today have got asthma. The wife's got a touch of it and my sister-in-law's got a touch of it, my brother-in-law's got a touch of it. But on my side I don't remember any of them having asthma. I'd be the most asthmatic type of the lot that I can remember. I don't remember any brothers having asthma.

Let's talk a little bit more about your childhood activities. You're saying that you and your friends, when you were still at school, you didn't have bikes of your own. Do you remember, was there a local bike shop?

Oh, not when I was really going to school that I knew of, but as I got older, well I found out where they were. Because a bike shop in those days was few and far between. There was one over at Hindmarsh and one over in the Henley Beach Road. Well that's about - - -. Miles apart. Different thing altogether.

How about - if we concentrate still when you were at school - what about going to see cycle races?

No, never saw a race in my life until I started in one. First race ever I - - -. Didn't know any such thing.

So you didn't have any boyhood heroes in the cyclists?

No, no.

Did you know of any local young men who were involved?

No. I won't say how I started because that's the story of my - - -.

Well, we'll get on to that.

There is a story. How I started riding was quite a story.

Well we'll come to that. Let's go on talking a little bit more about your childhood. What sort of things did you and friends do together when you were still at school age, in your spare time?

Oh, nothing particular. We wouldn't have more than what kids do today. Well, we didn't play tennis for a start off, we didn't play cricket. If you had an old football you'd get out in the paddock and kick that around. See, there was no organised sports for kids in those days, not like today, the kids are decorated up with all their bats and tennis racquets and footballs and gear about the place. We were lucky to find a ball that you could throw around.

Did you go to watch your brother play?

Yes, we used to go and see him playing. Of course all depends where he was playing. See, he might be playing - - -. If he was playing within walking distance, because otherwise you wouldn't get there.

Did you as a schoolboy have much to do going places on the trams or on the trains?

No. No, a tram ride to town was a day's outing, see. If we went to the Zoo, you walked to the Zoo. So you'd walk around to the Zoo and you might get a ride home in the tram.

Did you and your friends ever get out into - - -. I know there was still quite open spaces.

Oh yes. We used to go from round Thebarton there. We used to generally make towards that way, towards the beach. We used to go down to the sandhills there, down where Findon is now, down round there. Through the school holidays we'd go down round there and get into the paddocks. Of course there wasn't lots of houses there about.

What sort of things did you do on those outings?

Oh, if we'd see a fruit tree, we'd pinch some fruit. (laughs) Nothing to what the kids do today.

Did you have any form of airgun or shot to take with you?

No. No, no.

What about traps? Did you trap?

Rabbits?

Yes.

No. No, I never went rabbit trapping. But they used to get the rabbits. Different people used to get them down around towards the beach way. But I never went rabbiting.

Did you have any way of earning pocket money when you were at school?

Yes, a little bit. We used to - - -. Through the summer months my brother and I, we used to walk from Thebarton down to where Lasscock's nursery is now, down on Henley Beach Road, in there. There was a fellow - a gardener there - he used to have a lot of onions. We'd go down there snipping tops and bottoms of onions. Flies eating you. See, he'd have these big heaps of onions like this in boxes. We'd just snip, snip, top and bottom and get a shilling each and walk home. Walk down there and walk home (laughs) after chasing flies all day. We was wealthy people - we got a shilling.

What would you do with that money?

Oh, I don't know. I've still got it. My eldest brother I suppose around about that time he was always a very studious type and proper thinking man, and when we got to a certain age he opened a bank account for us with a shilling, and he said, "Never take that out," and I've never taken that shilling out. It's still there, because all my life I've had a bank account. So there's the object lesson see. He gave me a shilling to open an account and that shilling's still there.

Would you have banked a little bit of money when you were at school?

No, no. No, we never got enough to have a school bank. We weren't wealthy enough for that. But we used to go down the old pughole and pick up bones and the likes of that, because over where GIC's are now, over by the brickyard market, over there was the Adelaide Chemical

Works. We'd go over there with a bagful of bones and they'd give you threepence for them I suppose - a couple of pence or something. We'd take it over. Then there was the bottleyard that used to be in the middle of Southwark there by the brewery. We used to pick up a few bottles, take a few bottles over to the - - -. If you say an empty beer bottle - - -. Of course in those days a bottle of beer wasn't like it is today. As a matter of fact if people went to buy a bottle of beer in those days, you'd buy one bottle of beer, not a dozen, so you wouldn't find many bottles. But we'd gather up bottles if we could, and bones, and take them to the bottleyard or the boneyard and get a bit.

But then, of course, as we got older, I did a bit of work while I was going to school with a fellow that had a fruit and vegetable business. On a Saturday morning you'd go around. He'd go around, you'd go and get the orders and put them in the basket and you'd take them in.

How old would you have been when you started doing that?

Oh, about twelve.

Do you remember who that was?

Yes, Roy Jones - Ike Jones. How I got to know him was because he used to play football with my brother. He come from over Hindmarsh way somewhere. Well we'd get a job delivering. He'd go and get the order and come and put it in the basket and us kids'd - - -. Of course he used to have a step on the back of his trolley you see. We'd just hang on the back of this step. And as we'd come out we'd say, "Right," and we'd throw the basket up into the cart and jump. He'd be moving off with the horses. Well then, of course, when I started work with my brother, he did the same thing.

When you were working with Mr Jones, was there more than one of you boys working for him at a time?

Oh, I don't know whether Fred used to do bits I think with us. I think we used to take it in turns or something.

Do you remember about how much he might pay you on a Saturday?

Oh, about sixpence.

What sort of hours would you work?

Oh, two or three hours.

What about before or after school? Was there any way of earning money then?

No, not much. But since I've left school I've always had two jobs - I've always had a job. See, when I went to work with Alf on the fruit and vegetable business, I used to get the sack every week. (laughs) He used to kick me tail down the road to somewhere or other for doing something wrong and you'd get home and Mum'd send you back again. But anyhow, eventually when I got a job in town, well then I used to go down the market with him - help him to load up.

Well then I eventually got a job down there. For a long while I used to go down there trucking - what we called trucking. You get the gardeners down there, you see. They'd get their stuff from the stores that were delivering to the shops and so forth, and they would - - -. Might want a couple of dozen cauliflowers or a dozen cabbages something like that. We'd put them on the truck and you'd have two or three fellows - gardeners - that you worked for. You'd finish up at the end of the morning, you'd get - - -. I'd leave there and go to work then. That's when I got my job first at Elliot's. I used to go down there trucking. I'd pick up ten bob a morning. That was good money when you were only getting two pound a week. (laughs) You go down there. But that was my training. I'd go down there about half past six, seven o'clock, get those hand trucks and you'd load them up and you'd run all round the market. Of course when you come back they'd have another truckload for you. Say, "Right, here's the dockets, Bert," and I've got to go this one, that one, that one - "Right, away you go". Well then I'd finish up, by nine o'clock I'd rush off to work.

We'll talk a bit more about that time a little later on.

I've always had two jobs.

Yes, I'll keep that in mind when we're talking as we go along.

Yes, I say, with kids today, they don't know how to make money. I didn't make a lot but, all the same, it kept me fit and kept me healthy and I always had a few bob.

What sort of things would you spend that money on, when we're thinking about your schooldays?

Oh, didn't have that much money to spend.

Did you have hobbies when you were a schoolboy?

No. No, not really. Until I got bike riding. Well then I spent all my time bike racing.

Let's talk just a little bit about your schooling at the Thebarton school. Can you remember the first day?

I wouldn't remember the first day. I remember a few episodes. It was in the hot weather - one time was in the hot weather - at school dinner time, you're out, you're playing out. Well you always had to put your hands out to see your hands are clean before you go in. If your hands are dirty you've got to go out and wash you hands see. So this particular day I went out and I washed my hands and I got a lump of soap and soaped up all the taps. Because there were a row of them, see, with a trough in those days. You don't have the flash things they've got now. See, there's a row a taps - about eight or ten taps. So looking for something to do, I just put soap in them. Of course in the afternoon recess time, out they all come, and of course in those days you stuck your head under the taps and they all got a mouthful of soap. (laughs) And of course they wanted to know who done it and George Washington admits it, so I had to stand out in front of the class and suck a lump of soap. (laughs) I remember that - old Mum Laird, she was the teacher.

Did your parents hear about that?

Oh I don't think. (laughs) I don't think, no. Another time there was a big classroom - there was girls one side and boys the other - and the boys, we were having reading lessons, and they used to drag a big curtain across, you see, to divide us off. Well I was sitting where the two curtains come together. So we were having a reading lesson and of course I'm talking to the girl on the other side. All of a sudden the teacher must have spotted me. She said, "Standish. Right, you have to stand up and read". I was about four pages behind, so she said, "You're more interested in what the girls are doing than the boys". Sent me in amongst the girls and said I was more interested in the

girls so they stuck me in amongst them - they were sewing. (laughs) I had to get in there sewing. The girl that was supposed to be showing me, her mother knew my mother or something. I said, "Don't tell Mum - don't tell Mum". (laughs) So there's two episodes that I can remember when I was at school.

Did you enjoy your schooldays?

Oh, as other kids do.

Did you find any of the subjects particular interesting?

I still do - history and - - -. I like history and geography, always did. But I wasn't a good scholar and I wasn't a bad one. I was just running along. I never ever failed but I never ever topped the class either. I just made up the number.

Are there any teachers that you remember in particular?

Oh, more or less. A lot of them come into it. One old bloke, old McNamara - although I wasn't in the episode - - -. But they used to have canvas slides to lock it up, you see - it was just a big prefab room, you see, with just the slides. So anyhow old Mac, when he turns to do anything on the blackboard, there's always somebody had a shot of him with a bit of chalk or something. So anyhow one time he kept us all in - was going to keep you all in. So he didn't keep them in for long. They slid the canvas things back and they were all jumping out the window. But I wasn't in that - I was in the class but I didn't do it. I never did - - -. I was never a real out and out villain, but I admit to jokes at times.

Did you ever play truant from school?

Not that I know of. I did from Sunday School. I used to go to Sunday School with a penny to put in the collection box. I'd go out and spend that and I used to go - - -. It was over at the old Southwark Baptist Church. Instead of going to church there and Sunday School, I'd go and buy some lollies and I used to go to Hindmarsh and walk around the Hindmarsh cemetery reading the tombstones. (laughs) But school itself, I never ever wagged it from school. No, I'm sure I didn't.

Did your parents ever keep you home for one reason or another?

No. No, unless you were sick. But no, I can say my parents were real, you know - - -. Without being overboard or that, you were in the family and that's it.

When you look back at those schooldays, and your later working life, did you think that the sort of schooling you got was worthwhile?

Now, yes. I think they taught us what we should learn and then you go on from that. And as I say, I was never a brilliant scholar, but I never failed, and yet I've been through life, through business and all different jobs, without any university education or anything else.

Commonsense is the basis of life, there's no doubt about it. It works out even now. You can put this on record. Last Saturday morning a job come in down at the Torrensville shop and they said, "No we can't do that job," and I looked at it. I said, "Why can't you?" They said, "No". Some old bike - something they didn't know anything about. I said, yes, they could. So my son said, "You can't fix it". I said, "Yes you can". He said, "What do you do?". I said, "Well I'm not going to tell you. If you don't know, I'm not going to tell you". So he said, "All right, if you think you can do it, do it". I hesitated - "Yes, I'll do it," and I said to the bloke, "Leave it here and we'll fix it".

Now, I went back. See, I took it out in the workshop and I turned the bike upside down and I looked and I said, "Now I can remember a bike like this fifty years ago". You mightn't be able to follow me but the centre bracket - that's the part where the pedals go through - there was a sleeve going through that. Well I can remember fifty years ago we used to get trouble with a bike there. It was a big job to repair it - you could practically throw the bike away. So old Elliot brought out a cutter to cut the thread out and a sleeve to put in it, and that's exactly what was in this bike. Although the way it was on the floor and we were looking at it, I wasn't sure and I wouldn't commit myself. I said, "Yes, I'll have a go at it," and I thought, "Well I'll have a go. Somewhere or other I'll get out of it". And that's exactly what it was. So I went out, pulled it to bits and I found out that his axle was too short. Somebody else had had a go before on the axle, so I fished around and I got a longer axle, fixed it all up and I said to the lad there, I said, "There you are Adam". He said, "Jesus," he said, "I'm learning, aren't I?" I said, "Yes, I learnt that fifty, sixty years ago".

My son still didn't say a word. When we was talking he said, "I know you can't do it. Why do you think I've been in the trade all my life?" I said, "What do you think I've been in the trade for?" But they'd never seen one. He said to the bloke, "You'll have to get it welded". He said, "Can you weld it?" and he said, "No, we don't do any welding here". I said, "No, you don't want to weld it". I had another idea besides that, see, but then when I found out what it was - - -. But it was commonsense. The whole thing, when I pulled it all to bits, it was just commonsense, and that is the basis of life.

And I often do things here. My wife'll tell you. I'm a fair - - -. I never let a thing beat me. It mightn't come out as good, and it might take me longer, but I fiddle around and fiddle around, or I might drop it down altogether.

Was there any opportunity to do that kind of practical work at school?

No.

Was there woodworking?

A bit of woodwork was. I was one of the first scholars to go to the Cowandilla school. We walked from Thebarton school to the Cowandilla school where they had the first class of carpentering. So once a week we used to have to walk down there in the morning to Cowandilla school to do your lesson on woodwork. That's what I always wanted to be, a carpenter, but when I was growing up the Depression was on and you couldn't get a carpenter's job anywhere. But it comes back again how it's commonsense.

Only last week they had one of those - - -. You know the boards they put out the front of a shop, you know, like that [indicates] with a so-and-so name? I had one down at one of the shops and it broke - somebody broke it or something. Well they just threw it in the heap. Nobody worried about it. So I said to Graham - that's my lad - I said, "What are you going to do with that?" He said, "Can you fix it?" I said, "Oh, I'll take it home. I'll do something with it". I brought it home and pulled the thing all to bits the other day and glued it and stuck it together and took it back. So he said, "Gee, you fixed that up all right," he said. I said, "Yes, I have enough scrap wood in the shed, I'll

make another one for you". So I sorted out some bits and pieces out there now - that's my next job.

Was it for more than a year that you did the woodworking class at Cowandilla?

Oh, I don't know how long it was. That was when I was about twelve.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A: SIDE B

Do you remember whose decision it was that you should finish school when you did?

The doctor's.

As you were saying before. Had you done your qualifying certificate?

No. And I've stumbled through life up to this.

Would that have been coming at the end of the year when you turned fourteen?

Yes. Yes, I was in the grade. If I'd have gone through that year, I would have sat for my qualifying certificate. See, I'd never failed and I was into whatever grade it was that finished the grade.

Do you remember whether you had feelings one way or the other about leaving before reaching that level?

No, didn't worry me. I was glad to leave school.

You said that you had an idea that you would have liked to do carpentry.

Yes.

Did you have any ambitions at the time, for instance, to go on to the School of Mines or something like that?

No. No, that comes into - - -. That tangles up getting into the bike trade.

Let's talk about the time when you'd finished your school. Did you have any particular idea of your own about where that first job should be?

No.

So you pretty much were happy to follow your parents' advice on that.

Yes, take what I could get.

Was there any gap between leaving school and starting with your brother?

No.

Let's talk about that.

I've never really been out of work in my life.

How did your brother feel about taking you on?

Oh, he didn't worry. See, because I was just helping him, he'd go and get the orders and - - -. Of course eventually I'd practically run his van. He'd go off to do something or other and he said, "Right, you can go so-and-so". Get the two horses and the van and you'd drive around to serve this customer, that customer, and come back and pick him up.

Was Alf still living at home?

Yes.

With you and the family.

Yes.

So let's talk about what your daily routine was with Alf. What time would you be up in the morning?

Oh, six o'clock to go to market on market morning - about nine o'clock out into the next morning. See market morning was Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Tuesday and Thursday, well that was the off day. Then you'd have to do a few customers, clean the van out and clean up a few things - clean the stables out or something like that - and on again.

So what would you do when you went into the market? You'd take the trolley and the two horses in?

Yes, they'd go down there and they used to - - -. See, he'd go down to the market. Well his horses and trolley, he used to park them down on the East Terrace. He'd park them down there. Well then you'd go and you'd run all round the market and pick up all what he wanted. He'd go round and order what he wanted, see. Might get a case of tomatoes here, or a case or oranges, or half a dozen cauliflowers or half a dozen bundles of rhubarb, whatever it was. Well the different gardeners would have different things, you see. Well you'd go with the truck - you'd go to each one and get what he wanted. Well then you'd take it out and load it up into the van. Because he used to, in his first stage when I first went with him, he used to - - -.

One of his customers was the Cheer Up Hut - the old Cheer Up Hut at the back of the railway station. Well he'd go down there with his van - this covered in van. There wasn't room to - - -. I used to have to hang on the back step - you couldn't get in the van. You'd go down there, well then of course a lot of the stuff - they'd buy a lot of stuff. You'd put it in a bag, you see - bags of stuff - and used to take it down there.

Then he also used to serve the Austral - - -. What was it? Austral Gardens down where the nurses' home is on North Terrace, opposite the hospital. Who's there now? Ayers House I think it is. Well, that was another selected part of where the officers of the Army used to have their meals. See the ordinary soldier went to the Cheer Up Hut. Well the officers - the select part - they used to go down to where Ayers House is.

So would it have been part way through 1919 when you started, with the war still on?

Yes, round about then.

What do you remember about the Cheer Up Hut?

Not a lot. I was only about fourteen - fourteen or fifteen. I knew there was a lot of women - just volunteer women - there, and Alf was a real womaniser. He'd kid to the women a treat there. Of course he was all for business. He'd go in there, he'd joke with them all and kid to them all, and of course the more popular you made, the bigger the order you got. (laugh) He was a real hard businessman. No doubt about it, he was a shrewdie.

I'm wondering. I shouldn't think he'd be the only one supplying the Cheer Up Hut. They must have used a lot of produce.

No, he'd have that in hand. He'd be about the only one, because on Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon, he'd have it loaded up somewhere or other. He never let anybody get under his feet. He was that cunning. See, in those days they used to have the policeman on point duty, see. Well, he'd come down East Terrace - down North Terrace and then turn down to where the city baths was. When the police was on point duty, all the policemen on point duty, he'd have an apple or orange or something to hand out. They'd never stop him. He'd

come round, he'd just have his hand out, and they'd say, "Right, round you go". He'd use up anybody at all that could help him.

Do you think he might have done more trips to the market than your average suburban fruiterer to keep up that level of supplies?

No. He loaded his van up. Of course his van was pretty big and he had a pair of good solid horses, and he always had a spare horse because he didn't believe in wearing a horse to the ground. See, two horses went today, well next week this one'd be out, another one in, and this one out and another one in, see. They were fairly good semi-draft, see - good solid horses. He was very, very kind to horses, and he never believed in working them hard, but he believed in them doing what he told them. He used to come home to the yard and he'd back his van in and those horses had to back it in every inch. He'd turn round the back - "Go on in". If somebody wanted a horse trained a bit, "Give it Alf - Alf'll fix it". No, it was a life, there's no doubt about it.

Were any of the horses memorable in your mind? Were there any characters amongst them?

Yes, one of them tossed me off. I didn't find out till after. It was a big ginger one and he was a bit of an outlaw of a horse, but out of harness and that he was all right and I used to ride him around bareback with a bit of rope over the back for stirrups, and a bit of rope for reins, and away I'd go on this great big ginger thing. So I was trotting along there one time down Torrensville there by the old Fire Brigade station down there, and he started breaking into a bit of a gallop and I said, "Pull up, pull up, pull up," and the rope broke, and I thought "Gee" - amd the horse was going into a bit of a gallop. So I thought, "Now, I've got to stop him. I'll see if I can catch hold of the bit". I pulled down like this and instead of getting down on to the bit I got the piece over his eyes - winkers - and he just sort of - - -. Whick, up I went. He kicked me off and he just went along the road a bit and started eating the grass. Anyhow I got everything fixed and got home - never got hurt.

So later on Alf's telling about a bloke who used to do a lot of breaking in horses. He said, "Old Ginger threw Bert off the other day". He said, "What does he do with him?" He said, "Riding him". He said, "Christ, I won a buck jumping competition on him". (laughs) Old Ernie

Webb, he won a buck jumping competition on old Ginger, but of course he was older then and he just sort of - when I grabbed him - he stopped and I just - - -. It was about fifteen or sixteen hand horse.

Would your brother and other family members have used the horses much for riding around?

No. No, Alf was the one. He was horse mad. When he went away to the war he tried to get in the Light Horse and he couldn't get into the Light Horse so they put him into the ambulance. He was in the Eleventh Field Ambulance with horses. But he wouldn't go - - -. He didn't have to go, he volunteered. He put his age up something, so's he could go in, because Mum wouldn't sign his papers. But he wouldn't go in anything unless it was amongst horses. He was horse mad.

But he was another one like me. At school they could never keep him at school. He wouldn't keep at school and they couldn't keep him in a job when he left school. He'd argue the point and fight with anybody. He was a real hard, tough, sort of a bird, and he'd tell them what he thought. So he - - -. I've waylaid myself. But he couldn't get in - - -. Wanted to get into ambulance, see, with the horses. So that's how he got mixed up there.

When you were working with Alf, did you have a responsibility for looking after the horses yourself?

Oh, not really, no - not really.

You're saying he had the three, so that they could be rested every so often.

When one's rested you'd feed - - -. You always fed them well.

Were they out in pasture when they were resting?

No. No, in the stable. Eventually he - - -. When he eventually got married and went down to Torrensville, he had a block of land down there. He used to have the horses in the block of land, but that was later life. But as I say, he was a good brother. He was a hard man and a good Samaritan and that.

When I first started in business - - -. I don't know whether that might overlap when I was starting the business. Anyway, I was a hundred pound short of getting in. I didn't know what to do. I'd never borrowed any money in my life. So I thought, "Now I wonder if brother

Alf would lend it me". So I went down to the market and I said to him, I said what I was doing. Of course I was working at J N Taylor's at the time. I said, "I'm a hundred quid short with money," I said, "Can you lend us a hundred quid?" He said, "When do you want it?" I said, "Not now". He said, "Well sing out when you want it," he said. So I just told him. He said, "Yes, no worries". So when I went to get it he says, "Well, do you want me as a sleeping partner," he said, "or what?" I said, "No". So I said, "What'll I do about paying back?" He said, "Oh I'll make an IOU out for young Don" - that was his son. Anyway, I got my money to go into the business. But no ifs and buts or anything else. That was him. "Here it is," bang. And I know with my mother as she was getting older and that, brother Alf would always - - -. He'd always see that she was right.

When you working for him, did you have a weekly wage yourself?

Oh, I suppose I did. I don't know. That part didn't come into it. I don't know whether he paid my mother or paid me - I don't know. But living home, I suppose he paid my mother, I don't know.

You don't remember - - -?

I'd get a bit of pocketmoney and that was it - a shilling pocketmoney.

You don't remember sudden wealth when you left school?

(laughs) No. So when I left school, I never come into sudden wealth until I started trucking over the market. Well then I used to get that ten bob and that was it.

When you were doing the rounds with him, you've mentioned the Cheer Up Hut and opposite the hospital. Did he also have a suburban round?

Oh yes, yes, that was the main thing. See, he'd do Ayers House, then he used to do - I think it just closed up a little while ago - the Queen's Club there in Stephens Place. He used to do them and then he'd do the Cheer Up Hut. That might have been after the Cheer Up Hut closed. But anyhow, he did those three at different times. Well then when he left there - left town - he'd come down right through Thebarton - right through Thebarton, right down to Underdale. He'd come right in and out - in the two days. Say the Wednesday and Thursday. See, he'd wind his way right down through Thebarton to Underdale, down to Holbrooks Road. That was the end of his run. Well

there he'd have a string of people he was going to. Everybody in the street - this street - he'd just go one to the other. Then he might pack up and go another - - -. He had people everywhere. That's why I know Thebarton and Torrensville like the back of my hand. He was in and out every street.

You were saying he was a fairly aggressive sort of fellow. Would he have been in active competition with other blokes' rounds?

Oh yes. Oh yes, but you wouldn't beat him. That's what I say. He'd go down to the Cheer Up Hut, for argument's sake. He'd go down there and he'd always take the girls some oranges or apples or something, or down at the market. He might pick up a - - -. A bloke might have a few violets or something selling, and he'd pick up some and he'd distribute it round. He always made himself a good fellow - give with one hand and take it with the other.

Do you ever remember, when you were out on the rounds with him, coming across other vans?

Oh yes. Oh well, you was always mates. See, if you met another bloke that was in the game, well they'd stop and have a bit of a natter of what they were doing. They were all mates. And they'd say, "Well, see you later," and he'd go that way and you'd go that way. Down the market there - he'd go around - - -. Go there buying, see - run around the market. He'd find that peas were going to be - - -. [cheap HS] There's plenty of peas about. So Alf - two or three of them would get their heads together - "All right, we'll take a full bag," but at a price. He was the hardest businessman in the market. He was recognised one as the hardest buyers. He'd run around the market there and find out what's scarce and what's plentiful and he'd play one to the other. Oh yes, he was a story on his own, brother Alf. (laughs)

With his interest in trotting, would there be some times during the week where he didn't do the rounds? Saturday mornings?

No, business was business. As far as he was concerned, business was business. Anything else come in - that's it. He was great friends with Drings - Drings the carrier people. Well, as a matter of fact, him and Bill Dring - that's the chief of Drings - they were down Victor Harbor on holidays and they met their respective wives down there. Their

wives were down there and they met these two girls and they both finished up marrying them - different ways.

He also went in for show horses - he had horses in the show. He had what they termed in those days, an American runabout. He was a great - what do you call it? - stylist. He loved to have things good. Everything that was with him was good. His van was immaculate, his horses were well fed, were well groomed. Never see a horse - - -. His horses would never go to market with dirt on them, or anything like that, and they were always in good nick.

But he got into the show horses and he had a horse - had this American runabout - was all gold plated. It belonged to old Mr Dring. He knocked around with the son. Well old William Dring, a real old - was the start of the big business, long while before your time - but he had this - - -. All the little rails all gold plated, and he used to have a horse known as Gayboy. It was a beautiful bay horse with bobbed tail, and he won quite a lot of championships with it. He won quite a few with him.

Was he involved with that at the stage we're talking about when you were working with him?

Yes. Yes, he always had a good horse for himself. He was a real horse fanatic. No, he had a real colourful life, Alf. As you say, I'm more with him. When he went away overseas in the Army, well they went away in the boat. Well no sooner the boat got out, he was helping the barber. He was doing the lathering up for the barber. See, the blokes want a shave, well Alf'd put himself in. He'd lather up while the bloke come along and shaved them. But that was him. (laughs) That was him.

What sort of things did his van carry?

Everything. Fruit and vegetables. You had two shelves down the van like that [indicates] and in the middle. Well underneath you'd put - - -. Then you had a set of scales in there. You'd put your cases of apples and oranges and whatnot down here, and so forth along there - potatoes. He had this bag of potatoes up near the front. And then you've have your cabbages, cauliflowers. Oh, we used to have them packed up right that you couldn't get inside the thing. Oh, it was as high as that picture up there. You know, a great big high covered in van. But it was immaculate. It was always well painted up and every-

thing was right on it. And when he come home on Thursday, that van would be cleaned out as clean as a new pin.

I've heard tell of the fruiterer and greengrocers also selling eggs, rabbits, chooks.

No, never worried about that - no. He was fruit and vegetable, full stop. No, eventually they come to anything to make extra money. But he knew how to buy and he told me, when I went into business. He said, "You don't make money out of what you sell - you make money out of what you buy. If you can't buy right, you can't sell right". Another saying of his, "You don't sell your goods, you sell yourself".

Some of the greengrocers had a real line - a bit of a patter. Did he have any things that he'd call out?

No. No, he'd never get down to - - -. See, well they were called hawkers - see, hawking stuff. No, he had his regular customers and that was - - -. If they went out, they'd leave his order - order for him, or anything like that. And he knew the good customers. If they were good customers, he'd go in. If it was just any old bod, I'd go in.

I only said the other day - - -. We went down to Le Cornu's down here and I was looking at a picture there. It was a little bit of their history. It was taken - - -. The old chappie came out and it was taken over by his grandson or somebody - Lance Le Cornu. Well Lance Le Cornu, I'm practically sure - - -. They reckon he still comes - he's very old. Well I should say he'd be my group, because I worked one of my first jobs with Lance Le Cornu, and he was one of the Le Cornu's. We used to serve them right down near Holbrooks Road - a great big house down there. But Alf would always go in there because he'd load them up with everything. It was towards the end of the day, you see, and he'd go in. Whatever Alf wanted to get rid of, he'd go into Le Cornu's because they had plenty of money and they'd buy anything.

He was a good salesman - he'd sell anything. See the women'd come out to the van to buy their stuff and that, and it might be sixpence - sixpence change. "Oh, this is right," he'd say, and "gee up" he'd say to the horses and the horses'd go. He'd never give change. (laughs) He'd sling them an apple or an orange or something. But no, he was a character. He was a hard man to understand. What I mean, a lot of people hated him, yet those that knew him would swear by him. My son

down at Torrensville shop, he's the same - just the same, a real gyp. The same thing exactly.

How long did you work with Alf?

About two years - about fourteen to sixteen. Then I started with a firm in - a messenger boy - in Grenfell Street, William T Matthews.

Why did you make the change?

Oh, I got sick of getting the sack. (laughs) No, eventually I'd get the sack - I was doing something wrong or something else. Well eventually I think Roy - - -. Yes, Roy got me the job with William T Matthews. Well, I used to run messages around the town and deliver invoices and so forth. I got a bit old for them so they got me a job with G & R Wills and that's where I met this Lance Le Cornu. He was the son of Le Cornu's - this is how I figure it, because I was more or less working with him - and he was one of the Le Cornu's. And I saw this name, Lance Le Cornu, I said to the wife then, I said, "I bet you it's this bloke I worked with at G & R Wills.

What did you do there?

Worked there for about twelve months. Oh, pottering around in a department, getting up orders and unpacking stuff.

Were you in just the one department while you were there?

Yes, one department. What they call the Fancy Department. That was crockery and cutlery, or anything like that. At Christmas time you were in batches of three getting up orders to go away to the country. Well, I had two fellows with me - there was three of us - and these two fellows with me were two real bludgers. You know, they wouldn't work and of course I was conscientious and I was doing all their work too, and they'd let me work - I was silly. They let me do all the work.

So anyhow after Christmas, I was quite proud of the job I'd done, forgetting that they were loafing on me. So I went to the department manager and asked him whether I'd get a rise, and he took a few details and he said, "I'll see what I can do". Because you were only getting about two pound a week, if you were getting that. So anyhow eventually I got a call to go up and see the big chief. So I went up and sat down and he said, "You think you've earned a rise?" and I

said, "Yes". He did a bit of reading and talking and so forth, and he said, "I don't think you've earned one". Of course I was quite proud of the job I'd done, so I said, "Why not?" and he said, "Well here's your figures," he said. I said, "Yes, but," I says, "who was I working with?" Anyhow, one thing come another and he said - - -. Rang the bell and his secretary come in. He said, "Get this boy's pay," he says, "you're finished - out".

That was the start of my bike riding. (laughs) So that was how I come to be in the bike trade. I was kicked out of G & R Wills. I always wanted to be - - -. Then I always had an idea if I could get there I'd be a traveller. I thought, "Well this is a chance to be a commercial traveller," as they called them in those days - a representative. Instead of that I got the sack. That's when I went to Elliott.

So that was in 1923.

That'd be about 1923.

When you were, what, eighteen?

About eighteen. I'd started bike riding then - I was doing a little bit of bike riding. And a chap working in the department with me, he was a bike rider. That's how I got connected up with the bike riding.

What was his name?

Sulivan - Ralph Sulivan - old Sully.

We won't talk today about the actual racing or Elliotts, but you mentioned earlier that it was when you came up to work in town that you did get your own bike.

Oh yes. Yes, Dad bought me - - -. Well that ties up with my bike racing. See, well Dad bought me an old secondhand bike - been renovated up you see - to ride to work. It cost about four pound I think. Anyway, I had this old bike. In those days we were going to compulsory military drill and so I was at the drill parade over in Southwark there and a fellow named Chapman had a new bike - had a bike that he wanted to sell because he was getting a new one. And he was talking to somebody else about bike racing and I was just standing there. He said, "Why don't you buy it, Standish?" and I says, "I don't want a racing bike". They said, "Yes, you'd make a good bike rider - you've got good legs," and so forth. So, "Oh, I don't know". So anyhow

I went home and I told my Dad, and he said, "You can do what you like," he said, "but don't come and ask me for another bike". So anyhow I had a few bob saved up and I sold my other bike and one thing or the other, and I got this racing bike. It was all right to race on. So that's what started me racing.

I got this bike. Well then I'm going down the Port Road one Sunday morning for a ride, and I struck a fellow coming up alongside me on a sort of a racing bike and he said, "What have you got Chappie's old bike?" I thought, "How the hell does he know?" See, so, "How do you know?" He said, "Oh, I know Chappie". So anyhow we got talking and that and riding along, so we finished up right down to the Port. Went down through the Semaphore still talking - talking away. We were riding down and we went to the Semaphore. We were going to turn round to come back. Course in those days Port Road wasn't a bitumen road - it was an old wood block road.

But anyhow, we got down to the Semaphore and we got down on to the sea. He said, "Well go back along the beach". I said, "What all that way?" He said, "Yes". We got down on the beach and we finished up riding right through from there right through to Seacliff. Of course in those days, see, the beach - you never got off the beach. When we got to the beach - got to Seacliff - we were coming up and coming back home, and he said, "Why don't you have a go at bike riding?" I said, "Well I wouldn't go any good". He said, "Oh yes you would". He said, "Where do you live?" I said, "Oh, around here somewhere" - I didn't tell him. He said, "I'll meet you next week". He said, "Come out to the bike race with me". So I said, "All right, OK" - so I didn't turn up.

So anyhow, a few weeks after, I struck him again and he said, "You didn't turn up," or something or other. Anyhow I messed him around for a while. Eventually he found out where I lived, so he come round and I said, "I haven't got any gear". In those days in the Army they wear the sort of sandshoes sort of a thing - - -.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B

Second interview, focusing on Mr Standish's racing career and work for Elliott Brothers from 1923, 11 September 1990.

TAPE 3 SIDE A

Bert, we were talking last week about how you got involved in racing. You said you bought a racing bike from a chap called Chappie. Who was that?

No. That's right - Archie Chapman. Of course he's dead and gone now. He died very young as a matter of fact, but that was the start of it. That was when I was in the compulsory military cadets. He talked me into buying this bike. Then when I went out for a bit of a tour ride down the Port Road, another fellow that eventually did do bike riding recognised me on Chappie's bike. So he was the instigator. His name was Strugnell - Arthur Strugnell. He more or less talked me into it. He chased me up to go and ride. Well, I'd never seen a bike race in my life. Didn't know the first thing about it.

So we started off. Of course I was about - - -. What would I be then? Around about sixteen I suppose. So we started off and I happened to run second. He won the race because he wanted to win because he was the first one to win it on a Speedway bike. That was a fellow - - -. I mightn't told you in the first part. Bert Graham who had this Speedway bike, well he was a very prominent athlete in the Hindmarsh district and that - weightlifting and all this. Anyway he had this bike shop, the Speedway Bike Shop, and this fellow wanted to win the race on - - -. He was the first one to win a race on his bike so I let him win it. He gave me half the stake and I had half the stake - we got eleven shillings each, for me letting him win it. I could have gone on and won it but I didn't know what to do. I never knew the first thing about it. All he told me was to stop there where I was and let him go on, so I just let him go and in amazement I saw him go on and win it and me run second. (laughs)

Where was that first race?

That was from the Glynde Hotel. We started at the Glynde Hotel down Payneham Road to - what's it called now? Wellington Road it was called in those days - up another back street. I think it was about a two and a half mile block. It was a five mile race. So we finished down the old Glynde Road.

Do you remember who'd organised the race?

The Payneham Cycling Club, and it's still in operation I think - nearly sure.

How many cyclists competed?

Oh, I wouldn't know exactly, but I suppose about a dozen or so. Of course there wasn't the publicity about it that it would get now. It was just a mob of fellows started up as a club. Well this club was going. Actually speaking, Elliotts - Super Elliotts - come into it though. They were very prominent in this club because they were Payneham people. See, the Elliotts, they had their bike shop at Payneham, and the two brothers - Elliott brothers - - -. Well there was three of them really, and they were interested in pushbikes and they eventually got into motorbikes. Two of them - - -. There was two of them connected with the pushbikes come into town - into the city - and opened up their shop. The other brother wouldn't come in - he stopped out at Payneham. He called his firm Elliotts Payneham. And the other two who come into town called their shop the Super Elliotts. That's where the interest comes in as far as Elliotts - - -. That was the start of the Super Elliott Cycles.

I was surprised to find that the time Super Elliotts was such a long-standing one. It sounds like such a modern name.

No, no. No, Super Elliott bicycle firm would have started at about - - -. When did I start? '23 - I suppose around about the - - -. Well, yes, I can go back further. The start of them was that they were - the three brothers - were interested in this bike riding, and the war broke out. Or just before the war broke out, their sister, Mrs White, she went to an auction sale and bought a lot of old bike parts to give her brothers to play around with. Well, the war come along and of course bike parts then were very hard to get, so these three brothers, they got into it and started up selling bikes and pieces of bikes. That's how they originally started - Mrs White. She was their sister. Well, White's Estate down near Henley Beach was her husband's. They had a big estate down near the Lockleys Hotel. But she started her brothers off and that was the start. So that would have started - - -. You might say they would have started just after the First World War.

We'll talk a little bit more about Elliotts as we go along. Let's get back to when you first got involved with racing. Getting back to thinking about this first racing bike that you bought, how did that one differ from the secondhand bike your father had bought you?

Well, it had a fixed wheel whereas the one my father bought me was an old secondhand one, had just a free wheel, back pedal brake, mudguards and different handles - different altogether. More like a lady's bike with a top bar on it. So when I got this here racing bike - - -. Although not much difference to the average so-called racing bike today. Only it had no gears of course - there was no gears at all. But really speaking, it was not much different to the bikes of today. What you showed me just a few minutes ago. [See illustration following p. 20.] Practically the same as that.

When did you start racing with gears?

Oh, never. Gears come in - - -. I helped to fit on a set in about 1928. Old Elliott brought some out from England. They were just new and there was no instructions of how to fit them on or what to do with them. So I was in the workshop at the time, so we had a fiddle around to get these gears going. Well of course we didn't know the fine points of it or anything else, but they gave all the troubles in the world because they were very new, even overseas. They called them the Cyclo brand. Well that was the start of it, and a few of them put them on their bikes to race on and that, but they were never a success and they threw them aside - wouldn't have them.

Hubert Opperman, he come through Adelaide on his way to the Tour de France and we showed them to him, and he'd never seen them because he'd come from Melbourne. He'd never seen anything about them. So he went over there, and when he come back again, he stopped in Adelaide for a while. Bruce Small, who was his mentor, was a pretty shrewd sort of a bird. He got the sole Australian rights for Cyclo gears. When they went to France they found out that they were using them over there, so really speaking, that's the start of the gears that they're using on bikes today. But they went into a bit of a lull while the war was on, see, and although there was quite a number of different types come out, none of them were really successful. You used to have a lot of chain coming off. You'd be going along, the chain'd come off - wasn't reliable.

Well, after the war, the Japs got on to the principle of it and modified them up and they've never looked back. So they've never looked back from there on.

But as you say, they didn't play a part in your racing?

No. No, my main racing was track racing. I did very little road racing. What we used to do, you'd have a racing season [which] would be from around about October - Eight Hours Day. There was generally sports meetings to be held in October - like Eight Hours Day. That'd be the start of your track season and you'd go through till Easter. That's where you'd find all the different meetings, right through the country. Well, by the time you'd done your track season, well then you'd sort of have a spell.

Well then the fellows that weren't doing track riding would do road racing. Well they'd come out, they'd do their road racing. Well, when we'd finish our track racing, you would leave your gear down and you'd do a few short races and just have a few races just to keep yourself moving. Of course then the road races would start to get longer - likes of Burra to Adelaide and all those long races, see a hundred mile races. Well I used to - ending up to about twenty-five mile, I'd leave that alone. Then you'd have spell and you'd start training again round about September.

So the road races, did they concentrate in the cooler winter months?

Yes, it was winter racing you see. But nowadays, a lot of them, they race all the year round. But it was more of a seasonal thing. It's like football and cricket, see. The cricketers come out in the summer and the footballers come out in the winter.

So I never used gears. Well for track racing, well, you wouldn't have gears, you've got to have a fixed wheel, because you can't - - -. If you was in a track race with a bunch of riders, you'd got anything from ten to fifteen, twenty riders in a bunch, if somebody's got a brake and they put their brake on, you'd have them all in a heap. So having a fixed wheel, not only that, you've got more control over a bike on a fixed wheel, because the moment you stopped pedalling - ease pedalling and straightened your wheel - well your bike automatically stops, you

see. You've got automatic brake on it, and you've got a better control over a bike with the fixed wheel than you have a free wheel.

What sort of a bike was this first racing one you got? Do you remember the brand name?

Yes, it was built by Bullock Cycle Works. It was a very, very old firm in Adelaide. It was their second grade bike - an Arrow. See, their first bike was called a Bullock Special. Well then they had their second one - grade one - was an old green one, an Arrow, like a second grade one.

Did it take you time to adjust to that different type of cycle? Do you remember learning to ride on the racing cycle?

Yes. I don't know how to place it. No, riding a good racing bike is a different thing altogether. You've got your very light wheels. That is the basis, in my opinion, of a racing bike, is the wheels. People think it's the weight of the bike. It's not. In my opinion it's the light wheels. The lighter the wheels the easier the bike will run. Now even you would see this now, and would realise. It's the easiest way to explain it. You've most likely seen the fellows with the Grand Prix, they have a wheel that wide [indicates great width]. One man will pick that up and put that on that car - you've seen them do it.

Yes.

Well that wheel has got to be light hasn't it? There's the whole answer to it, and that's what we used to have fifty-odd years ago, light wheels. Because that's the part that's just spinning. But if you haven't got a little bit of weight in the bike, there's no momentum in it. It's like if you get a table tennis ball and a golf ball and roll them along, the golf ball will go further than the table tennis does. As soon as the pressure has gone from the table tennis ball, it stops, but the other ball would go on. Now that's commonsense, isn't it?

Yes.

So that's the same thing with the bike. If you've got too light a bike, as soon as you ease off the bike, the bike stops. See, you've got to keep pushing the whole of the time. You don't get any relaxation. See, in a track race, for argument's sake, if you were in a ten mile scratch race, well you're not going flat out all the time - you've got to have your little breathers. Well, as soon as you ease, well you stop - you've

got to go again. See, you've got to keep going. That's my theory of the racing bike. There's a difference between a racing bike and a touring bike. The same thing in a road racing bike. Well, they load their bike up with their drinking containers and extra handbrakes - well, handbrakes and all the rest of it - well, you've got to cut a bit of weight out of your bike to compensate for that. But a track racing bike is just the bare bike.

Looking back on that first track racing bike you had, was it a good one?

No, no, second grade. That was steel wheels - only had steel wheels. Well in those days we used to race on wooden rims. You'd have the big wooden rims. They were about that big. [indicates about one and a half inch width] Well then when it come to real track racing, you had what they used to call single wheels - singles. Well they were very, very light wooden rims, about an inch wide - very light ones - to get the lightness. Well eventually they come to - - -. [alloy rims HS] They scrapped them and we come to aluminium rims. Well 90 percent - well 100 percent - of the cyclists today have alloy wheels - have aluminium rims and hubs.

But they tell me now, where we chopped these old wooden rims up for firewood - because nobody wanted them - they tell me now that overseas, and the big major races, road races, they're coming back to wooden rims. The theory, or the idea is, that riding in those long races - Tour de France and Brest to Brest and all those - the continual use of brakes rubbing on the alloy rims caused the heat, so they find that they're burning out the rubber brake rods etc. So they tell me now that they're coming back to wooden rims. Where we used to have the old wooden rims, we used to cut them up - cut them in pieces about that long and make coat hangers out of them. We've got a couple of them down at the shop now - what's called the single rims.

Were the alloy rims introduced during your racing career?

No, they were just coming in when I was going out. I still think - I haven't heard it - but my theory is that the wooden rim has got more life in it. When you stop and think - - -. You mightn't be able to follow me to a certain extent, but a wooden rim over a rough area, no matter how smooth it might appear, there's a certain amount of vibration. Well, a wooden rim, in my opinion, will bounce on - go on - there's more life

in it. An alloy one more or less hits it dead. The same as a motorcar. Now, you've driven a motorcar over corrugated road. If you go over it slow it shakes you to death. Go over it fast, you jump straight across it, and that's where I reckon a wooden rim - - -. This might be the reason they're coming back to wooden rims overseas now. I don't know, it's just [through] hearsay you find out that the - - -. Where we were cutting up for kindling wood, wooden rims, overseas - - -. Off the track. Anyway, we were chopping them up. That's right, overseas now, they're paying over a hundred dollars a pair for a pair of wooden rims.

This first race that you entered, was that before you joined Elliotts?

Yes, before I joined Elliotts. I joined Elliotts - - -. How I come to get to Elliotts, I left my brother's job - brother Alf - on the fruit and vegetable business, and another brother of mine got me a job working for an indent agent, William T Matthews, in Grenfell Street, running messages and delivering invoices etc. Well, I got a bit old for them. I was about fifteen I suppose - I started to get a bit old for them - so they got me a job at G & R Wills.

Yes, we talked about that last week.

Well, after I - - -. Then I got mixed up with the bike riding through this lad that I met on the road - Strugnell. Well, I was mixed up then with - - -. [break in recording to rectify microphone position]

Yes, you were saying Ralph Sulivan.

Yes, Ralph Sulivan - old Sully the old fox they used to call him. He trained me, or coached me, for a while. So I was working with him at G & R Wills, and when I left there, he got me the job at Elliotts. That'd be in 1923. Well that photo was taken in 1925 - that's two years. I was twenty there so I was about eighteen when I first went to Elliotts.

Did Sulivan at G & R Wills?

Well, he eventually drifted away. He was a bit of a wanderer. He drifted away and went over to Western Australia and became a bookmaker, but he died fairly young of cancer. So I don't know just what he did in his later life, but he went over there as a bookmaker.

Do you remember your introduction to Elliotts? Did he take you round there?

Yes, he went down to Elliotts. When I got the sack, more or less, at G & R Wills for telling the boss I was worth more than what he reckoned I was, he took me down to Elliotts - introduced me to Elliotts and they gave me a job there just knocking around in the workshop. They had a shop there, cleaning up old bikes and renovating bikes etc. From there on I just graduated up from that section into the assembling and repair section, and from there I graduated to managing their shop in Rundle Street.

About what period of time between starting with them and going to their Rundle Street shop?

'23 - - -. When did I get married? In '24. Oh, I'd say about three years - about three to four years.

Where was this first shop you worked at - the workshop?

In Gawler Place where Motors Limited were there - they've gone. Midway between Pirie Street and Flinders Street in Gawler Place. It actually was an old livery stable where they used to have the big round doorways. You know, the doorways, instead of being square, was sort of oval, just like a big arch you went through. They were getting into motorbikes then. They had the Excelsior motorbike and the Villiers two-stroke engine motorbikes. Well motorbikes didn't interest me. Then for years they had the shop over in the corner of Pirie Street and Gawler Place. Well, they shifted me from the factory - the workshop - because they had the motorbikes in Gawler Place. They shifted me into their shop in Pirie Street - up top. Upstairs we used to do the repairs and the assembling - bikes and repairs, any of that.

Let's talk a little bit about the first workshop in Gawler Place. How many employees were involved?

Frank Duckett, - - -. I suppose they had about seven or eight there, working there. They had the two top motorbike riders of the State there, Jack Wise and Frank Duckett. They were the two top grade motorcyclists when they used to race down at the Showgrounds, the speedway there. But they were a bit older than me, but they were on

the motorbikes. Well, they went overseas riding motorbikes. Well then they come back and started on their own, I think.

Who else was there?

[break in recording] There was Frank Duckett, Jack Wise, Tom Clark, Stan Clarke, Percy Kutcher. They were the main ones there that I can remember, but there were others, likes of me, coming and going all the time. But then I moved across from there to the corner of Pirie Street.

Do you remember who interviewed you for your original job?

I think Mr Vic Elliott. He was in charge of the pushbike section. Then there was old Bert Elliott - called him B J Elliott. He handled all the motorbikes section of it. Then there was a son come on - old Bert Elliott, his son come along, Laurie. Well he was about the same age as me, but he was the messenger boy etc down in the shop in Pirie Street.

Was one of the Elliott brothers at the workshop on a day to day basis?

No, they were more or less - - -. Old B J Elliott, he handled all the book work and all the executive side of it, and Vic Elliott, he handled all the retail shop. Because they only had the one shop. Actually speaking, the three brothers - getting on to the history of the Super Elliotts - the three brothers, when they started up with these bits and pieces of bikes, they had an argument. Well, they wanted to come to town and the one at Payneham, he didn't, so Vic and Bert, they get their heads together. So Vic left the Payneham shop and come into town and opened up a shop to see how it'd go, and when it started to go, well then Bert Elliott left the other one. And that's how the two Elliott brothers originated.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A: SIDE B

So who was in charge of the Gawler Place workshop?

Vic Elliott. Vic was really my boss. He was the one that handled all the bicycle side of it and all the racing side.

What kind of a bloke was he?

Very nice. He was a very la-di-da type. Well, not la-di-da, but a very nice straightforward fellow, and the most likeable of the two. The other one, old B J Elliott, he was a hard and fast businessman, but a great

philosopher. He'd come and sit down and talk to you and tell you what you should do and what you shouldn't do, and what people should do and what people shouldn't do. And now my sons must get sick and tired of me say, "B J Elliott used to say this", "B J would say that". They said, "Christ, can you only talk about B J? Was he the only one about?" But he was. A lot of stuff, as I've said to my kids, "Eventually you'll say, 'Dad used to say that', when I'm dead and gone".

Can you remember some of B J Elliott's philosophies?

Oh, a ton of them. What did he say? "There's no fool like the fool that can't be told he's a fool." Now, if you analyse that. (laughs) And he used to say - he'd come in - "Now, if I tell you to do something - - -". He said, "If I tell you you're a bloody fool," he said, "forget it". No, he said, "If I tell you you're a fool, forget it. But if I come and I say you're a bloody fool, I mean it". (laughs) And he did. He'd come in, "You're a fool to do that," he'd say. Well you'd say, "Oh yes". And he'd say, "You bloody fool, what did you do that for?" You'd say, "Jesus, the old bloke's on the wall". But he was shrewd, a very shrewd fellow. Come up from nothing. His first job when he left school - or before he left school - was planting onions. He said, "That finger - onion plant". They come up from nothing and dressed - B J in particular - dressed similar. You never see him dolled up, but Vic was always respectable and very fashion conscious.

Would he wear a suit?

Yes. But B J, he'd have the same suit on year in, year out. He had a crook duct - tear duct - with his eyes. Some people used to call him gravy eyes. He'd be talking to you and go like that [demonstrates] and wipe his finger on the lapel of his coat. But he was, as I say, a very hard businessman, and he told me one philosophy, "Never pay anybody until you've got to". He said, "Don't run your business on your money - run it on other people's money," and he did too, and it's right. It's as true as you like.

Now one of my sons, he's got a bad name in the trade for not paying his debts, because I told him when he first started. I said, "Now look, B J said you don't run your business on your money, you run it on theirs. Don't pay any accounts until you've got to, but see that it's

protected," and I've always done the same. So when your account is due, even now - - -. I've just paid my RAA. I had the second notice. My wife said, "Why don't you pay it?" I said, "I haven't got to. They'll give me another notice". It's been drilled into me. And old Elliott, I've seen him - - -. I've seen the two of them in the shop there - there's a doorway there and a doorway there and somebody was coming across - and they'd say, "Oh, here's so-and-so," one of the travellers. If he comes in that door, one runs out that door, if he comes in that door, one'd run out that door. You couldn't give a cheque because they've both got to sign the cheque. He'd say, "My brother's away. He's not here today so I can't pay the cheque today, but come around tomorrow. Come around next week, I'll give it to you". Anything to dodge paying. So, as I say, they're the hard things of business. And yet old Elliott - - -. Vic died comparatively young - round about fifty-six or so - but the old bloke, old B J, he would have died that close to a millionaire that it wouldn't matter. He owned property everywhere. If you had a dog kennel at home on a block of land and you wanted to sell it, he'd buy the dog kennel. But very hard thinking businessman.

How old were they in relation to you when you started?

Oh, old men. See, well, Vic would have been forty - thirty-five to forty. When I started there, well I was only sixteen, seventeen. And old B J would have been another - - -. I don't know whether Laurie, the one at Payneham, was in between or not, but he would have been another four or five years different. He would have been about forty.

Did they ride bikes themselves?

Vic did, but B J didn't. He was a little fat dumpy fellow. Vic was a very slim type of fellow. He rode motorbikes. As a matter of fact he was one of the first to do a hundred mile an hour on a motorbike on Sellicks Beach. I've never seen the record anywhere, but that was always the story as far as that was concerned. He had an old - those days - a Big X motorbike - it was a bit cumbersome - with a sidecar on the side, and it was all painted with stripes all round. You could see for miles around. Had these two blue stripes around it. Because this fellow who worked for them - was a fellow named Percy Kutcher - he was a wonderful painter. He'd do anything with a brush, but he was an

alcoholic. They couldn't get him off of the booze. But then again, he was a real - - -. He'd come to work in his best suit, put his old rags on, and when it come knock off time, you'd see old Percy down washing his hands and getting changed, and his hair - wouldn't be a thing out of place. But eventually the booze got him to the extent that they couldn't control him. But he saw the light in the finish and come back to work at Elliotts. He drifted around, just a hobo around the town. But a real nice fellow - he was a wonderful tradesman.

You've talked a little bit about B J's business philosophies. Did they have certain expectations about what their employees should behave like?

Yes, very much - very, very much. A little episode, now, whether I can repeat, to give you an idea of him. I was managing his shop in Rundle Street - 147 Rundle Street. That's just there near where - - -. They've knocked it down now, but just up from Pulteney Street where they built that new place there. It was in there - 147 Rundle Street. Well I was there for about twelve years. How I come to be selected to manage it, I was up in the workshop on the Friday and they sang out for me. We used to have a tube - they used to talk in the tube. Anyway, there was two shops together, you see. So you go up the stairs here to the workshop there. Well, if they want a repair job down, or something done, they just get the blower down the bottom and say, "Bert, I want so-and-so bike". "Right oh" - instead of going up getting it. Well, it come up the tube, "Bert, you're wanted down here". "Jeez, what's happened?" - a Friday afternoon. So when I get down there there was B J and Vic and the son that was my age, the three of them together, and I thought, "Hell, what have I done?" So they said, "You've got the sack," and I looked at them and I could see this. I said, "Oh yes". I said, "What am I going to do with it?" They said, "Yep, you finish up here tonight. You've got to go round tomorrow in Rundle Street and take over in charge of Rundle Street shop". I said, "Me!" and they said, "Yes". I says, "Oh, I wouldn't be any good there". He said, "Yes you will - you'll be right". I said, "Who's going to help me?" "You're on your own." I said, "Gee, I don't know". They said, "Yes, here's the keys. You open up there tomorrow morning and take over".

Well, I showed a bit of promise, because when I used to go away around the country racing, I'd always come back with an order or so

for somebody, because being a promising rider and that, you see - or not a promising, but a prominent one - I'd come out and see the lads there. No trouble to sell a bike or so. What I said went. What I'd say would go, you see. Well I'd always come back with one or two orders. So then again if I was down the shop and they were busy, well I never hesitated to say, "Yes, can I fix you up?", you know, just because I was working there. So, unbeknownst to me - - -. I didn't know. I suppose because they took notice of my sales ability. So that's how they sent me around there.

Well, I was there for round about fifteen years, and I used to say to old Elliott, I said, "You never come round and see me or tell me anything. I never know what's going on". He said, "Bert, if things are going bad I'll be here. (laughs) If you don't see me, you know it's going all right". But to show what a cunning old fellow he was, now I was there working, handling his money and his shop, so he said to me one day, he said, "Bert, you rent your house don't you?" I said "Yes". He said, "Wouldn't you like to own it some day?" I said, "I'd love to have one," because this is in the Depression days more or less. So he said - because he's dead and gone now so we can put this on tape - - -. He said, "What if you was to look around and see if you can find a house that you'd like and I'll finance you?" I said, "Oh, that's very good - lovely. Thanks very much."

So this is all right. So I chased around looking where [I could] see a house, and of course those days I was getting about two pound ten a week, which was - - -. They were never noted for paying big wages anyhow. So I eventually saw a house and I went to him and I said, "I've found a house, Mr Elliott, I think we'd like to buy". All right. He said, "Now where is it?" Told him. "What's the price?" "So much, so much." "All right," he said, "how much money can you put down, Bert?" and I never had a lot so I said, "Oh, about a hundred pound". He said, "A hundred pound". I didn't have a hundred pound but I said to him I had about a hundred pound. So he said, "A hundred pound". He said, "You don't drink do you?" I said, "No". "You don't bet?" I said, "No". "You don't gamble?" "No." "You don't smoke." "No." "You ought to be bloody well ashamed of yourself". The bottom fell out of me. He said, "You don't drink, smoke or gamble," he said. And he said, "And you're in a regular job, and you can only save a hundred pound". Needless to

say I never got the house, because what he wanted to find out, if I had had said I had two hundred pound, he said, "Where did you get that money from?" (laughs)

Now, that's the gospel truth. He did it to another lad, but the other lad had too much money. He got the sack because he owned a motorcar. I won't say his name because he's still alive. But, now, that's what I say is the type of fellow.

When I left them - - -. They put me out on the road as a country traveller just after the war. Well, stock was scarce - we had no stock because you couldn't import much during the war - we had no country recognised customers. We had a few agents around the country. So I was fitted up with an old - - -. This was the end of me over there. They fitted me up with an old ex-Army ute which was a dilapidated sort of thing but it went. Petrol was always scarce, there was no motels to stop at and the hotels were all run down over the war, so several nights I slept in the ute rather than go to some daggy old hotel when you don't drink.

So anyway after around about six or eight months of that - - -. I used to come home of a Friday night and away again Monday morning - away you'd go. Well you had no time to yourself or anything else. It more or less broke up my first marriage - but anyway that's not the story. But anyway, he come to the - - -. So I come in one day and he said, "Bert, your figures are not too good". I said, "Well I can't get blood out of stone". I said, "I go miles out of my way and Mr so-and-so - he's not there, he's in town, and Mr there". I said, "They want this, they want that and we haven't got it. Not going to open up an account". See, if you go to them they'll say, "Have you got any spokes?" "No," because they were a scarce line. "Have you got any of this?" and "Got any of that?" See well you didn't have it. You only had the everyday line which everybody else had. Well, they wouldn't give me an order when they've got another traveller coming around.

So anyhow, after about six months I'd had it. I said, "I've had this business of going around chasing round the country trying to get orders, living in the ute". So he said, "Well what do you want to do?" I said, "Come back into the shops". He said, "No". Well, the war was over and most of the lads that were more or less conscripted, they were obligated to take them back, see, so he had these fellows came back and

into their old jobs. Well my job was gone. So they said, "You've still got to do it". I said, "No, I'm not going to". They said, "You've got to. You're the only one we've got that can do the job, and you can do the job". I said, "Well I'm not going to". They said, "Well, what are you going to do?" I said, "Well, if I haven't got a job I'll leave". "Please yourself." I said, "All right, I'll leave". They said, "Well, it's up to you". This is how tough they got.

So anyway, a little before that - I was with them for twenty-three years - - -. Somewhere in the archives in there I think I've got the letter congratulating me on twenty-three years' service - how good a salesman I was, how good at service I was and all the rest of it, and telling me what a good bloke I was. Well, I put that aside. I said, "Yes, that's very nice". So anyhow they gave me this letter and congratulated me, but that was before I went out on the road. Well, after I went out on the road and I left - more or less left and got the sack at the same time - - -. You name it, that was it. So I sacked myself and they told me to go. They really thought I would turn and come back, but I chased around for a job.

The first place I went into was Harris Scarfe's, see if I could get a job at Harris Scarfe's, quite proud of myself with my letter that I had of twenty-three years of service. I showed the fellow my credential - my letter. He read it and he looked at me and he read the letter, and I could see the look on his face. I never got the job. When he read that, "Here's a good man, everything else. Twenty-three years' service and he's looking for a job. What happened?" See. So I could see that I never got the job, so I just crumpled it up and stuck it in my pocket and I went down to Vic Elliott, because he was the only one you could talk to. I said, "Vic, here, you can wipe your bottom with this". "Why, what's wrong, Bert?" I said, "I just went after a job and I gave that as a reference and the bloke kicked me out of the place". He said, "Why?"

Oh, in the meantime, Laurie Elliott in his fit of anger said, "You were never any good to us anyway". This can go on tape, too, because he's dead. But anyhow, Laurie said "You're never any good to us," so this is what riled. I went down to Vic and had a go at him. I said, "Well I went and put in for a job at Harris Scarfe's and I got knocked back. Laurie told me I was never any good to you". I said, "What a lot of mugs you blokes must have been to have let me put it over you for

twenty-three years - because I could say what I liked then. And Vic was a man you could talk to. That's what I said in the first place - the best of the tribe. So he said, "No, Bert, that letter was given to you in sincerity". I said, "Well, I don't believe it ..... never will". He said, "Look forget it Bert. Don't tell anybody". I said, "Yes, I will, I'll tell the world," and I have told the world, because people that know me knew my loyalty to Elliotts. So that's the start and finish of Elliotts. That's quite a story isn't it?

It is, yes. I'd like to go back, as we talk about your racing, and also go back to Elliotts every so often, to pick up the story there. When you first started with them, was it a requirement that you be a bike rider that you work with them?

Being a bike rider got me the job. Concession-wise I never got any time off to go training or the likes of what they do now, but I never bought another pushbike in my life from there on because I would come back - - -. Many a time I would come back from a country town and I'd sold my frame - which was a part of your bike - to one of the local lads, and then they'd build me another one. Or else they'd get some new stuff out from overseas - they had to do a bit of importing. "Hey Bert, put this on and try it out - see how it goes". That's how I measured up the lightweight stuff - lightweight parts.

Old Elliott come to me one day - old B J - and he said, "Bert, I've got some lighter weight stuff, aluminium stuff, from England". He said, "I want you to put it in your bike and try it out and see what you think of it". So right oh, everything was aluminium - the cables, and cranks and the seat. All the seat, iron work - handlebars and rims and hubs, everything. Oh, it was light as light. That's where I found out that you had no momentum in the bike, because at the time I was one of the leading riders and I was riding in good shape. I just went from bad to worse and I come to the conclusion that I was riding myself flat. I was working hard all the time. So I said, "No, it's no good - it's too light," and I threw it aside. A lot of the other guns reckoned I was mad, didn't know what I was talking about, but they all tried it out and they all did the same thing because they found out it was too light. So I put back my other stuff on my bike and had a bit of a spell and come back again.

Now, the amount of racing I did while I was with them, I only thought to myself the other day, of the different country towns that I raced in. Now, I'll start from Port Augusta. Port Augusta, Quorn, Wirrabara, Appila, Laura, Port Pirie, Crystal Brook, Kapunda, Tanunda, Angaston, Greenock, Williamstown, Gawler [Blyth, Point Pass, Clare HS]. Now that's up that time. Mount Gambier, Casterton, Naracoorte, Goolwa, Langhornes Creek, Strathalbyn. Now I raced in all those towns, plus a few others. Then around the city I raced at Port Adelaide on the flat oval, and I raced at Port Adelaide, Prospect - Prospect Oval - Thebarton Oval, Hindmarsh Oval, Glenelg Oval, Colonel Light Gardens Oval, Jubilee Oval. Now I raced on all those places. I thought to myself the other day - - -. Oh, Mildura. You can put all Mildura and Renmark, Barmera. So I must have done a lot of racing. But with that they would be most of the times - or practically all the time - while I was racing at Elliotts. Well, I don't know whether I got paid for my time off or not - I don't remember - but knowing Elliotts I don't think I would have. (laughs) But I was getting money all the time - you know, getting prize money.

I think we'll go back and forwards between Elliotts and your racing. Let's talk a little bit about your racing. Did you have to make a conscious decision about whether you were going to be a professional or an amateur rider?

I couldn't be an amateur. As a matter of fact, when I started riding there was no amateurs. I think I briefly said something to you before. The start of the Amateur Cycling Club here, or the Association. Vic Elliott and a fellow named Stephens - Dump Stephens; he was the President of the League of Wheelmen - they decided they were going to form an amateur club in Adelaide, and they called a meeting to be held in the old YMCA hall on the corner of Gawler Place and Grenfell Street. When they called this meeting up there was a fellow named Murray - George Murray. He was Secretary of the Railway Institute which was an amateur body connected with - - -. [the South Australian Railways HS] Down the old Cheer Up Hut, down the back of the railway station. Old George Murray, a fellow named Bill Sweeting. He was the Manager of 5CL and he come over from Melbourne. He was connected over in Melbourne with Bruce Small, Malvern Stars. He was naturally interested in bikes or what other. Well he was Manager here of 5CL - he was one. There was

another fellow, an English bloke, called Charlie Cole. I don't know much about him. Well, they were the three main ones. They were at this meeting and they were amateur minded, and in those days an amateur was an amateur. If you raced anywhere at all for money, you was out, see.

Well they called this meeting out of order to the fact that professionals couldn't start an amateur club. So this is the start of the Cycling Amateur Association, and I don't think there's anybody about that could tell you this story. So anyhow the meeting was disbanded and these people - - -. I don't know where they'd be now. I know old George Murray only died here within the last twelve months. But what happened to Bill Sweeting and the other bloke, I don't know. But anyway they formed their amateur club, and their first amateur race started from the Newmarket Hotel. I think I told you that.

Yes.

That was the very first amateur bike race.

When was that meeting held, do you know?

That would have been - - -. Oh no, I was talking to old Tommy Herriman and the others a few months ago. Fifty years ago. Just what month - - -. Their first meeting was this road race down there, and the next one was Eight Hours Day. It would be roughly this time of the year. They had Eight Hours Day carnival out at Colonel Light Gardens. That was the first track race.

So round about the end of the thirties?

Yes, before the war. Well that's formed that up. Well I was always actively interested, but I couldn't take an official position because I was a professional.

So the concept of being an amateur rider just didn't occur to you when you first started?

No, a bike race was a bike race, full stop, and there was no other bike race to ride in, because this amateur club would have formed, oh, ten to fifteen years after I started racing.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE B: TAPE 4 SIDE A

Let's start talking a bit more generally about the cycling world. We've talked a little bit about your first racing cycle. How long did you persevere with that Bullock bike?

Oh, when I went to Elliotts, naturally I got an Elliott bike. I should say about six months.

How many races would you have done before you went to Elliotts?

I don't know. I had a record in the juniors. I don't know how long it went for. I raced for - - -. In my junior career, which would be roughly about twelve months, I was never out of a place. So I was either first, second or third.

Where was the cut-off point for juniors?

When I turned eighteen. Then I got amongst the likes of most of those bike riders there - well hardened, seasoned riders - and when you got amongst those hard and seasoned riders, well they'd use you up. They'd jam me out of it - talk you out of it. Anything for a few bob. So the first season I went around the country - see, we used to do track riding - I was placed in every wheel race. Now the wheel race was always considered the main race - generally a two mile race. That was the big prize. I was placed in every wheel race. I couldn't win one. The main reason was I didn't have enough there. [points to head] Do you remember me saying? Guts, brains and speed. I had the speed and I had the guts, but I didn't know what to do with it.

So that's where old Sully come into it. He was as shrewd as you like. He used me up too. Gave me the biggest fright of my life one time. He showed me how to get into a real position on the track with another rider, and work into a good position. So we were on the Hindmarsh Oval one time and I'm trying to get into this good position he'd told me. He was on the inside of me and I'm worrying him. I'd work into this position, he would tell me. He'd come around, he'd push me out of it and he'd get in there. In the end he said, "For Christ sake get out of the road, Stan". (laughs) He always used to call me Stan. And he got my handlebars - he shook my handlebars. And of course you've got bikes all around and if somebody shakes your handlebars - I got out of the road quick. But I was trying out one of his methods.

It didn't work on him.

Well, he got sick of it. When you're doing about twenty or thirty laps and somebody's niggling at you all the time. So then when my brother come along - - -. My brother, well he used to come and see us racing,

so we put him in a couple of boys' races. I said to him, "Well you're going to gain from what I've learnt". I said, "I'll win from - - -". In the juniors, when I went into the seniors, well back I go on a handicap. You see, you're handicapped back. I said, "Now you're going to win your races out in the front. You're going to learn the game first and then win races". So we left him out in the front. Well he was a big boy. So, as I say, he was around sixteen stone when he won a championship here. So anyway he was riding off these front marks and he'd slow the field down for me to get up. See, he'd get out in the front and I'd say, "Well right oh, slow". If we got in the finals, well he'd just slow it down. They'd all sit before him - trace behind him - because he was so big and comfortable to get behind and of course it'd give me a chance to get up on towards the front positions - until they woke up to us.

But anyway, when he started off we were at Williamstown and he said, "What'll I do?" I didn't get into the final - the final of the wheel race see. And of course you have heats and then the final. Well I didn't get into the final. I said, "Well go up to those couple of lads from Port Pirie there and tell them you'll take them for a chop". Taking means cart them along - do the pacing. So he went up and he come back and he said, "They want nothing to do with me. What'll I do?" I said, "Well sit on them". And I said, "Win it yourself - have a go". I said, "You can do it". So all right, away they go, and they weren't worrying about this big fat Standish. So away they go and, bang, away goes the final bell and he just stepped on the pedals and washed them all up. Did they growl - grizzle? Because he sat behind them all the time. Well, see, that's what they call bludging. See you're supposed to take your lap, do your - - -. [share HS]

So from there, he went on from there. I said, "Right". We went up to Laura. He won the wheel race at Laura. We went to Appila - won the wheel race at Appila. Of course he's right out in the front mark and I used to be on the back mark. Well what I'd do to let him win, I'd be among the scratch men at the back of the field, so I would just more or less bludge on them, until they woke up. Instead of going out and doing my bit of pace and chasing, I'd go out the front and just ease down and of course they'd all ease down with you. Well big "fat" was out in the front winning it. (laughs) This is what I say in the game, it's the brains of the game.

See, well eventually of course we got back on the same mark together - all around about together. Of course then we - - -. I said to one of the handicappers one time, I said, "You never put the two of us in the same heat together. Why?" "Because you buggers, you always put your heads together," he said. So they used to always break us up if they could. But it all comes in the game. And when you get a bunch of fellows - - -.

Now, as I say, there's a picture there. That wouldn't be all the bike riders. See that's seniors and juniors, mixed. Not too many juniors there - they're nearly all seniors. Well, there were a fair number of bike riders about, but they weren't the flashies like they are today. Any old football guernsey or a pair of bathing trunks or anything was - - -. [good enough HS] The only good thing the cyclists in those days would have would be always a good pair of shoes.

Let's talk about the outfit. Tell me a bit more about the sorts of things you'd wear.

Well the first outfit I had was a pair of green hide soled Army sandals that they gave us for issue when I was in the cadets, a pair of khaki shorts which I had, and a khaki guernsey - khaki sort of thing similar to this. Well that was it. My toe straps were practically nil. Well, see, a bike rider - a good bike rider - he has a good solid shoe at the bottom. See you get a leather sole and it's as hard as that, because you've got your foot down hard. Now these fellows that call themselves bike riders around the street now with sandshoes on, well, when they push down on a pedal, say that wide [three inches], their foot - - -. They sort of claw their foot. Well after a distance with a foot clawing like that, their foot would start to ache. Once that starts to ache they alter that position and then their ankles ache, then their knees ache. See, you've got to be comfortable, particularly over a distance. And that's where it all starts, down at your feet.

Was there a particular line of shoes that cyclists would buy?

Yes. They'd pay over a hundred dollars a pair for shoes now.

What about when you were starting out?

When we were starting, no. We used to get a little leather shoe - leather top - and we used to treasure those shoes. When you finished

racing, you have a little block - underneath a little block of leather. Nowadays they have proper studs and all. But anyhow, we had a little block of leather, round about two inches wide and about - say about a quarter of an inch thick - and you'd put it just under your shoe about there. Well that would go - - -. You'd have your toe clip would go to the top of it like that, and then you'd have that block there so that you could - - -. You push and pull. When your foot gets down like that, see, that's your motion. See, your ankle is going around. Well, when you get to the top, you practice - you drop your heel so that as soon as the pedal's on the top you get behind it to push it. When you get down - as soon as you get down - your foot goes under to pull it up. See you're like that all the time. You practice that. Some get it naturally - I had it naturally - but that is the action you've got to get so there's not a dead spot.

Well in those days the shoe was that way. Well then your riding trunks were - - -. Well, you started off with a pair of bathers, or something like that. Then eventually you'd buy a pair of knickers. Well then you graduated up as time went on. They used to put a piece of shammy inside the seat of the knickers, see, which was better for sitting on over distance. Well then of course, then they come along with all different silk jackets and so forth. But today they spend some big money. They spend a hundred, a hundred and fifty dollars for a pair of knickers, and a hundred, hundred and fifty dollars for a pair of shoes.

Would Elliotts have supplied your clothing?

No you buy your own. My wife used to make mine, and she used to make my jacket. You'd buy the knickers, sort of cashmere sort of a knicker. You used to be able to buy them in Windsor Smith. As a matter of fact the big shoes people in Melbourne now, they started off making bike shoes - bike riding shoes. They were noted among the cyclists. You could get a pair of Windsor Smith shoes. I don't know the start of the place, but they were the only ones were making bike shoes, and they could have quite easily have been connected, like Elliotts. Connected in bikes and started making shoes.

Where would you get the Windsor Smith shoes in Adelaide?

From Elliotts. Elliotts used to get them over from Melbourne. But even now, you could go round the town now to the bike shops, and I'm doubtful whether - - -. There's only a bike shop here and there that'd carry that sort of equipment.

When you were mentioning about the shoes and this leather block, so that would be on the pedal as you're riding?

Yes, it'd fit in the - - -. The toe clip comes round like that to the pedal like that there. [demonstrates] Well that stops there and then the block'd go in there, just behind the bar of the pedal. You haven't got that picture there handy of me. [selects photograph]

This one? The Dunn Sash?

That'll do, I think so. No, it's not quite clear. Have you got a clearer one there? [Selects another photograph showing him wearing the Kilkenny Amateur Cycling Club sash. See reproduction following p. 138.] Yes. Now see that hanging down there?

Yes.

Well that's fastened to the pedal. Well when you get your foot in it - - -. When it's hanging down like that [in the photo], and it's then when the pedal comes up like that, you just put your foot in that. You can't see the shoes too good there. Had little socks we used to get - little white socks. So some wouldn't. But see now, that comes down and then up. Well then your strap goes in the back of the pedal, straight around your foot around there. Well you'd get that. When you get your foot in there - into that block - you get the block as tight as you can up against the toe clip hard fast. Then you strap your foot in. Then when you get on your bike, before you start, you wriggle your foot around everywhere to see that it doesn't come out. They say, "What happens when you fall over?" Don't ask me. You foot comes out somehow or other. I don't know. But top of the shoe you'd have soft stuff - soft leather round there - so that when you take your shoes off you can darned near put them in you hip pocket, because the main thing was a good solid sole.

How long would a pair of shoes last you - those Windsor Smith ones?

Oh for years and years, because you'd only use them for racing. As far as we were concerned in those days - I don't know about now - that

was the main part of your gear, and you nursed that. You nursed your shoes and your wheels, and your saddle. You always had a good comfortable saddle and you always had a good pair of shoes, and you looked after that, and a pair of wheels. You wouldn't ride your wheels around the road - you'd carry them - because the tyres, tyre and tube combined, would only weigh about six and a half, seven ounces. See, coming again, the light stuff. See the lighter the tyre the more speed you'd get.

With your clothing, when you were representing Elliotts, was there any way that their name was represented on your clothing?

No, wasn't allowed to in those days. You couldn't have any advertising on your gear. That wasn't permitted. I don't know about nowadays. But you see all those cyclists, there's not one of them got any name on.

So how would you be recognised as an Elliott cyclist?

By their advertising for one thing, and talking. You'd always - - -. You were loyal to your firm more or less. I was. You wouldn't get an opposition firm come and ask me to ride one of their bikes. "There's no good going to see Bert Standish. You won't shift him because if he does you've got to give him a job." See, you were set because of your job.

But I should say, in that picture there, 75 percent of those riders would ride Super Elliott bikes in those days. They had the string of them.

But they wouldn't all be working for them?

No. I think there's one - Billy Knibbs worked for them. There'd only be about the one there that's be working for them. Oh well, they couldn't employ all of them. As a matter of fact I told my sons when they were in business, "Don't worry about bike riders. Don't chase them. You don't want their business, because they're no good. They're no good to you. They want everything for nothing, and if somebody else offers them there, they're gone". I know it - I've seen it.

Now my son Graham, he fathered the two Turtur brothers. You might have heard of them in the amateurs. There was another one, Gary West. Anyhow, those three riders, he did everything for them when they first come to - - -. [Adelaide HS] Gary West come from Darwin. I don't know where the Turturs come from - where they started. As soon as they got

prominent and good riders and other people offered them money, they just wiped you like that. They wouldn't go near his shop now - you wouldn't see them. He organised and run the schoolboys' championship here for about four or five years. He went to Sydney, went to West Australia, went to Victoria with them. He's got the trophy down there in his shop now. The lads that won it wouldn't buy a puncture outfit. They couldn't care less. And the public couldn't care less either. It's like today. A footballer, while he's a champion footballer or cricketer, he's in the limelight, everybody's chasing him. As soon as he stops, they don't want to know him. Here's one [indicating himself]. I've been through it. See - I've been through it. They don't know you.

So, as I think I've more or less said to you, I don't follow it, I don't chase it - couldn't care less. Get what you can out of it, grab every penny you can get - or cent; we won't use them directly - and get out of it. Be professional. Trophies I won - - -. Well, my ex-wife, she dumped them all. But what I had of that, it's not worth that. I've got three or four trophies down the shop down at the Torrensville shop that my brother won. When he died, nobody wanted them. They were just thrown away. I happened to be there. I said, "Oh, I'll have them". Because his trophies were good. Now, he had a beautiful - - -. You know those clocks in a glass dome like, he won that. There was a big show down at the Wayville Showground one time. I never got a chance to get that. Nobody wanted his sashes.

Well we'll talk more about the prizes and the money.

There's two sashes that you've got that I haven't got. Don't know where they are. [referring to sashes he is seen wearing in photographs]

We'll talk more about that as we go along. What about the actual kit that came with the bike? Would you equip yourself with repair tools?

No. Most bike riders - what I've struck - most bike riders couldn't mend a puncture.

You were capable in that line.

Yes. Well see I was in the trade and I worked in the workshop on repairs. That was my first job, more or less in the workshop building wheels and repairing bikes. In those days you had to repair them.

Today they don't - they only put new parts in. If a person had a pair of forks got bent, well we'd take them out and straighten them up. Or we'd take them out and put a new blade in them.

Were you actually doing any sort of blacksmithing work?

You wouldn't class it as blacksmithing - brazing. Here's an illustration again with old Elliott. When I was a lad in the workshop, there was another lad come there after me, and they put him on to building forks. See while I was doing ordinary repairs - - -. Of course doing repairs, you've got to learn to do everything, see. Well, this is what I find out eventually. Well he was building the front forks. Well, that's the easiest part of the bike to build, because you've only got the one steering tube, the crown and two fork blades - you only do one braze. So this lad come and they put him on the brazing, and I thought, "Gee, this is nice. I'm doing repairs - all the bits and pieces - and he comes in, he's only here a few months and they put him on brazing. Well, what have I done?" see. So I went down to old B J Elliott and I said, "B J, I don't like the idea. Bill Masters comes here," I says, "he's only been here a few months". I says, "He's on brazing. What about me?" He said, "Bert, do you want to be a bike man or a bike builder?" and he looked at me, and I says, "OK". I could read him. I learnt everything. See on repairs you've got to do everything.

This bloke finished up, went into business on his own and went broke because he could only do one thing. See, he didn't learn the whole lot. One of the best bike mechanics at that time - this is how they'd class him - was old Tom Robinson, and he's still going. He's an ex-Army man of the First World War. He's about ninety-six, ninety-seven, old Tom. He couldn't repair a bike. He was a good builder - a wonderful builder, built hundreds of bikes for Super Elliotts - but he couldn't repair a bike because he was on the one track.

Were you apprenticed to anyone informally?

No, there was no apprenticeships about in those days.

Who was teaching you the repairs?

There was an old chappie that taught me a lot. He was a fellow named Bushell - Claude Bushell. He had a withered arm - his right arm was

withered - and he was the best builder in the country. See all that work on the front of that bike?

Yes.

He used to cut all that out of a piece of metal. I never thought of that before. But old Claude, he always prided himself that he'd never cut out two the same.

Was that a decorative feature?

Yes, decorative. He started off - - -. I could write a book about him, because he always prided himself that he wouldn't buy anything if he could make it, and he'd make any damned thing. He was building there and sometimes, when he'd get his back forks, you know, one of his stays coming down the back would be a shade longer than the other. He'd say, "Come over here, Bert, we'll put the chewy on it". He'd get it in the forge and he'd make one of them hot and I used to have to hold the bike there while he stretched it while it was hot - just that eighth of an inch, three sixteenth of an inch. "Put the chewy on it," he'd say. But another builder would camouflage it up that other way. See, he might have to file the ends, or let it go as it was out of true. Of course in those days you built a bike. It's not like they do now. They put them in a jig, they're all jigged up and just boom, boom and that's it. They built a bike. In those days we built a bike up from scratch. You just got the lumps of tubing - - -. You just got the tubing, you'd cut it off the length you wanted, and the parts you wanted, and put them together, drilled a hole in it and put a pin to put it in position while you trued them up, then put them in the forge and braze them up.

So you actually were building the frame?

Yes. I didn't do a lot of building because my building career, such as, was interrupted by the fact they took me and put me into the shop.

The tubing itself was from Britain?

Yes, you used to get it in big long lengths from England. You'd get a length from here to that wall long, and us kids used to cut the tubing. You'd get the tubing in the vice - it'd be all greasy and dirty - and cut it down. Well then there's certain - - -. They don't do it on bikes

now, but when you get a piece of tubing straight cut, you cut what they call scallops. It's got a little bit in so that it fits in correct. They don't build bikes now, they only throw them together. It's all done by machines.

See, you couldn't compete. People say now that it's a shame there's no bikes being built here. You can't build them here - you wouldn't compete. Because the average person doesn't know what they're getting. See, nowadays the tubing is round. It's cut off straight, it's just pushed in and not even pinned. We used to have to drill a little hole, a 5/32 pin and put it in there and hold it together, true it all up and then put it in the forge to braze it - hold it true while you're brazing it. Otherwise, if you didn't pin it, when you put it in it'd twist. Well then when you got the bike out of the forge, you'd have to true it all up and it was extra work and takes the strength out.

And then again, brazing, a lot of people say - - -. A fellow that used to be a couple of doors down from here - he's retired and gone away now - he used to do welding and all the rest of it then. I said to him one day - - -. I had a little job I wanted to do for my caravan. And I said, "John, can you braze up?" He said, "I can do anything Bert". I said, "Well can you braze these couple of bits of tubing on?" He wasn't in the race. Brazing and welding is two different things. Welding you put there and you put the metal around it. Brazing, it goes in like that [demonstrates] and you've got to run the brass in there. But you get it to a certain heat. If it's not hot enough it won't run, if it's too hot you burn the tubing, because the tubing's only thin. So when you get to a certain heat, you'll see the shadow of the brass run through - finished. I haven't brazed for years, but I know the methods. I suppose if I got on to do a bit of brazing now, I wouldn't know what end - - -. But that is the method of it. So I know what to do, but today I wouldn't know how to do it I suppose.

With that original workshop on Gawler Place, was it a noisy, bustling place?

It was a room I suppose, taking that passage way in, about this size.

Not big?

No. Old Claude worked there, old Tom was there, I was there, and the forge was there. There was four of us worked in that room, with the

old bib and brace overalls, black shirts. There was a window there and there was a window over there. Right through the summer you had the forge going in the room and - - -. She was hot. (laughs) Of course we had no unions. There was no union or anything like that in those days, and the conditions were nothing.

END OF TAPE 4 SIDE A: SIDE B

A little funny episode. The toilet was just sort of a little block just off right, you see, so different strangers that'd come up to use the toilet - "Yes, OK". But when they got in the toilet and closed the door, just alongside of it was the forge. Well the forge was a big gas pipe, see, where you light up the gas and do the brazing. Well, when these strangers - somebody come in and they get into the toilet - and when they get in and sat down, we used to get the big gas pipe and just put it under the door. And of course as soon as they got that, the first thing they'd do was - - -. No, no we used to - - -. No, first of all we used to get out on the roof - on the verandah - and we'd get a cup of water and throw it in on them. Then of course the first thing they'd do is shut the window. Well then you'd put the gas under. They'd be sitting there and all of a sudden "(whooshing sound)" - nice big - - -. (laughs) So it was one of the little jokes we used to have to break the monotony of the workshop.

Did the workshop open out on to the street?

No, it was up top. We were up top looking down at the people that were down below.

Who designed the Elliott bikes at the time you were there?

Old Claude - - -. Oh well, they were designed before that. They were designed years before. When I look back the years that I was in it, a bike hasn't altered. So the bicycle - the history of a bicycle - is a big thing. You can buy books on it, of how they started right back in the sixteen hundreds. See they started it off as a hobby horse - you know, the kids with a little hobby horse, a stick with a couple of wheels. That's how it started. Then eventually somebody put proper wheels or somewhere or other, and every time - - -. [they improved HS] I read a very good book one time on it. It started in France, or Belgium - one of those countries. It'd be forty or fifty years before they'd started -

somebody else'd get a brainwave. Eventually they put the wheels in for the hobby horse and the forks. Then when they got that, well then somebody come up with the pedals - they got the pedals. Then somebody'd come up with the back wheel with the chain, similar to what you've got there. Wooden wheels.

You were mentioning, however, for instance, your first racing cycle was the second grade Bullock one. I'm thinking in those terms. The variations and the different types of cycles that Elliott marketed. Was there someone who was suggesting those slight variations and components?

Oh yes. Yes, well this old Claude Bushell, he'd design anything. And as a matter of fact I often say it, and they reckon I'm wrong, but I know it's a fact, the frames of today that are coming even from Taiwan - - -. On the lug of the bike, where the bar goes in, it's generally a straight cut. Well they generally put a little point on them, and I've often said to people, "Why is that point on there?" "I don't know." "Why is it?" And I can tell them. It originated with this Claude Bushell in Elliott's shop. Because back in the thirties the craze come around that they were having a nickel plated bike - get a bike nickelled. Well when they do nickelling, they've got to have that tubing and everything glass smooth, otherwise if it's not, the nickel will peel off. Well when they come up to the join - the join of the tubing into the lug - they couldn't get into that crack around there with their buff to clean it. And to try to get into there, they used to buff away until they'd buffed the tubing away.

Well Elliotts had a few bikes come through and they found out the bars were breaking right up at the lug. They found out that the electroplaters who were on the job, they were buffing in to the extent they weakened the tubing. So they didn't know what to do. So old Claude got the idea. He cut the lug back to a point and chamfered it. I don't know whether you can follow me, but he chamfered it. Well then, when they come with the buff they went straight over the top and they had the points. See, well then, old Elliott, he ordered from England the longest lug he could get. See, some of them were only short ones so they'd give them a longer peak. The longer the peak the better the chamfer. Well now, that peak now, is coming on bikes from Taiwan, China and everywhere, and that's where it started. I tell my kids, I tell a lot of people, and they can't believe it.

Then, down on the forks - the front fork and the back forks - there's always a cleat goes down. There's a bit of a little groove. Well, Elliotts got out some stuff one time from overseas from the Brampton people and it was round tubing, and of course it was soft to put it into bikes - they'd bend and everything. So they didn't know what to do. They had all this here round tubing for the front forks - the front forks the wheels go in. See that bend. So old Claude said to me, he said, "You know Bert, they corrugate iron to make it stronger. We'll corrugate these blades and see what happens".

Well he made up a little gadget of a piece of steel about that long, and he brazed a piece on it like that [demonstrates], and I used to hold the forks there while he went along with a piece [of steel HS] and hit it and put that cleat in them to strengthen them. And it worked. And now the bikes come out today have got that cleat in them, and that's where - - -. [it started HS] Because he didn't study. Well, there was no books or anything like that. It had to be there.

What sort of age was he when you started?

When I started he was a man, I suppose, of about thirty-odd. But he'd pull anything to pieces and remake it. He was a very clever man. But they could never get him to work at daytime much. He wouldn't come into work until one or two o'clock, then he'd work - - -. He'd do all his - you know, cutting all those lugs and that out. He'd do that after work because no interruption.

So that decorative work there is in the lug?

Of course now there's nobody to do it. One old chappie was in the bike trade - he used to have a bike shop down the Henley Beach Road, old Les Brown - he said, "That bloke up there, he beats me". He used to build a good bike. He said, "I look at his job and I try to copy it - I can't. But," he said, "every job he does is different".

Would people ever suggest designs to him for that lug?

He wouldn't listen to them. He had no design. He used to have a little round - half round - file, a little triangle file about that long [six inches], an hacksaw and away he'd go - and a drill. He'd drill a hole here and do a bit of a cut there or something, and then he'd start. How it started, that's how it finished. He'd start off from nothing, and he

wouldn't know what he was doing. He wouldn't draw it or anything, he'd just work free hand - just do it, and as it worked out, that's it. And some of them - - -. This is not a bad example here. [studies photograph of Kilkenny Club Sash, reproduced on page following p. 138.] You can see that top part - that's all little parts. Because there's no strength there. He needed - - -. The strength's all at the back.

I had a bike down to the shop down there one day - down the Torrensville shop. A kid had just an old bike that he'd traded in or something, and it was one of Claude's bikes. I said, "Gee, that's a beauty". And I never said nothing and later on I said to my son, I said, "What did you do with that old bike?" "Which one?" he said. "Oh," I said, "that old racing bike". Oh, he said, "I sold it to a kid for five dollars or something". "Oh Christ," I said, "one of Claude's jobs like that".

But you see, we got tubing. Tubing come out in different grades. Well in my day the [Renolds HS] 531 tubing was the best, but of course now they've improved it out of sight - light tubing and the strength and all of it with carborundum and all the rest of the stuff. But the second grade bikes were only one step above water pipe - big heavy stuff. Well then this all depends on the grade you got of material.

Would other craftsmen be doing similar sort of work?

Tried to.

So it was pretty much his signature.

Yes. He was the - - -. This old Tom Robinson, he come along, he was the next best. But old Tom would be set to a certain thing. He'd do one after the other the same way, but old Claude wouldn't. Of course he's dead and gone, but you'll never get another one.

Let's switch again to talking a little bit about racing. What I'd like to look at now is your training. When you first started out, what did training consist of?

When I first started, well you'd go out for a ride on a bike - out on the road. My first long ride was out to the Abattoirs and I come out, said I'd been nearly to Gawler. (laughs) Found out when we went to Gawler it was a long way. But we'd go out of a Sunday. For instance, you'd go out and do thirty, forty mile. You might go down to Victor,

you might go up around through Strathalbyn and up around through towards Williamstown, all round there. Up along Port Wakefield Road, up as far as Port Wakefield. You just ambled along. You get two or three, four or five of you in a bunch and off you go. Some of them you have to tow home - they get tired. But you studied your riding position, your ankling position. As I said, you used to practice that - see practice ankling, as we used to call it. And in the end you'd get that used to doing it, your ankles'd ache but you couldn't get out of it because you ride along and they'd say, "Hey you're squibbing on it".

Then you'd go out for a ride, say, up to Gawler. Well you'd just take it easy going up there. Just riding along and just going to work. Then when you turn around to come home, right, you get your head down and go, see. Because I always say, you don't get your exercise until you get tired. See, when you're fresh and that, well any mug can do it, but it's when you're tired, that's when you've got to punish your body more or less. Not so much punish your body, because I don't believe in it. I think myself - - -. I've seen people racing and that, they're that flat they can't stand on their feet when they get off. It's no good to you. You only do what nature intends you to do.

Did you have anyone advising you about training when you started out?

Not really. A few of those old birds in there. Old Sid Rowe, in there, he was the fittest man you ever struck in your life, and we always copied what he would do. I don't know how he'd get on these days. He used to sit out in the sun for hours and hours and hours - he's nigger. There's some well built fellows amongst that lot of fellows there. [Refers to the photograph of the cyclists at Thebarton Oval, 1925. See reproduction on following page.] So they were really tough men. You had to be tough in those days to be a bike rider. (laughs)

Of course you were working all week. Would you only train on weekends?

Weekend or after work. You never got time off to go. No, you started at half past eight, nine o'clock, or whatever the case would be, and you'd knock off at half past five or six o'clock, whatever it'd be, and then go and do your training.

What on a week night would that involve?

Of a week night you'd put your light on your bike - I lived down in Thebarton - and my training run was down to Port Adelaide and back.

In those days there was only one road to Port Adelaide, not two. You'd just cycle along - - -. Again, you'd cycle along, talking to one another, two or three of you, then on your way back they used to have the Shell beacon light. You'd see that beam go around and as it'd go around you'd set your pace to that. You'd set a pace up, and "Right, the beam's coming". You'd go for your - - -. [life HS] Then get up around about Hindmarsh there, then you'd start to lay it on properly. We lived just over the river - this side of the river of Hindmarsh - and our sprint was from the bridge, from the Hindmarsh bridge up to the Squatters' Arms Hotel, about there. You used to duck your head down, then right it's a sprint flat out.

But it's just naturally training. We used to have an old shed in the back of where my mother lived. Of course we never had any physical gear. We used to do a lot of our training with old bike tubes, and have an old punching ball hanging up in the shed. See, we had no money to buy gear. You get three or four lads there and you get an old chaff bag. We used to get on the floor of the shed and we'd struggle, trying to get it away from one another. See, you were all straining, see, and you'd go like that until you got flat, and it darned near pulled the bag to bits. But it was all exercise. The punching ball, it was just an old ball. We used to stand around that and punch it, and you had to stand up close, and if you wasn't quick enough you'd get hit in the head with it.

Then we had what they called the training rollers. You have two rollers at the back - one might be here, another there. You put your back wheel in there [across them] and you'd have [a third roller] up here [for the front wheel to rest on] and it's connected [to the front rear roller HS] with a belt. Well, you'd get on that and you'd ride like mad. Get there, and you got a good sweat up on that. Then we used to do a lot of - - -. A lot of our training used to be with old bike tubes, see, instead of having expanders and all this they have now. I used to do it myself one time. Get an old bike tube and just put it on to your foot and just lift it up this way or that way, or put it across your back and pull them this way. See, and fetch them round. Well that'll take your back. Then used to get under your foot, put two of them under and push them away. But surprising the different exercise you can get with a couple of old bike tubes.

I get them now in the shop. I often find fellows, you know, get talking to them. I say, "Grab a couple of old bike tubes". I give them a couple of bike tubes - "Go home and stretch them". See but no, they go to the gyms and they get all these special things that cost hundreds of dollars, and you get all the training you want out of that.

We used to have a peg in a post of the old shed, and we'd get our feet up against the shed, and you use it like a rower, see. And if you were too strong, and it wasn't strong enough, hook another tube on. That used to stop them.

I think in that family portrait, when we were looking at it, you mentioned a trellis that you used to use.

Yes.

How did you use that?

Incidentally, the wife's trying to talk me into buying one now for her. It's an archway. Here, the archways they have over the gardens now - the craze - that's all it was. As we come in the side gate up to the back door, there was this here archway affair. Well, we used to get - - -. It was made of iron piping. We'd get on that, see, and then pull yourself up - up and down. So that was our horizontal bar. But it all did the job.

We used to have, oh, a lot of fellows there. There was Percy Smith, Andy Anderson, Len Von Einem. There's several of them in there [refers to the Thebarton Oval photograph] used to come around. They'd come round - you'd have all the lads of the village. Andy Anderson, there's Wonger Bowden, Yorkie Shone, Pussy Smith, Len Von Einem, Buller Jarman. Buller Jarman, there - bloke in there [refers to photograph] - wasn't a bad sort of a bike rider. He was the uncle of Barry Jarman the cricketer. Len Von Einem, hell of a nice fellow, he would be uncle to Von Einem the murderer.

Did a lot of the bike riders live in your area?

No, we scattered from everywhere. Don't know where he come from. I think he's one that's still alive. I think he had a block up at Renmark.

Which one's that?

Hurtle Williams. This bloke here [Bill Richards HS], he had thighs on him like a horse. He had a brother too - there was three of them used to ride with us. There was Bill, Tom, and I forget the other one [Fred HS]. There's Tom there [refers to photograph]. Oh yes, [Reg HS] Rosewarne, he was well known in the - - -. [football world HS] The family belonging to the Glenelg Football Club - there's Rosewarnes mixed up down there. This fellow here, he come down from [Broken Hill HS]. This was taken on a Saturday. On the Thursday night he fell over on the Thebarton Oval and they had to take him to hospital. He got a patch on the side of his face. But, he was as tough as nails - a real fashion plate. Everything was spotless with him.

What's his name?

Howie Brady. He won an Australian championship. He went up for a six day race up at Brisbane on the board tracks years ago, and he fell over and there were splinters, and splinters went right around. So they carted him off to hospital, said he was finished, and he got off and took the splinter out and went back and raced. (laughs) Oh, there were some hard, tough blokes amongst them, believe me. (laughs) And they weren't all there either.

You mention that quite a number of them would come to your house and you'd get together.

See we had a bit of a shed there, my brother and I. You'd go riding, they'd come back there and I had it geared up.

Did you follow any particular diet?

Yes and no. If anybody told you that that was no good to you, you didn't touch it. You're going out racing, the day of the race you wouldn't have a baked dinner for instance. I say even now - - -. They say "What do you accredit it to?" Because my foundation. We weren't fanatics, but you still studied what you did do. See, now, I should say amongst that lot of fellows there, I would say there wouldn't be a half a dozen boozers amongst them, whereas now, if you'd be in a gang like that there wouldn't be any that wasn't a boozer. I can't really say there that these fellows there that would really drink. Old Bill Richards, I think old Bill'd put them away. I don't think he could have because the class of rider he was. He was a good biker - a big heavy looking

bloke. Worked in the quarries. He used to pick up stones - big stones - and throw them around, and they lived up at Glen Osmond there. He was a real big strong fellow.

What about smoking?

No.

Was it recognised as say damaging your wind?

Bad. See, I only said the other day, you don't find people about now - - -. Years ago people'd say - you know, open up a packet of cigarettes - "Have a cigarette". Well I'd say, "No thanks, I don't smoke". They'd say, "Oh, you're lucky," see. But you don't see - - -. [it now HS] People don't hand the cigarettes round like they used to. I don't know whether it's because of the price or what. One time it was a matter of - - -. [being polite HS] Everybody, as soon as they pulled out a cigarette, well, "Have a cigarette". Well, that's what I always say. Did I make any money out of bike riding? Yes, I made a lot. I don't drink, smoke or gamble. Well I don't drink or smoke, see. Well look at the money I - - -.

Now, when that picture was taken I was so dedicated to my bikes that I wouldn't smoke and I wouldn't drink and most of those fellows would be the same. All those chaps I knocked around with or had much to do with were similar to me. You'd have a reunion of cyclists. There'd be a bit of a get together somewhere or other. You wouldn't find much drink amongst it. Wouldn't find much - - -. [smoking HS] Really speaking, a cyclist is a clean living fellow - a dedicated cyclist - or was anyway, because that was the thing with it.

These days of course, with training - and actually, for instance, on your long training rides - these days people have these high energy drinks or foods that they use. Did you have anything like that?

No, no, no. They come out with all types of stunts. They used to try and tell you this and that and everything else, but I can honestly say that I didn't know of anybody that really rode on any stimulants.

What about something just to give you a bit of an energy boost? Sugar or glucose?

Oh, there was a few fanatics a bit that way. What did I used to have? I only heard it mentioned a little while ago. It was more of a nerve tonic - just to settle your nerves. See you go to a bike meeting and you get tensed up a bit. What the hell was it? I only heard it men-

tioned the other day. I said, "Gee, I haven't heard it for a long while". I suppose it's been on the shelves and somebody's brought it back. It was bitter - bitter as quinine. There was quinine in it - it was real bitter. You'd have a few drops of that - it was just a - - -. Fisher's Nerve Tonic, yes Fisher's Nerve Tonic. Used to get in a little bottle about that big [about three inches tall]. Had a little bit of that and it was a just a matter of settling your nerves. Because what I mean, I've seen them that way that you push them off at a bike race and they're trembling like mad. If you're pushing off or anything, well you rock them then. You get a roll backwards and forwards, see, on their bike - they're going backwards and forwards. Then when the gun goes for them to go, right, they're going. It's just to keep them - - -. [pepped up HS]

Oh, there's a lot to it. It's an individual sport. Cycling, see, never mind how good you are or how bad you are, you pay your nomination money and you're in it. There's a grade for all bike riders. See now, among the veterans, they have about six or seven different grades. They get forty or fifty riders in the veterans, you know, and you've got to be thirty-five or over to be in it. You'd pick up the paper this morning. Well, it don't get that much publicity, but you'll see them, and so-and-so won this grade - you know, Grade B, C, D. See, up to seventy-odd years of age.

You've mention the nerve tonics. What about liniments - sorts of things for muscle ache and so on?

Well, they use similar - - -. Well I don't know what they're using today, but the basis of most of them - I've got some in the cupboard there now - is oil of wintergreen. What did the doctor give me? Oh, something or other for rubbing down. I said, "What have you got, oil of wintergreen in them?" He said, "Yes". That's the basis. But we used to use mainly olive oil and eucalyptus. Olive oil for rubbing down. They even used to use talc powder. Anything to get a friction up. (rubs hands)

See a bike rider - or in those days - you were more or less a good living fellow, although they were as tough as goats' knees. Of course most of them were out of work anyhow. 1925, there wasn't too much work about. That's what I say, I've never been out of work in my life. I would have been if it hadn't been for bike riding, because Elliotts

kept me on where they didn't keep others on. They mightn't have kept me on. See, I might have got the sack too.

END OF TAPE 4 SIDE B: TAPE 5 SIDE A

One thing that I wanted to ask you about before we continued with the actual racing, was this idea of training on the streets - - -? When you first started out, what was the rest of the traffic like? What did you have to compete with?

Nothing. We used to go down to Port Adelaide. You'd get on the Port Road and you see the old motorcar coming along - you know, with the canvas hoods and so forth - and they'd be doing around about twenty, twenty-five mile an hour. You'd get behind them and you'd go all the way to Port Adelaide. I went to Gawler one time and I picked up a truck going to Gawler round about, oh, Little Para - Parafield Gardens now, out the airport - and I went right - - -. Followed that motor truck right to Gawler. And then we got by the race course and I'm tucked in behind him, and unbeknownst to me he's going to pull up. He pulled up on the side of the road - went to pull up at the side of the road - and I got tangled up in a bit of rope he had there, and over I went. I hurt my wrist and that I night I come home all the way from Gawler with a crook wrist. I'll never forget that long ride home.

But the traffic was nothing. We used to go out on the Gawler Road and wait for them. Get a car coming along. When the old buses used to go down - the Port Adelaide - we used to get behind the buses. Some of the bus drivers, they'd know you was behind them, and they'd go along at - - -. You'd be going along nice and all of a sudden they'd make a backfire - bang. (laughs)

One time I went down to Port Adelaide behind a mate of mine. He had a Harley and sidecar, the motorbike. Went down there. We said, "Right, when we get home, when we get to the Port Road bridge, we'll have a sprint along the top of the road. So we're building up speed - we must be doing fifty, sixty mile an hour - and as we got there by the - - -. Of course it was a single road in those days. When we got to the Port Road bridge, the traffic converged and we got tangled up in traffic. He went one way, I went the other - we never had our sprint. We was going to just see what we could do along - the speed. Because we were hiking along and I was going to have a special sprint alongside of that road.

But no, the traffic was easy, because it wasn't permitted - you weren't allowed to - - -. Police would pick you up if you was pacing behind a car, but I never got picked up. We used to do a lot of pacing behind motorcars.

How would you know what speed you were doing?

Couldn't care less. Oh, you'd judge it. You'd know when you're up to your speed. You'd judge it.

Did you use stop watches with your training?

No, never had one. No, no. As I say, the stop watch was the old beacon on the Shell building. When you see the light coming, "Hurry up, I'm dropping back," because that light had about - - -. When you were at a certain thing. Or you'd count the revs of your pedals. You're getting all sorts of things. But the whole thing is exercise. Exercise is doing something. You don't have a stop watch when you go out with a dog, but you're exercising it, and exercise is moving. But there's training and straining. You're training, see. Now you go out walking with you dog, that's training. But if you went out with your dog and started running, you'd be straining.

Did you have any schedule with your training to try to, for instance, build up your speed for your racing?

No, but you'd have your regular night's training. Through the summer months you'd train on, say, Tuesday and Thursday night, and race on Saturday or the weekend. But in the meantime you'd do a little bit of training. Wherever you went you sort of did your training. Never worried about - - -. In my early courting days my ex-wife used to live down by the Findon terminus. I lived over this side into what used to be called Southwark - it's Thebarton now. Well I'd go to the pictures, take her home and come up to catch a tram. No tram coming, just run home - just set into a jog. Then, as I said, I used to work down the East End Market. Well that's all training. Training is exercising, and exercising is training. But I think you've got to do it with a method.

Were any of your contemporary bike riders known as particular fanatics with their training?

Oh yes. Oh yes, they'd drive you mad.

Do any come to mind?

Oh, not really. Old Sid Rowe - Sid was a fanatic, but he was more of a fanatic on the beach. He'd go training on the beach and sunbathing. No, most of them trained similar to what I did. You'd go out on the Gawler Road on a Sunday and you'd always pick up - - -. Just dawdle along for a while, you'd pick up a team - you'd finish up you'd have six, seven in your team. Then you find another team going home again. Then you might go to Victor Harbor where you start off with two or three and you finish up with half a dozen. Pick up somebody along the road. See, once you've got away from the city, if you struck a person on a bike who was a bike rider of some sort - - -. It's not like today. If he has his handles down he was a bike rider, but now every Tom, Dick and Harry's got their handlebars down - they're bike riders.

I'll get hold of old Phil [Thomas HS] and find out if he's got any old photos down there that might interest us.

You mentioned you got a bit of coaching from - - -. Who was that again?

Sully.

Yes, Sullivan. Would he advise you about training?

Oh well, he used to take me down the beach and give me sprints on the beach. That's the reason why I took on more sprinting than long distance riding. He was a sprinter too - he was a good sprinter. See, some of those riders there would be road riders, but there's not too many of them. Most of them were track riders.

Which beach would you go to?

Oh, down the Grange. Down the Grange down where West Beach is now.

Would you be training on the sand?

Yes, on the sand. You'd get there and you'd lay off in the sun for a while. You'd go down the Bay Road, or down the Grange Road with just a good even speed. Get down there and get into the sandhills and lay off in the sun for a while, and have a few sprints up and down the beach. But you made it all into pleasure. See, in my day it didn't seem to register with anybody to ride yourself flat. There's too much - - -.

See, I can't see that these fellows breaking this record and that record today, can do it naturally. They can't tell me that they're not on

dope of some sort, because I know they would be, and because I know at times when, even amongst that lot there, they'd have some sort of a stimulant or something. He's not amongst them now - well, not there amongst them. A couple of them there, I reckon, were on ether. You could always smell it. Go into the training room and if so-and-so and so-and-so was there, you'd sniff - "Hello, where's he to?"

How would they use that?

Quickens the heart. Put [a few drops HS] on loaf sugar - sugar loaf. They'd get little cakes of sugar we used to get years ago before your time. Instead of going into a restaurant and getting the shakers to get a bit of sugar, you'd get the sugar lumps and put it in. Well, he used to get that and put so many drops on there. And they used strychnine too - they used to use strychnine, over interstate and that. I know a fellow died - supposed to have died over there. They used to take these strychnine tablets and after the race, well they'd vomit it up again, and this time he didn't do it. [At least that is the story they told us. HS]

Do you think that happened in South Australia?

I think it would have. I don't know what they'd use, but there was a time, later than that - - -. A bloke there, old Count - Count Strafford - and a couple of others - I won't mention names - I knew if they went over for the Melbourne Centenary Race - - -. Old Count's gone, so I can't say nothing. They went over to the Melbourne Centenary Race and they went from Melbourne out to Ballarat and up around the block. On the way out to Ballarat there was a fellow wanted to win that stage of the race because he was putting himself through the uni. and wanted to win it. So he told a couple of them if they let him win it he'd give them some of the tablets he had. So anyhow they let him win it and - - -. [that's history HS]

One of the fellows here now should have won it, only Vic Elliott, for the last stage, took his chain off and put a new chain on and didn't put the clip on right and the last day he lost it. But he was in the joke. And there was old Fergy - there was about four or five - and old Poppa Lang. There was a gang of more unemployed. This was about 1936 I think. They got on to these Torpedos they had. Well they used to come back here. They'd take a Torpedo and make them go.

Well, I can give you an illustration. I don't think I told you about my last race at Whyalla. Did I tell you about that?

No.

My next to last race I come back and they re-handicapped me and I gave it away, but it was near enough my last race. I went to Whyalla - you have the photo of us lined up. I was practically finished, you see, but I just thought I'd ride up there. Seventy-five mile race. It was twenty-five mile out and twenty-five mile back. Have you ever been to Whyalla?

Yes.

Well as you're coming into Whyalla you go over a bridge - well that comes into it. So anyhow we lined up for this race, seventy-five mile. Before we went up a chappie who used to train quite a few of the riders here, and he said, "How will you go?" I said, "Oh no good - just in for the fun of it". He said, "You ought to go all right". I said, "No, I'll be all right if they let me sit on for the sprint, but" I said, "I'll be no good over the distance". He said, "Can you take an Aspro on its own?" I said, "I don't know, why?" He said, "I'll give you a couple of Aspros". He said, "Swallow them down about a half hour before the finish". He said, "They'll make you go".

Then again, on long road riding, I used to pack up in the back - my back'd give in. So a fellow said to me, "The trouble is, when you're down at the handles, the wind coming through comes here and it settles on your back on your kidneys". He said, "Get an old piece of flannel - the old stuff - and put a pad around the back, that'll absorb the perspiration then". So I went up to Whyalla and I went to the haber-dashery shop and got this bit of - - -. I put that around, and then I suddenly thought. I remember years ago, back in my early days, the big guns from Melbourne used to go for long rides. They used to have the kidney pads - used to buy kidney pads you see. They were red pads for the kidney - like sticking plaster on the back. And that's the reason I thought, "Well if they used to have that, I wonder why". So anyhow I got that, so away we go in this race. This bloke gave me these couple of tablets and I had about six or seven little sticks of celery, like that - wonderful. See, stuff like that just - - -. See there's

a lot of moist in it, and then the strings of the celery, you've got to chew it and chew it like a chewing gum, but you're getting all the moisture and goodness out of it.

So anyhow, I had my sticks of celery in my little white bag and away we go. We had to go out twelve and a half miles, come back, out and back, see, three times. Well we went out, we come back and we started the second time. So, as we were going out the second time, one of the lads said to me, he said, "I'd like to win this". I said, "Well if we stick together we can". Now how was it? Anyway, this lad, named Bangtel(?), he wanted to win it. He said, "I've got myself on - - -". It was worth twenty-two pound to win it. He had a pound on himself at thirty-three to one with the bookies, and he had himself in a Calcutta, and was up for sixty-odd pounds to win it. I said, "Gee, you do the right thing," I said, "you could win this," and I thought of these tablets. I didn't know what they were. So he said, "What've I got to do?" Well there's three of us together. There was lad named Deitman from Port Pirie - I didn't know him - and this lad - the three of us. So I said, "You do as I tell you If you win," I said, "you can have the winnings - - -. Give me the winning stake. You can have all your betting money". I said, "And you do any work, and give the other kid ten quid". So he said, "Right."

So I said, "Right, you go out the front," and I got the other kid and I said, "How are you going?" and he said, "All right". I said, "Well look, you team with me and Bangtel and I'll put you on a chop". So every now and again they'd have a sprint, you see, along the race. Well the first past the post would get a prize - a couple of quid or something. So we're letting him get the little bits. So when we got out to turn around to come back - see, he turned round to come back - I said, "Here, chop these down there". There's twelve and a half miles - roughly half hour's riding. So I said, "Chop these into you. Go on, swallow them down". He swallowed them down. So away we go. I'm cutting a few little bits out but neither here nor there.

But anyway away we go. So on the way back he's darned near dying on his bike. The other lad's out all right, and I'm saying, "How you going Bang?" "Oh, I'll never do it." "Come on, come on, you'll be all right," and I'd urge him on and urge him on there, and the other lad and I doing all the work. So in the end we got nearly back to Whyalla

and I looked around and there's a big crowd coming behind us. Well, the scratch markers and all that. "Gee, we'll never get there". So all of a sudden, as we come to go over that bridge - just as we start to go over the bridge - there's a fair big crown on the road.

As we started to go over the bridge, bang goes Bangtel's back tyre. Oh gee. Well, on the crest of the road, he's half way up. Well he's more or less - - -. His wheel's dragging him into the gutter. So I run up alongside of him and I say, "Get up on the road - get up on the top of the road". But when he got on the top, well the wheel's going this way and that way, and he's going like a scalded cat. The pill worked. So he went over the finishing line, we got over the road and just around the corner and he said, "Catch me". (laughs) He'd had it. He won it. The hardest thing for me to do was to stop the other kid from beating the two of us. (laughs) But anyhow, I finished up, I think I got thirty-three pound out of, and the other kid, he got nearly as much and he had his betting money.

But then again, they had a bit of a dance or something on the night, and he blew the gaff. See, when he went up to get his sash and his cheque and that and they congratulated him and he made his speech, and he said, "If it hadn't been for Bert Standish giving me the tablet," he said, "I could never have got there". (laughs) Gee, did I get roasted.

What was the reaction?

I don't know what it was, but it was a tablet, because this fellow used to train quite a few of the real top grade riders at that day. I was more or less - - -. I was about forty years of age, so as I was more or less out of the game. But there was three or four of them around that grade. Without mentioning names, because they're getting about now, they were on a tablet, because [an old timer HS] - this was the bloke that was training them - he gave me the tablets. So the tablets worked because this lad was practically dying on his bike. I thought he'd never get there, and so all of a sudden they worked, and, boom, away he went. We never got near him. If he hadn't have blown his tyre out he might have still been going. (laughs)

And when he mentioned publicly about the tablet, was there general criticism of that sort of thing?

No, nothing more was said. I just brushed it aside. The lad that won it, he just faded into - - -. [smoke HS] He was a local boy and I don't know where he finished up. He never went on with much in the game that I know of.

Have you thought over the years what the tablets might have been?

No, don't know what they might have been. But they had a dope, because this gang, they used to go away around the country a bit. They'd come back here and they'd go away up around through New South Wales and they'd clean up a few of the big meetings up there and come back and relax off here. And then a few months after - a couple of months after - they'd go away again. It goes on. Nobody'll convince me otherwise, but I can honestly say I never ever took anything myself, neither did my brother, but it goes on. I'm talking now about thirty-odd years, or forty years ago.

When you were first starting out, say during the 1920s, were you aware of people taking one stimulant or another?

No. When this fellow was supposed to have died - took strychnine - - -. Who was it, [one of the international riders? HS] Anyhow, one of the real top world riders. That would have been in around about the thirties - thirty-fives - just before the war. He was riding on the old Velodrome in Melbourne. That was pulled down after the war. But even then, that was only talk, but that's what they reckoned happened to him. He died suddenly. They reckoned that he took a strychnine tablet and didn't fetch it up. So whether they did it I don't know.

You mentioned using the ether on sugar cubes. You said you thought that was just a couple of riders who did that. Do you think it was fairly widespread?

No. No, it was all - - -. See the average rider was too - in my day - was too full of himself. Well I mean, he was too interested in getting himself fit, without getting the stimulant.

Of course part of the use of drugs is this urge to be the number one, to be that far ahead of everyone else. Was there that sort of competitiveness amongst you?

No, I don't think. See, now in that group there [refers to Thebarton Oval photograph], you could put ten of those riders in a race and any one of them could win it fair dinkum. At least ten of those riders in

there would be of equal ability. In some of those programmes you'd see a scratch race. Well a first class scratch race, you'd have ten, fifteen riders would be first class riders, and if you didn't do a bit collusion and work with one another - - -. Now in that picture there, I know Bill Richards won the race, because I know Hurtle Williams took him. Well he did all the work for him and just opened up and let him through at the right time. See, well there was a lot of that went on.

Why the collusion between riders? What was the purpose?

Oh, to share the prize money. See now, in that race there, Bill Richards won the Riley Cup - he wanted the Riley Cup. Well the prize money would be about three or four pound. He wouldn't worry about that - he got this nice cup and he was satisfied. And Hurtle Williams was satisfied with the three or four quid. We weren't racing for big money, see, not like today.

They tell me down at Regency Park they have the vet. races, racing down there on a Sunday morning. Well they'll have forty, fifty riders at five dollars a time to nominate and then sweepstakes, and they'll split it up into three grades, see. This is what Phil Thomas - - -. Phil used to go down there and he said the bunnies come in - the fellows that don't know anything about bike riding. They put their five dollars in. All the guns that know something about the game, they'll put their heads together and say, "All right, we'll chop this up". Next week the bunnies come in again, put their fivers in, see. But the other shrewdies - they're real fair dinkum bike riders - will put their heads together. Three or four of them will put their heads together - might be worth forty or fifty dollars - and they'll chop that up. One'll win it this Sunday and next Sunday the other one wins it and so forth.

But it goes on in all sports. They can say what they like. I reckon the football today is as crooked as you can make it. When money comes into the game, it's out. The only fair dinkum sport - I've most likely said it - the kids at a Sunday School picnic. Line them up, clap your hands, they go - they all go. (laughs)

Were there bike riders who went it alone and weren't involved in the collusion side of it?

Oh yes, yes. We went to Langhornes Creek one time and we had it all ge'ed up - I don't know who was going to win it; one of the others was

going to win it - and somebody say, "What about Laurie Elliott?" "Oh, he couldn't win it." See he used to ride for the sake of riding. So they said, "What about Laurie?" "Oh, he couldn't win it, no way." We're on a flat track and away we go and we're all waiting for the bloke that's supposed to win it and Laurie sneaks through the inside and won it. (laughs)

That's happened time and time again. I did it one time myself down the Showgrounds. I wasn't riding too good. It was a Market Gardeners Picnic. I'd just started the season, round about this time of the year [September], and there was a few riders. One of them's in there - big Rolly Murkel. He and Buller Jarman - I think Buller was in it. Anyhow, there's three or four of them. So what is it now? Oh, I was on the back mark, that's right, and I went up to Rolly Murkel and I said, "Put us on the chop, Rolly, if I slow the back markers up for you?" He said, "All right Bert, can you slow them?" I said, "I'll try".

So anyhow I went back - these two or three on the back mark, and I said, "What's going on?" They said, "Nothing, we're just having a go the best man win". "Right oh," so away they go and I picked out who was going to win straight away. I tried to slow them, they wouldn't let me. When I went to the front they all stopped. They wouldn't let me - they'd go past me, because they were chasing and I was slowing. So I said, "All right, that'll do me. I'll slow and have a sprint to have a go myself". So when the bell come - Buller Jarman was it - and so as they come around for the bell, I ducked my head and went. Of course Buller Jarman, he was the pea - the was the one that was going to win it. So when we got around the back straight I'm racing neck and neck with him. I saw him drop his head. I thought, "He's had it" - so had I. See, when he dropped his head I thought, "Well he's had it," so I just gave a couple of extra kick and I went and won it. Of course then Rolly Murkel reckons I was going to slow them up for him, he went crook because I didn't slow them up. (laughs) So you never know. They wouldn't let me slow them up.

See, the same as I said earlier about my brother at Williamstown - - -.

With that race, the Market Gardeners' race, would you then feel obliged to share you money with the chap who thought he was going to win?

No. No, no, no, that's yours. No, you won it. Oh no, it's dog eat dog. As a matter of fact it was always reckoned in tough times, if you was working with a bloke, be right alongside him when he gets his cheque, otherwise you mightn't get paid. (laughs) If you wait till tomorrow to get your pay, you mightn't see it. Although you were all mates, they were all after the few bob. No, it's a big education, there's no doubt about it. It must be interesting to you - how the other half lives.

Yes. Were there times when you just didn't have wins for a whole season?

Oh no, no, we'd always get a bob or so in there.

How much did you have to pay to nominate for a race?

Oh it varied. All depends on the size of the money. I raced in the fifty pound wheel race one time. That was big money - cost a quid to nominate. Elliotts paid my nomination, that's right.

Would that happen a lot? Would Elliotts pay your nomination?

No, I wasn't going to ride. They wanted me to ride and I wouldn't ride. I said, "I can't afford this". "We'll pay it." So that was in my early stages. That could have been round about then [indicates photograph]. It would be too. Tommy Richards won it. I looked like winning it and there was a little bloke, used to be in the game, he run me off the track - out of the road. I run second. He got fifty quid for first prize and I got three quid for second. (laughs) I can remember that!

END OF TAPE 5 SIDE A:

TAPE 6 SIDE A:

Interview on 25 September 1990. This, the third interview, continues to focus on Mr Standish's racing career and work for Elliott Brothers from 1923 onwards.

I'd like to talk some more about your racing career, and I thought that I'd start off by asking you, perhaps thinking back to the 1920s when you were starting out in the racing, how would you chose which races you were going to compete in in a season?

How much money was up - up for grabs. But mostly you'd only have the one pick because the different clubs and that wouldn't more or less compete with one another. If you had to have a race meeting here, then there'd only be the one meeting to go to. You either went there or you didn't go at all.

Right, so you wouldn't, say on a long weekend, be choosing between two meetings?

Two meetings, no. No, very, very seldom. At Christmas time there was a little competition between the northern country towns and the southern. Now, see, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte would have a big range of meetings, and the same thing'd come then up to Port Augusta or Appila and Laura - they'd have theirs. On the Australia Day and New Year's Day, they were the two main days. Well, you'd have a range of races down the south and a range up north.

Did you have a preference of which you'd go to?

Oh yes, you had a preference.

Which would you choose? Did you like going up north or down south?

Well I went north mostly, because if you went down to the south, well being a professional, you'd look for the money. Well, when you went down to the south, you would meet - - -. All the Victorians would come across. The prize money was a little bit bigger, but it was a lot harder to get, where if you went up north, well you wouldn't have as big a competition. See the competition wasn't as hard. So you'd go down to Mount Gambier, if you won a heat you did all right, but you go up north, you'd win the programme darn near. (laughs). They used to say, "Why don't you go down among the men?" I said, "I'm all right". We'd go up there, we'd win the money up there, but go down here you'd

only get a sniff of it. (laughs) So that's one thing again comes in - the old fox.

Did you have the opportunity to race every weekend? Or how often would the meets be over that - - -?

During the summer months you wouldn't get them every weekend, but you'd get enough to keep you moving. See, any occasion - any country town - would have a summer occasion. It'd be a fiftieth anniversary or something, or the lodge of the town would put on the event. Well then they'd have a school picnic or something, and all sorts of lurks. Anything to make a bit of a gala day.

How would you hear about the different races?

Oh, you'd get it through the League of Wheelmen. See, the League of Wheelmen would be the controlling body. You had to be a member of the League of Wheelmen - they were the controlling body, the same as the Adelaide Racing Club with the horses. You'd sniff them out - you'd find out where they were.

Would Elliott Brothers have any opinion about which event you should be competing in?

No, I was a freelancer - I was definitely a freelancer. At times they might say, "What about going up to so-and-so," or "What about you going here or there?" but they had no control over me as far as that was concerned. If I wanted to go somewhere that they didn't, they might say, "What about going to so-and-so," if it suited them, but I never had any friction any way that at all.

Would they be trying to have one of their representatives at a meet?

Oh, they would like to. As a matter of fact they used to take us there sometimes. See, they'd arrange - - -. They'd have one of the cars. Old B J was the one, he'd go, and he'd take two or three riders. He had an old Essex car and we used to strap the bikes on the back and on the side and away we'd go. He'd take two or three riders. He'd fetch you back.

You spoke a little bit last week about Elliotts sometimes paying your entrance fee to the races. Was that normal?

No, very seldom they'd pay it, unless they really wanted you to go. But they never spent any more than they had to. (laughs) Well anyhow they didn't have to in a way, I suppose, because we were just hungry for that few bob and we'd sort out where we thought we could win, how we could get there in the cheapest way and so forth.

Was there someone in particular you'd often travel with?

Oh, mainly with - - -. In the latter parts there was mainly my brother and I. But you had your mates - you had your different gang. You'd have your own little private club, I suppose you could say. You'd make up those - your friends. It's just like you'd go round to a party. Two or three of you would all go to the same party wouldn't you? See, you wouldn't go on your own.

When you were starting out, who perhaps were you competing most with, or going to different events with - in your early days?

Who? What, the people? Well, the ones I used to train with and go racing with - - -. My brother was one. Nobody in particular, but mates. There was Yorkie Shone - a little Pommy lad - and there was Percy Smith. He broke his neck on a motorbike - I told him he would. There was old Bill Strache, Doug Wade. They were real intimate friends - they were lesser degree riders - but they were hangers on more or less. You know, we were mates on and off the bikes. As lads grow up they got their own little gang of them, and of course they would all tag along. They all took certain extent through me. See they'd see me riding and they'd say, "Oh, I'm going to get a bike and have a go too. Yes, I suppose, when I look back, I was the instigator of a lot of them taking on bike riding, and apart from that I had relatives that more or less had a go at it, but none of them to the extent that my brother and I were.

With the racing schedule, when you were saying you could race most weekends, you would see it in your own interests? Did you feel you were fit enough, or it was good for you to race as often as you could?

Oh yes, although for general fitness, as I look back now on the fitness that I've gained out of bike riding, I never thought of. We just got fit so we could ride the best we could. But looking back now I can see that I'm gaining now physically what I did in my youth - my foundation in life. You watch what you eat because you say, "No I mustn't eat

that," you don't drink and you don't smoke because it's no good to you for bike riding. Well now I'm gaining by that. But not looking so far ahead, but just looking to be fit.

You mentioned earlier how B J Elliott would take some of you around to races in his car. What were some of the different ways of getting to races?

Ride your bike, go by train, by motorcar - get somebody or other with a car. Of course motorcars were few and far between in the earlier stage. Most of them were the older style of cars. Somebody in the gang would know somebody that knew somebody that had a motorcar and we'd all put in for the petrol and away we'd go. And of course there was no flash cars with boots or that. We just strapped the bikes on the back of the car. Strap one on to the spare wheel, when they used to have the spare wheel on the back of the car - strap one bike on to that and strap one on to that. They used to have the running boards on the side. You'd put a couple there and climb over the top to get in. (laughs) You'd generally have about three or four bikes on board.

But then we'd go by train to some. One time we went to Strathalbyn by train. I think we went by train. We got there somehow anyhow, because anyhow I know we rode back the next day. We stayed overnight and rode back the next day. We did the same thing up at Williamstown - went to Williamstown. I don't know how we went there, but I know we rode home. But somehow or other. We used to get to Sandy Creek by train to go to Williamstown. Then after we'd finished racing, if you had time you'd catch a train back, but if you didn't you just rode home.

Would you take more than one bike with you?

No. You'd take a pair of what we called heavy wheels - the ordinary road wheels. Then you'd have your racing singles - you'd put them on your back. Of course they were only light - they weren't very heavy. The secret of the fast bike was the light wheels.

And you wouldn't ever use them on the road?

No, you'd nurse them like a baby. You wouldn't even ride from them from the car on to the track. You'd be parked off in the parkland - park of the area. You'd carry your bike right to the track. Because they were precious, and they were expensive in those days too. Well

they're still expensive but we didn't have as much money as they do now.

How big a group of people? What would be the biggest group of people you travelled to a meet with?

Oh, only just like that. You wouldn't take a bus load. Occasionally there might have been some but I don't remember any bus loads going.

Do you remember any memorable trips getting to a meet where something went wrong or something in particular happened?

Yes, We were going to Appila. Now Appila - do you know where it is?

Yes.

We were going to Appila. My brother Roy took us up in a - - -. I think it was a Ford, Ford car - I think it was a Ford. Anyhow we got to Clare and the car broke down and we had to get to Laura for overnight. Anyhow his car broke down so we left the car there. Well, he stopped there with the car. We rang through to the publican at Laura. He was the President of the Laura Cycling Club. Laura and Appila is about twenty mile apart - fifteen, twenty mile apart. Well there was a meeting on one day - I think it would be on the 28th, thereabouts, of December. Laura had their meeting, and then the Appila meeting was on New Year's Day. So we had this old car. I know Fred [my young brother HS] was in it, myself and Doug Wade I think. I think there was three of us riding - my brother Roy. Anyhow there was about four or five of us.

So we rang through to Mr Condon who was the publican at the Laura Hotel and he was the President of their sports meeting and told him our predicament so he come down. No, that's right, Vic Badenoch from Mount Gambier was with us. There'd be Fred, Roy - yes, anyway. Yes, old Vic was there and he was a bit of a hard doer. So Mr Condon come down - he got down there about half past eleven, twelve o'clock at night. He drove down from Laura - down to [Clare] - to pick us up, took us back to Laura. We spent the night at the Laura Hotel, then he drove us to the sports meeting. And I can remember we were walking up and down the street waiting for this car to come from Laura to pick us up.

My brother, he had to get his car fixed. Of course those days it was a major job. I don't know, they pulled the engine down or something. He come along after and picked us up and brought us home. That was one episode.

Otherwise, oh all sorts of little episodes, you know, that you'd find on the road.

What about the train travel side of it? Was it a problem?

Yes, one of our earlier stages was the same thing, up north. We had to catch a train up to Appila - up to Laura. Then we got the old bloke that used to run the mail between - in an old T Model Ford - from Laura to Appila. Well, on the train then it was just the narrow gauge when you got up past Bowmans and we'd sit on the step at the back and pick up stones on the [track HS]. The train was just chuffing along - we was having shots at things along the road. Anyhow we got there and strapped our bikes on the old T Model Ford to go to Appila next day. We just got out of the town and the car stopped - wouldn't go - and an old fellow named Macdonald was the old bloke that used to do the mail. The car stopped, wouldn't go, so he looked around and he didn't know what to do. So one of us said, "How are you going for petrol? Have got any petrol?" He says, "Oh no," he says, "I think I'm out of petrol," and he was out of petrol. I don't recollect how we got on about that. Anyhow we got on to Appila somehow or other.

At any stage during your racing career, did you have your own car that you travelled round in?

Yes, in the later stages. We had my Dad's car first and I got my own one way or the other. But we was always looking for somebody. But we had no trouble getting somebody who was interested enough to go, because it was somewhere to go.

I think you mentioned when we were talking another time that once you flew to a race.

Yes, that's another one. Yes, that was in my very latest stages. That would be 1945 to Whyalla. This aerodrome wasn't going then. You had to go from Parafield. Only a little plane. So we took our bikes with us, Eddie Wingate and myself. I'd never flown before. There's Eddie and I saying, "Goodbye cruel world". (laughs) There's this little old plane just

going up. So took us up. We didn't come back that way. When we come back we got a trip back in somebody else's car somewhere or other. Just another episode.

But little things like that. There was always something different and you had no real routine.

Another time Laurie Elliott from Elliott Brothers, and myself, we were going to - - -. We finished up at Whyalla but at Port Augusta we - - -. It was during the June holiday period so business was bad - it wasn't too good - so Laurie got a bundle of tickets of bad debtors around the country. So we'd go round the country repossessing bikes and collecting money - bad debt collecting. So anyway we got up to Clare and Laurie went into a place to see about the bike and - "Come in with us". So we went in and there was an old bloke there, and a real tough old bloke. So anyhow he had no money and he was in arrears so Laurie said, "Oh, we'll repossess the bike - we'll take the bike back". He says, "No you bloody well won't". (laughs) He grabbed the bike out of Laurie's hand and things didn't look too good. Laurie, he said, "Yes I'm going to". Anyhow I stepped in soothed the old bloke down a bit. An old fellow named Borlace. Anyway we didn't get the bike I don't think. I don't know whether it ever got back to Elliotts, but we didn't get it on that occasion anyhow.

We went on from there - we was in an old Capital Chev - and up through from Wilmington to Port Augusta. It was going along pretty slow - a rough road - and it was getting dark. The police in those days used to drive around in a motorbike with a sidecar. Anyhow, up bobbed the police and we had no lights - our lights weren't working. So the cops picked us up and had a chat to us. All right. So anyhow they said - - -. Oh, one got out of the sidecar and he got in the car with us and we limped into Port Augusta.

That was the time when I first met Phil Thomas, and the fellow that went in the car with us was a fellow named Peake - Cyril Peake. He finished up in a fairly high position in the police force as a matter of fact. What was he? Oh, I don't know. He was pretty well up and he went through the detective range all up. And old Cyril, he used to always come and see me and that and he borrowed my bike. See he got shifted from Port Augusta down here. Well we sort of became mates. Well I had my bike pinched - - -. No, the police used to have their sort of

a sports meeting at the Showgrounds, so Cyril borrowed my bike to ride in the race - he won the race down there. Well just a little after that I had my bike pinched and of course Cyril, he didn't find my bike but he found two or three others through it. I got part of it back. But we was always mates from there on.

About what time was that trip with Laurie Elliott for repossessing bikes?

That'd be round the June time.

About what year?

Oh, now. Oh, I'd say a rough '30.

So you were already working in the Rundle Street shop?

Was I or not? I must have been. Yes, I was managing their shop at the time. Yes, I'd be working in their Rundle Street shop.

So it would have been round about the Depression time?

Oh yes. Oh yes, things were tough. See, another time things were tough so old B J come and he gave me a bundle of cards and he said, "You'd better go home and get your gear," he said, "and go up through to Port Pirie, debt collecting". So a cousin of mine that was interested in bikes, he went with me. We rode our bikes through to Pirie. That's right we raced up there. We rode our bikes through to Pirie and on the way up I had these little cards to see the details. You'd pull up at this farmhouse or this little town and so forth and look for Mr So-and-so or Mrs So-and-so. If we couldn't get any money, you'd repossess the bike, take it to the railway station and send it back to Adelaide.

So anyhow we rode through there and we went to - - -. I rode in a race up there. There was a race at Port Pirie. I think they still hold the race. The road race goes from Port Pirie around through Crystal Brook and up at Gladstone, all round there, and they had a truck following them. Well anyhow round along the track a bit I got a bit tired. The truck was picking up the losts and strays so I got in, and it was rougher - not better than my bike - so as soon as they pulled up to pick up somebody else - "Give me my bike, I'm going to ride". So I rode my bike. It was better riding my bike than sitting in a truck getting thrown around. (laughs) There's another little episode.

So it was worth Elliott's while to do these debt collecting trips?

Oh yes. See well otherwise I'd have been sitting back there and they had to get somebody to do them.

What sort of percentage of people would you have to actually take the bikes off them, or would most of them pay up when they were confronted?

Well you'd take anything they would offer you. If they offered you two bob you'd take it and leave the bike. The secret of it was, if you took the bike you got nothing, because it was no good suing them or anything else, they had no money, but if you got two bob today - - -. [you can go back again HS] I did that round the suburbs for Elliotts as a matter of fact - bad debt collecting - at the same time when things were crook. Give you a bundle of cards and you'd go round and collect - - -. Bad debt collecting. Well, when you go round they'd say, "No we've got - - -". [nothing HS] "Well give us a shilling. Can you give us a shilling, give us two bob? Anything." "Right, OK." Well if you took the bike you got no more, because if you got a shilling, next time you go around you get another shilling. And of course the bike'd only cost around four or five pound, I suppose, in the first place. But that was one of the lurks. When you got them down - if you had them down to a low rate - see, if they only owed [a couple of HS] pounds, well you'd take the bike. See you don't take the money. But if there's too much money hanging on the end of it, you'd take the money first.

Was there a big problem with bad debts in the bike business?

Oh always. See, well practically every bike in the bike trade in those days was sold on hire purchase. If a person come in and said they wanted to pay cash, you'd ask them the second time whether they meant to. See, it was ten shillings down and two and six a week or a pound down and five shillings a week, two pound extra for terms. And of course the lurk was to tell the people that if they pay for it in three months, they get the cash price. "Oh, I'll do that," they'd say. Well that'd click a sale. You'd generally click a sale on that. They'd come in and - - -. Well, after the first month or so - or first few weeks - they'd start missing payments and they wouldn't worry about the cash price in three months.

Oh, Elliott's had - - -. At one time they had two men doing nothing else but bad debt collecting. When the war come old Elliott said to me one time, he said, "I don't know what's going to happen," he said,

"getting this money in". Well then the war come and he said to me, he said, "It's all coming in, voluntary". Because people that couldn't afford to pay for their bike, they'd join the Army and the first thing they'd do, they'd pay their bike off, see, because they've got a few bob, but they had no money before. See, there was no dole money like there is today. You only got a ration ticket. Well your ration ticket was no good. People don't know they're alive today - they don't.

Did you hear any sad stories when you were on your debt collection rounds?

Oh, they would all tell you a sad story, but that would go in one ear and out the other. And you'd go and knock at the front door and then run around the back door because nobody would answer the front door. They'd see you there and they'd know you, so they wouldn't answer the door. But if you knocked at the front door and run around the back, well they would see nobody at the front door, they'd wonder what was going on, so you'd bob up at the back door, vice versa.

END OF TAPE 6 SIDE A: SIDE B

Monty Haywood, he wouldn't do any debt collecting until after five o'clock because nobody'd be home, or they wouldn't answer the door. Many a time he's come to my place - I was living down Thebarton way - he'd come there seven o'clock in the morning. He'd caught them before they'd gone to work and repossessed their bike and he didn't want to drag it with him all day. He'd leave one or two bikes at my place - pick them up later.

When you say that at one stage Elliott had two chaps doing debt collection, were they from a debt collecting agency?

No, no. No, they were on a commission basis. And the racket with them was, they wouldn't take the bike away while there's money to be collected. They'd rather go and get the collection, because if they took the bike away, well that's the end of their customer. See, well they wouldn't get any more. But if the bike was down to owing about a pound or thirty shillings, they'd take the bike away, but if they owed four or five pound, well, no, it's no good taking that away because that's one customer you haven't got next week. (laughs) It was better to take sixpence - take anything. You'd take any coin at all. Because,

as I say, money then was money. Not like today, a shilling today is - - -. [rubbish HS]

What about the condition of some of the bikes you had to repossess? Had they got pretty bashed about?

Oh some did. That's another thing you used to look at. If the bike wasn't worth repossessing, you'd hang on - just keep chasing them for the extra money. But if the bike was any good at all, we would take it back because that's where Elliotts made the money. They'd take that back, they'd resell that bike. They'd hold it for three months and then resell it.

So they had a three month opportunity?

As far as they were concerned. They had a great big storeroom of bikes and through the winter months you'd get the bikes out - re-possessed bikes - and put them in the workshop and fix them all up and sell them again as secondhand bikes. Well, you'd get the same price again. They'd turn over and over and over again. He made a fortune. Of course there was no regulation of what he could charge you for terms. If it was two pounds - well whatever it was - he had two pound extra for terms. There was no percentage of interests, just a flat two pound. And the lurk was to say cash price in three months. Well one in a hundred might pay the three months.

Did you turn up at some places and find the bikes simply weren't there any more?

Oh yes. Oh, you'd chase them up. I've had them even in my own business. When I first started off I had customers that I thought I could trust and you couldn't get your money out of them. When you'd go back again, nobody there. "Where's he gone?" "I don't know, he's shifted." So you had to find out where they lived. But on your hire agreement, you used to take all particulars of who they were and where their uncle, auntie or grandmother - all the names. You'd go there, well they don't know. Or else there was fictitious names. They'd even tell you a fictitious name right from the word go. So that was the thing you used to - - -. That's a thing you had to be alert to.

On the other side of it - and let's concentrate on your time at Elliotts for now - who would be your really good customers? Did you have contracts with, say, police or some of the other occupations who used cycles a lot?

Well most of those sort of places would go to the head office, see, because they would be looking for reduction in prices and so forth. But I dealt with - - -. Over the years, you know, people would come to me and I had a case one time, a Mrs Preston from Colton, Palmer and Preston. You might not know it.

Yes, I know the name.

Yes, Colton, Palmer and Preston. Well Mrs Preston always come to me for her kids' bikes. They could buy wholesale or anything. They were like Harris Scarfe's. But, no, Mrs Preston would always come to me for her kids' bikes and so forth. So one morning a bloke walked in and he said, "Mr Standish?" I said, "Yes". He said, "So you're the young man that's got a charm over my wife," he says. (laughs) And I thought, "Gee, what's happened here". So he said, "My wife told me to go to nobody else but Mr Standish," he said. "I'm Mr Preston," he said. "I can get bikes wholesale," he said, "I can get anything I want wholesale, but my wife said, 'No, it's got to get it from Mr Standish'".

And Mrs Bickford, from A M Bickford - Bickfords the chemistry stuff - she used to come in the shop and she was a character. She'd say, "Oh Christ, I'm tired," she said, and she'd jump and sit on the counter. (laughs) And she come in there one time. The kids wanted this. She said, "These damned kids," she said, "they think money grows on trees". I thought, "Gee, I'd like your tree," because they had race horses and everything - they had tons of dough.

So Mrs Colton, was she buying bicycles for her own family?

Mrs Preston, yes. Yes, for her own kids. They'd go to one of the colleges, you see, and they'd come in and say, "I want this", "I want that, and Mum'll come and fix you up for it". "Yes, right oh, OK."

Another name bobbed up the other day, as a matter of fact. We were discussing about the different old firms - Balfour, Wauchope. Well old Mr Wauchope, he used to always come in. He used to ride his bike in from out Kensington way. He used to always come in to me. Then there's another one - I see his photo was in the paper the other day - what's his name again? He finished up, he was Manager of 5DN. Now, what's his name? We get another name as well as my name. And he finished up, he was well up in the police force too.

Was that Lewis?

No. Very neat, dandy little fellow with a little moustache. What's his name? Anyhow his name was real Scotch - [his mother HS] used to have little Scotch terriers. He bought his first bike off of me. Oh, what the dickens was his name? He bought his first bike off of me.

And I'll tell you another one of note that bought his first bike off of me, was Weinert. Do you know the fellow, Weinert? He's a millionaire now. He come down from up the north there somewhere - around Laura, somewhere up that way - and he come down and bought a bike off me for ten bob down and two and six a week. He's right up among the big millionaires here now and he was just an ordinary fellow. He come down town there and he used to board just in the same street as where I lived, and he bought this bike. It's surprising the ones that you find that go ahead.

We'll talk more about customers and so forth as we go along. Let's get back to the racing side of it again. We've talked about the racing schedule and getting to the races and so on. I wanted to ask you about a typical carnival, and I know one of the things you had in your newspaper clipping folder that you let me borrow - - -.

There's that photo. You've got that photo there, haven't you?

Yes, just a photocopy of it, just in case we needed it today. But, one of the programmes that you've kept over the years was this one from the Casterton Cycling Club 1928. [See copy on following page.] I wanted to talk to you about the different sorts of races that would be on at a typical carnival like this.

Well you'd generally start off with a half mile handicap race. Then you'd have a mile handicap race, then you'd have a two mile - what they called the wheel race. That was the main race. You'd have your heats and the finals, and a two mile wheel race. But that generally carried the biggest prize money. Then you'd finish the day off with a scratch race. Well a scratch race would be anybody could ride. You're all riding off the same mark and you'd generally do about a five mile race - sometimes a ten mile.

I noticed your name turning up in most of these races. Would you compete in all those during the day?

Yes, you'd generally do the programme. You'd use the half mile handicap, particular when you was riding off the back marks. Very seldom you had a chance of them because it was bang, bang. You'd no sooner

start than the race was over - you haven't got time to pick up. But you'd use them as a bit of a pipe opener - as a bit of an exercise run. So you didn't worry so much about them, but the main race was your two miler. That's where the scheming'd come in because that'd be worth, in those days, ten or fifteen pound. The other race would be worth two or three pound.

What sort of times would you be making in the two mile race?

Time didn't make anything. It all depends how you worked it. I should say - - -. Oh, well I don't know - times never worried me. I'll tell you a thing that I never told you about and I've thought since, about motor pacing.

Yes, I've got that down. I wanted to ask you about that, but let's continue talking about these sorts of carnivals. I was just wondering, with the two mile race, how many minutes average would it take? How long did you have for your scheming?

Oh, I'm out of touch with it nowadays. I suppose round about three and a half, four minutes, five minutes. You'd average, I suppose, around - - -. On an average you'd average about thirty mile an hour. You hear people talking about phenomenal speeds on bikes. Don't listen to them. See, thirty mile an hour, when you work that out, you're going fairly fast. But to maintain that speed - - -. I know, I've got kids coming into the shop with old bikes and they said, "Oh, we've just done thirty mile an hour". I say, "Are you sure?" Well, thirty mile an hour, if you do a half mile in a minute, or a break a minute, you're moving - you're really going good. So a mile'd be about - you'd say about two and half, three minutes, because they bunch up. And when they bunch up they slow it down and when you get a wheel race most of them again, you've got to do about eight or ten laps. All depends on the size of the track and the nature of the track. I'm talking now about the gala day ones, not the real velodrome racing. That's a different story again.

But your picnic thing, they'd gang up and slow the field down, or somebody out in the front'd go like mad and fizzle out in the finish. Wouldn't be there in the finish, but they'd make it hard for the back man. See, if you get somebody - - -. You see it on those programmes where you'd be standing them up a hundred and fifty, two hundred yards or more, three hundred yards. Well you've got to catch him and

then beat him. Well you see, if they'd put their heads together and go like mad, well they'd make it hard for you, but if they don't work and go hard, well you go hard and catch them up. Well then when you get up, the first thing you do when you get up into the field, you go round right to the front and plant yourself there. And of course the general attitude for the novice rider - of the scratch men up - "We're out of it," and they'd all slow down which is just what you wanted them to do. Because if they did the reverse thing, which we did when we was working, my brother and I - - -. Big Fred, when he was first started, as soon as the scratch men'd get up, he'd duck his head and go like mad. Well that's the last thing the back man wants, because he's tired getting up, and then some silly looking clown, well they'd go flat out. Well then you've still got to get on with it. But what you do, you go straight around to the front of the field and let them all know that you're there, and then they say, "Oh he's up, the race is over," because they know you'll beat them in the sprint.

So that's what I say, that comes into it. (laughs) You can see what I mean. It's all experience and it's all working, and it would still go on. Right to this day, that sort of riding still goes on. I've seen them on the TV, the racing, and I'll pick who's going to win. I say, "This bloke'll get - - -. If they get up, this bloke'll win it," and you can pick it. You can see the one that's supposed to win it, he doesn't go to the front of anybody. He's behind the wheel all the way, following someone. You say, "Well there, he's following him. He's the pea" - he's the one that's going to win it. Then when it comes to the bell for the last lap, well right, they just open up and away he goes. But he's had a spell all the way. I told you I'll make you bike rider before you've finished. (laughs)

I noticed also on these carnivals that you'd have sometimes reference to a relay race.

A relay?

Would that be a cycle event?

No, foot race. No, a relay race would be, they'd be changing the stick over, you see. Well you wouldn't be able to change a stick over - you've got your hands on the handlebar. But you'd find a pursuit race. That's one starts here and one will start there and you chase - - -.

You've got a finishing line there and a finishing line there. Well you'd do three, four, five laps, whatever the case may be, for the first one to get there. That's unpaced. You're following that bloke - you're racing him. You've got to keep him within your safe distance. But I didn't do much of that.

There wasn't a lot of that. That's come along since. Most of the Olympic Games now are pursuit race or time trials - they race against the clock. That's a matter of - - -. There's not so much scheming goes on then. That's a matter of duck your head and go for your life. If you start off slow and finish extra fast, well, it might be too late. The secret of that is go for your life until you're flat, even if you come home walking. You've done all your energy - give it all. It's no good finishing on the finishing line with all the speed in the world when it's too late.

I noticed in this 1928 programme, you're ranked number two behind Liddle.

Liddle, that's right. Liddle was a Victorian fellow. There was a lot of scheming went on there. See, now, I was on my own. In that particular race there was Liddle - - -.

Bawden.

No he was - - -.

McLeod.

McLeod - yes McLeod. There was another one. Wells - Jumbo Wells.

You've mentioned Badenoch.

No. No, I'd run all over him. There was Liddle - - -. There was three of them come from Victoria - Liddle - - -. Excuse me, I'll soon pick it. [is passed the programme]

Yes, I'll hand it over to you.

Stevens - L C Stevens down here. Now there was Stevens, Liddle and - where's the other bloke? (pause) Liddle, Stevens, and who was the other one we said?

McLeod.

McLeod. Oh yes, down here. In the scratch race - - -. McLeod, that's right, he ran third. Liddle won it and this bloke Stevens did all the

work, and I knew that I was battling against those three and they were watching me. Well where the track was, round like that - - -. It was in the afternoon and the trees were over here, and of course the shadow there. "Well," I thought, "now if I go over there, they can watch my shadow," see. Well I'm behind them and I've got to watch - - -. The big bloke was out in the front and I had the other two to beat me. Liddle was the pea - well he was the winner. McLeod was the bloke to stop me. So I thought, "Now, we've got to come around here". They were expecting me to go when the bell goes in the shade of the trees, so I thought, "Well I'll go before then". So away I went from the back straight when they couldn't see any shadow, because the shadows were going that way. And when I went I heard big Stevens say, "Watch out, he's going," he said, and away I went for the lick of my life. I was gone before they woke up, but actually speaking I had to go too early and they just come up first thing. I think I got second, didn't I?

Yes.

Yes, well the third bloke would be Stevens - old Bowie Stevens, that's right - and the other bloke, he was there to stop me. See one was doing all the work, one was to stop me and the other was to win it, so I had the three of them to beat. Well my technique was to go when they wasn't expecting me. Well, when I went, well I'd opened up a gap of about four or five yards, you see. Well I had a bit of gap, but the distance was a bit too long and they had too many guns against me. [Actually I'm describing a race with a similar line up in Victoria. HS]

Was there any physical contact in the tactics with races?

Oh yes. Well, to a certain extent. Because a lot of it was illegal - you couldn't elbow a bloke. But my brother, he used to beat them because he was a big fellow and he'd have a big knee, and he'd put his knees out. If he was in a close race he'd put his knee out. Well, a bloke six foot odd and sixteen stone, well, you had something to beat. But I was on the smaller side, you see. Well I had the disadvantage - I didn't have the weight. You know, you have a different technique.

Then there was another one - another bloke used to - - -. Of course we woke up to him in the finish - old Sid Rowe. As he'd come around he'd put his knee out under your knee. See, he'd put his knee

out and as his leg'd come up, because you were on fixed wheel, if he got underneath you, stick his knee under your knee, and you'd go down. (laughs)

No well, you never - - -. People often say, "Oh, it's dangerous to fall over and that". Well, you don't fall over amongst good riders. Now that bunch of riders - - -. Of course that was only a country meeting. There was riders there that I'd have beaten them going backwards. But when you get amongst a bunch - some of those bunches of good riders - all being well you could throw a coin and anyone of them could win. See, they're all equal ability. Well then it comes in who gets the right position, and that's what you've got to fight to get it.

The biggest fright ever I got in my life - I told you. The old fox, old Sullivan. I was on the Hindmarsh Oval. He taught me how to take a wheel away from another fellow.

Oh yes, you mentioned that.

(laughs) He shook my handlebars. The biggest fright ever I got. (laughs) You're down like this and somebody goes [demonstrates shaking] "Out the road," and you get out the road quick.

I'm interested in asking you about your ranking in the professional cycling. When you were cycling in the city, was that your biggest competition? Would they be your best fields, cycling in Adelaide?

Yes. Now that picture you've got there, I should say there would be at least ten riders in that bunch - - -. Of course I was only twenty then - I was only just coming on. But in that bunch there, you could say there'd be ten of them, you'd line them up and any one of them could win - equal ability. The other half you could throw away.

Was it possible, with the different sorts of races and meets and so on, for someone to say, "I'm the best rider in South Australia at the moment"?

Oh, you'd soon knock him down. (laughs) You'd soon show him how good he is.

Did you consider yourself up at the top at some stage in your career?

I didn't consider myself unbeatable, but I considered myself among the best. Well, when you get on those back marks, see, you've got to be good to get there. You don't get there by winning one race. But then you fluctuate. If you get back too far, then you run a few dead 'uns,

well then you drift out a bit. And when you get out a bit, well then you get a race or so and they chop you back again.

There was one particular fellow, he'd always run third - old Porter Jefferies. Porter would always run third. He'd sneak through and get third prize if he was in the bunch. I said to him one day, "You old fox," I said, "you always run third". He said, "The easiest way to win money," he said. (laughs) He always got a chop. That's all he worried about. He'd always pick up two or three quid and that's all he's worried about, while all the others are going it hammers of hell trying to win it. He just plays along and he'd sneak up and he'd get his place and hold his handicap.

What years do you consider to be the peak of your career?

I'd say from '26 to '30. Of course then I got married and I stopped for a little while - I retired out of it a bit. Then the war come along. It varies. Looking back now, I reckon I could have been a lot better bike rider than what I was. Looking at it now, if I'd have - - -. [trained harder HS] But of course the whole thing was - then again - the whole thing was it was Depression years. You didn't have the time and the money. You had to work and train as well. Well now these good riders, see, all they do is like the football, and all they do is train.

I think you've mentioned to me that a lot of people were riding during the Depression as a way of getting a bit of money.

Oh yes, get money.

Did any sort of desperation creep in with some of the riders - that they needed to win?

Yes. Well, they were after it and there'd be a - - -. I've seen riders get that desperate, they get off their bike, they fall down, can't stand up - they'd ridden flat. But I could never do that. Now I can remember, just after I got married things were tough and I went to Kapunda - Kapunda racing - and I said, "I'm going to do or die. I want money. I'm going to do or die". As soon as I got tired I had to stop. Now, a lot of fellows would have fought on, see, to get it, but I had a fighting spirit up to a certain extent. But that's why I think. Looking back now, if I'd have instilled the other part into me, I could have been a lot better. I

had the ability and the knowledge, but I didn't have the inclination. Life was worth more.

You've mentioned the collusion amongst the riders. Would it ever have entered into it that you knew a bloke really needed the money?

Yes. Yes, Deane Toseland. Deane Toseland turned out one of our best bike riders, and we let him win the Hamley Bridge - - -. We let him win the main race at Hamley Bridge. I was born at Hamley Bridge. Another fellow, old Sid Rowe, come up and said, "Let the kid win it," he said, "He's just got married - and they've got a young baby," or something - and we let him win. And there was old Porter Jefferies. They went over to Porter and said to Porter to let the kid win it and he said, "No, that's not my fault if he got married or not," he said, "If I can win it I'll win it". Well naturally we stopped him winning it. But Deane Toseland won his first race that way, or first main race. So, as I say, as one that stands out I know it. I've got the programme in there to show it, where Deane Toseland won his first scratch race.

Oh there's stories. As you can see you can - - -. It's surprising.

Was there ever an occasion you remember where you said to others that you had to win it for a particular reason?

No. Another episode I had in a bike race - - -. The scar's still there I think. If it's not there it should be - a little weeny one. That was at Crystal Brook. I didn't tell you I rode at Crystal Brook - I don't think I mentioned that name. That was the [BHP] Smelters Picnic we went up there. It was a rough old track - Port Pirie have actually closed it down - for the Port Pirie Smelters Picnic at Crystal Brook. So we went. There was a scratch race. It come to the final race of the day, the scratch race, and they were all in a big bunch and it was getting a bit rough, and I said, "Gee, I'm getting out of this. Somebody's going crash directly". So I back-pedalled - there was about fifteen or twenty riders in a bunch, see. Most of them were country riders that didn't know how to ride the bike. So I back-pedalled to go round. Just as I went to start to go round, over they start to fall. I thought, "You beauty, I'm out of it". Instead of that, a nickel plated bike - chrome plated bike - fell over in front of me like that, and over I went. Hit my head on a post, I nearly pulled that ear off. Had a couple of stitches in that ear and bunged up one knee. Of course I think nearly everyone fell over

barring the two or three that were out in the front. But I could foresee that there was going to be a fall and over they went. You get that way - - -.

END OF TAPE 6 SIDE B: TAPE 7 SIDE A

We were talking about a typical carnival and you were explaining the scratch race where everyone starts on the same line. Do you know why a wheel race was called a wheel race?

No. It was the main race of the day and they always called it the wheel race. I don't know why.

With your races down in Adelaide, did you race at velodromes?

There was no velodromes. The only velodrome, or type of velodrome, we had in my day was at the Payneham Oval, but that wouldn't be classed as a velodrome - it's too big. As a matter of fact I raced everything out there. We used to race for peanuts because the club was trying to get a velodrome race track. See, they eventually got one out at Norwood but it wasn't a success. I even raced a billy goat out there. (laughs) But we used to have all sorts of races out there and, of course, being at Elliotts and make the programme, they were more or less behind the racing itself.

You'll have to tell me about the billy goat.

Well they had a billy goat race on one night, you see, and there was only one billy goat turned up and me. So they didn't know what to do. They said, "Well Bert, what about racing a goat?" I said, "Yes, I'll have a go". So the goat was put in a certain position and I was half a mile behind him. So shoot the gun off and away we go. Of course I had to let the billy goat win it. The billy goat beat me - just went over the line, just beat me.

Was the billy goat racing on his own or in a cart?

No, in a cart. See there was a little episode there - that would be about - - -. Oh, I don't know, I suppose about the 1930s, '28. There was a bit of a craze about - at a few of these carnivals there was billy goat races. Kids have a billy goat and a bit of a cart. Anyhow they put this billy goat race on - there was only one billy goat turned up.

But I raced all sorts out at Payneham Oval there for charity - no prize money. Just two or three of us'd have a special race there - a bit of a one, two, three race. Anything, just to make it fill in the gap while the others had a spell or something like that. Being with Elliotts, you see, well you sort of feel duty bound to do it, because Elliotts were really behind the game.

You talk about height of my career. Well in 1927, '28, I won the cup here for the most consistent track rider in South Australia, but that trophy got thrown out somewhere or other. That was presented to me down at the old Palais, down North Terrace. We had the rollers - what they call rollers. You have one roller there and one there and then another one there [demonstrates]. Well, you put your back wheel between those two and your front wheel up on that. You just stand and nobody holds you up, you just race. And, gee, you can go a speed on them because you've got no wind resistance. We used to do a lot of our training on them.

How was that connected with the Palais?

Just a spot through the dances, you see, just to give them a spell. Oh, we used to have a lot of those sort of races about. I didn't like them myself. You get on them - - -. When you used just to just have an ordinary race - - -. But they could never get them going successfully. Have all improvised sort of thing. Then they started putting them on, you know, a quarter of an hour ride and that. Well, you got no wind, nothing. Sweat, oh, it'd roll off you.

So were you racing against the clock?

No, you'd race against one another. Sometimes they raced against the clock. But they used to have two of them and you'd race one behind the other. They had a set of rollers facing one another.

They'd be monitored in some way so they could tell what speed you were doing?

Yes. Yes, but one again you see, actual speed didn't come into it. It was working. You had a needle that used to show where you was going, you see, and you'd race that needle - you'd watch that needle. But where the thing was always jigging around somewhere. They were never fair

dinkum. There was always something wrong with the rollers, but the public didn't care.

Did you do much of that?

Not a lot of it.

Doesn't sound like much fun.

No. No, I didn't like it. Oh, they used to have them in the big city shops of a Friday night, and Elliotts used to have them in the shop window of a night as a novelty. We had a set home in the shed and we used to get on them. One of the chappies one time, we went away on the Sunday morning for a ride and left him training on the rollers. When we come back he's still going. We'd been out and done a thirty or forty mile ride and come back and here's old Norman still going. My brother, he used to get on them to sweat some of his weight down. He used to put a big piece of rubber tube around - motor tube - around his belly and sweat it off.

Did you ever do the races like that in the city stores or shop windows?

No, I was never Aunt Sally. (laughs) No, you leave that to the blokes that are looking for publicity. I was always a little bit on the reserved side. Until I went into business on my own, really, I always seemed to want to let the other bloke do the battling. But when I went into business on my own, a chappie said to me, he says, "Now Elliotts have blown your trumpet all your life, now you've got to blow your own". And I stopped and I thought, "Oh gee I do". See, so I had to tell people who I was. Instead of Elliotts telling them who I was, I had to tell them. It makes a difference. See how you learn as you get older. (laughs)

Let's talk a little bit more about the racing side of it. One thing I haven't asked you about, with your country trips, what was the accommodation like?

Oh terrible sometimes. All sorts. Hotels in those days were tumbledown shacks. To get a shower you'd go out in the tin shed out the back and put a bucket of water in a kerosene tin and pull a cord and the bottom falls out all over you. Oh, we had all sorts of fun. Or a changing room. The changing rooms'd be a few posts around, a bit of hessian around it

- that's your changing rooms. So that's the accommodation. Different altogether.

Places that you went to fairly regularly over the years, would you stay in private homes ever?

Not really. I have stayed in one. I rode to Pirie one time about debt collecting, another time, and I stopped at a place at Wallaroo - Smiths. There was about six boys in the family and they were real fair dinkum farmer boys - big lumps of bloke, and the old Dad, he was the boss, and they all sat down together, and was there a din. (laughs) They all had a nickname. One was a big ginger headed bloke - he had all the say. Then there was Alby Smith - he still races trotters out at Kadina. I think he's still going.

Another time, the same thing, I was up around that way somewhere and I stopped overnight with the Martins [at Bute HS]. There was three boys that was bike riders and I stopped overnight there. I didn't have to. I was going to come on to Adelaide and I got talking to them. They were agents for Super Elliotts bikes round that part of the country, at Bute. So they talked me into stopped overnight.

Badenoch at Mount Gambier, I stayed privately down there with him. He was in that list you had just now - Vic Badenoch. He was just an ordinary bike rider but one of the enthusiastic ones - loved bikes. He had a butcher's shop down there and I stopped with him a couple of times I went down there.

These days, when you see some of the longer bike races - I guess even with the shorter meets - the riders have all their support team with them. You know, the ones who are going to do the running repairs.

Yes, but that didn't happen in my day. That's where it's commercialised. That's where I might have said, Hubert Opperman done the record from Western Australia and they reckon he broke his arm. Did I tell you that? [It was a joke of course. HS]

No.

Oppy did the record from Western Australia - from Perth to Sydney. The rumour went around here he broke his - - -. "Oppy's pulled out. He's broke his arm". Then of course everybody come in to the party. They said, "How did he break his arm riding a bike?" They said, "He put his hand out of the car to see which way the wind's blowing and

hit a tree". (laughs) Because there was a car following him all the way, you see. Well that was the joke. Everybody wanted to know how Oppy broke his arm. (laughs) But that was the opinion of what we thought of Oppy riding his record. Right out in the Nullarbor Plains, not a soul for miles and miles around. What's he going to do? Get in the motorcar.

There was a girl put up a record here from here to Melbourne. She got as far as the toll gate up here and she got in a truck and she finished up in Melbourne - broke a record, Adelaide to Melbourne. (laughs)

So you're a bit cynical about those sorts of distance races.

Another chap, old Pat O'Leary - old Cyril O'Leary - he did a few bum records and that and they caught him. He had one of those little speedometers. He went out - supposed to go to a place and back or something else, so many miles - they found him at the side of the road sitting down spinning his wheel round. He was measuring his distance by his cyclometer. (laughs) So, you wonder why I don't believe it. Of course they reckon he broke his record and that, but that's what he did, I know it, because he used to be the mechanic when I was at Elliotts in Rundle Street - old Pat.

So it was a real game.

Oh yes. Still goes on. There was two blokes here - I think it was the McLeods - they put up a record from Adelaide to Melbourne - one of them did - and the other one, his brother, was in the motorcar that was following them. They started from the Aurora Hotel in Pirie Street. They left there round about six o'clock at night. But his brother, the brother was riding and his other brother was dressed identical. Before they left they had similar gear on and everything else, see, sitting in the motorcar. Anyhow he put up the record Adelaide to Melbourne. It was registered. But being in the game and expecting what would go on, and being part of the sort of things yourself at times, you know what to expect.

Do you think that that side of the racing game affected its popularity as a sport?

Right back in the dim dark age, yes. Right back in the early days of cycling, when they used to race on the Adelaide Oval. The Adelaide Oval

was a bank track really, because the mound of the Adelaide Oval was the bicycle track. There was a fellow there - - -. [before my time HS] And they were international riders - Major Taylor, Bill Martin. Those blokes, they were real top American riders. And this Bill Martin got disqualified for some reason or other and he said he'd race them all on an ordinary bike. They all laughed at him and that, so when the race come on he got on an ordinary bike and hung a cowbell on it and got on the track and went around. But of course the race wasn't on, but he did it.

What they did in those days more or less crippled it to the eyes of the people that lived with it. But of course without that team work, there wouldn't be - - -. Now, as far as bike riding is concerned, without that team work, it wouldn't be worth looking at. When you know there's team work going on, you're looking at the finer points of it. You'd find three or four teams - - -. Now that photo I was looking at just now, I know the team that won it and I know that they were going to win it, but there's two or three teams in that race that were trying to win it too. See, it was who got the best of it.

See, I won a race down at the Wayville Showground one time. I don't know whether I told you that one. I was going to slow up the field for the other ones, you see. Well, there again now, if anybody was looking on that knew the game, they'd see what I was doing. The blokes themselves knew what I was doing, but they couldn't stop me.

In the time when you were racing, was there any betting that affected the outcome of races?

No. No, we had no money. (laughs)

What about outside interests, the gamblers?

Not much. You might find a little bit. Early days - very early days - of Kilkenny Club, when they used to ride in Mrs Oatley's paddock, before the track that's there now, they used to have races there of a Sunday morning and you used to have a couple of bookies taking threepence, sixpence bet. Because I know I went down there one morning - one Sunday morning. I took my policeman mate, the one I said, Cyril Peakes. He was very, very cycle conscious - loved cycling. So I said, "Well come down". So when he got down there, there they were laying the odds, so-and-so. So he went up, as a policeman it was his duty - and he was

a conscientious policeman, but a nice fellow with it - he went up and chatted them to cut it out. He went back and they still went on with it, so he got the bookmakers and put them off the track. Of course they reckoned he was a terrible bloke, but he was only - - -. He said, "What am I going to do Bert? It's my job". Now if I said nothing, see, there's some clown in the party'd say, "Oh, Cyril Peakes is a good bloke. He went down there with betting right under his nose". If it gets back to the Chief he says, "Where do I stand?" See.

And that same fellow, I went to Terowrie one time. I don't think I put in amongst the tracks I went to. Just after the war I went up to Terowrie. That's right, I stopped at a private house that time too. When we got up there they've got this cycle race going and they haven't got a starter, because in those days all guns were confiscated. See you wasn't allowed to have a gun. When we got there they said, "We haven't got a gun to start the race with". I said, "What about the local copper?" "Oh no, not having him on." Well that was this Cyril Peakes. Well he was a policeman at the time. He had been a policeman at Gladstone and with the Army and that at Terowrie there was a lot of betting and SP booking and that going on, so they shifted him across there, unbeknownst to the others. Of course he cleaned the town up a bit, and I said, "What about the police?" "Oh, we're not having him on." I said, "He's all right". "Oh, no, you can't trust him," they said - "I wouldn't go and ask him". I said, "Well will you have him if I get him?" They said, "All right, get him". So I went over to Cyril - "You've got a job". "What's that Bert?" I said, "You've got a revolver haven't you?" "Yes." "Well," I said, "you're official starter". I nominated him. He said, "Right oh". Well he finished up President or something of the club. He was a good fellow but he was a policeman and he had his job to do.

Would there be an amount of small bets? Would that be normal?

Oh, might be a little bit amongst themselves. Wouldn't be any big betting.

What about at some of the big race meets you were involved with? Did you hear tell of larger gambling interests involved?

No, the only thing, occasionally at Kapunda. There was always somebody at Kapunda that had a Calcutta. I don't know if you know what a Calcutta sweep is. It's a sort of a sweep. I don't know how they work

them myself. But the night before the race you put so much in, and they called it a Calcutta sweep. You draw your rider. Well, if he wins, you get - - -. The prize money might be chopped among say three or four. But they used to always have a Calcutta at the hotel on the night before. That one, I know that. The same at Whyalla. They had it at Whyalla. That race I rode at Whyalla I told you about, the Calcutta, well that was the same way. So that's the only way of betting that I know of it to any extent. Might have been a little bit but nothing to say there was betting.

Did you hear tell of riders getting outside financial incentives to try to fix a race in one way or another?

No. The only way you could fix a race was the way we used to fix it. If you knew somebody was going to win, well all right you was out to beat him, and that's all about it. See now my brother and I. "All right," they'd say, "one of the Standish's is going to win". Well right oh, they'd gang up against you, see. Well then it's up for you to beat them. It's a matter of beating.

What would have been the biggest win that you had financially?

I don't know the biggest, but I know the worst one I had. It was a fifty pound wheel race. I run second and got three pound. (laughs) That was out at the Payneham Oval on Christmas Day and I got run darn near off the track coming for the finish. That was the old Payneham track, the flat one. Old Siddy Grivel. I remember this little old bloke - a little weedy little bloke. As I went to come around he run me half out of the track a bit, you see, and I finished up, I got beaten by half a nose by another mate of mine, old Tom Richards. He's in that photo too. He got fifty pound for the race and I got three quid. I can remember that because it was such a big drop. But others, you know, ten, twenty, thirty pound would be as big as you'd go.

I had another funny episode. There was a fellow, he carried the name right through, even - - -. Well there wouldn't be too many now called him. He was always called Ta-ta - he's in the picture - Ta-ta Williams. We were riding on this old track at Payneham and we were going - - -. We'd won our heats or something - got in the race anyhow - and it was a bit of a pear shaped track, on a flat track. So coming round towards the bell, this Hurtle Williams, he went around me, but as

he went around he said, "Ta-ta Bert". When he did, he ran off the track. (laughs) He got nowhere and I went on and win it. He got christened then - they used to call him Ta-ta. (laughs) As I say, there's a lot of funny things happened. He was so concentrating to say that he'd stole a march on me, and he was going, and he says, "Ta-ta Bert". If he'd have kept going he might have won too, I don't know. But he didn't even hold the track and I went on and won the race.

Did you have a favourite track that you liked riding at?

Not really. There was such a variation amongst them all.

What about one that you didn't like? Any you avoided?

No. I didn't like grass track too much - racing on grass track. It was a bit too heavy. But, oh, we got on to all sorts of tracks. Every track was different. But you read them. See, the old Payneham track, the real banked one, was a downhill finish. But you knew it. When you'd go past the winning post you'd go up a bit of a grade, then you come down. Well you'd race to seat yourself there. I did motor pace, and that was my last motor pace race on there. I looked like finishing up in the grandstand.

What was involved with motor pacing?

The motorcyclist had extended handlebars, right back, and an extended seat, and he more or less sat. He more or less stood on the back wheel. He would stand right up. At the back of the motorbike, from the axle, he had a roller across the back, I suppose about that wide and about that round [about eighteen inches wide and two inches in diameter]. Well, you'd ride as close to that roller, with him standing straight up. Well, you could put your hand on his shoulder. And you were riding right behind him - you could talk to him. So if you wanted him to go a bit faster, you'd tip the roller. See, well that [demonstrates the noise it made] and that meant go a little bit faster. Well, if you didn't have a good pacer, well he could knock you over, see.

Now I did it on the Hindmarsh Oval one time. I had a chappie was pacing me. We were going along all right and I got too far back off the roller. He wasn't worrying about me. He was going, and he was about fifty yards ahead of me and here's me stranded. (laughs) He looked round and I'm not there - he ran away from me.

Then I had another pacing down at Mount Gambier, and they improvised some rollers on a motorbike and I found out it was loose and I thought it was going to fall off any time. I wasn't game to touch it because if I'd have touched it and spun it, it might have fell off and I'd have been over the top.

But no, at Payneham Oval, this night I'm racing this. This Ta-ta Williams, he took it on. He crashed a couple of times out there - done his collar bone in one night. He was determined he was going to handle it, but you couldn't. The track was too good for the speed that you could get up, behind pace, you see, because when you come down this grade and the motorbike opened up, well the motorbike'd run away from you if you let him.

So you were trying to go as fast as you could.

Well I was going fast and I could see the wheel of the motorbike starting to do a bit of a skid. Well if I'd hit that roller when that motorbike went in like that, well that'd take my wheel too - over you go. So were coming down the hill there at the old Payneham track there, and skidding, and I said, "No, I'm out of this". And we're making - looking like we're going to hit the fence. I dragged my bike back in time to save myself and I let him go. So I said, "Finished". They said, "Why?" I said "A man'll break his neck on it". This Hurtle Williams, he had two bad falls over it. He was going to master it. But I said, no, it wasn't worth it.

Because, you see, we could do a speed that the track wouldn't stand. All right, you can control your bike, but you couldn't control that motorbike, see, because the motorbike - - -. See, you're going round the track and the speeds going, the wheels skid. As I say, you've only got to hit that roller as that wheel skids, and then you're [demonstrates noise] - take you straight away. I'm looking at the grandstand and coming straight for it, what do I do? I let the motorbike go you see. Let him drive away from me and when I hit the wind, well naturally I eased up. So I said, "No more". They said, "What happened?" I says, "No way, I don't want to finish up in the grandstand"

Did you set any records with motor pacing?

Yes, I still hold it - on the Thebarton Oval - behind a motor pacer. It was among those cups - 1.52 I think for a mile from a standing start. Of course most records on motor pace, they have a rolling start. Well in those days they wouldn't permit a rolling start. See, you had to be at a standing start. Well that's why I was saying, when you was talking times, a mile in 1.52, well that's thirty mile an hour, behind a motor pace. Of course from a standing start you'd do quarter of a lap before you got your speed up, and that was on grass too. Well that's going pretty fast on a grass track.

No, you see, you can't adjust the speed - you can't say the speed - because it all depends on the conditions. See, you can have a beautiful track and a howling gale down one side, see. Well, that'll stop you. Then you get another time you have a go and there's no wind at all, so how can you compare your times?

It's obvious that you did a great variety of types of cycle racing. Was it typical of the riders of your generation to diversify so much?

Yes. Yes, although I didn't do much road racing because, once again, it was costs come into it. Like you had to have a different set of wheels and one thing and another, although that wouldn't have worried me as far as I was concerned because I never ever - - -. The only bike I ever bought was the first one I ever bought, because when I was at Elliotts, well if I wanted another frame or anything, well I just got another frame. I'd say, "This frame's no good," or I wanted another frame, and they'd build up another frame. And of course the repairs, I'd do my own.

I should have raced - one time - I should have raced. They had a twenty-four hour - - -. Was it twenty-four? I think it was twenty-four hours, or two days' ride or something else - teams race out at Payneham Oval. They rode right through day and night. Well I was teamed up with old Count Strafford - old Jack Strafford. I was teamed up with him. My tubes weren't too good - my tyres weren't too good - so I asked the old boss. He wouldn't come across see. He said, "No". Of course they were dear. I said I couldn't afford them, so one thing and the other - - -. I got a little bit of emery in my eye for a start off, and then I couldn't afford - or I wasn't going to afford - to buy a new tube to ride in the race, so I pulled out of it. And old Count Strafford

teamed up, then, with old Porter Jefferies, and they went on and won it. But you ride day and night for peanuts, so.

END OF TAPE 7 SIDE A: SIDE B

But when we were racing, I was racing on Thebarton Oval behind motor pace - for two seasons I was undefeated, on match races. You'd have a match race, two together. My pacer - the fellow was pacing, he used to pace me - was a good pacer.

What was his name?

Charlie Gray. He was a motorbike rider, but he was a good pacer - he had a good judge of speed. But most of them were good motorbike riders but they were no good pacers. They'd go away and leave you. See, the throttle - they'd open up the bike too fast. Well if you were riding behind a motor pace, you've only got to get two or three feet away from it, you're out of it. As soon as you lose the stream, you're gone. As soon as you get a gap between him and me, you're out, and once you get off you can't get back on because he's going at a certain speed and you can't pick that bit up.

Was there good prize money with the motor pacing?

No. I used to get two pound a night. For a match race fact I'd get two pound for it, because I know I wasn't married at the time. That was on Thursday nights, and on Friday nights we used to go to town. My ex-wife used to get her glory box with that. See, I'd get my two quid - that was good money. It was money for jam. Every week, two quid this night.

How much would the pacer earn?

Oh, I don't know what they paid him.

So that came separately?

Yes. That never ever entered my mind, whether he got paid or whether he didn't - I don't know. But I know Elliotts supplied the motorbike that I used to pace behind. And, oh, there were a lot of different fellows used to have a go at the pacing. At the time I was invited - - -. A bloke - I don't know who he was - but come up to me down there. He wrote to Melbourne and he was wanting me to go to

Melbourne. It was the time when Opperman and Fatty Lamb - they were all the top riders in Melbourne. But it was towards the end of the season and this bloke wrote away, anyhow, just like Jack Rees[2] come to you. See, I don't know who he was, but he wrote away and he got a letter back from the promoter saying that it was practically the end of the season and to contact him the next season. Well, Hubert Opperman, he was right up in it - in the promoting of it. So anyhow he come over here for the Burra to Adelaide race, which incidentally was last Saturday week - same one - and they said to me, "Why don't you go up and have a talk to Oppy?" I said, "I'm not going there". Once again, as I said, I didn't push my barrow. If I'd have gone up and had a talk to Oppy, he might have said, "Right, what have you done?" or, "Well come over under my wing and I'll show you what to do". But I never worried about it. So I said, "No, I'm not going to go up to him". That would have been around about 1924, '25.

But I didn't push myself. I was always prepared to get a little bit and be sure of it. But looking back, after - now, looking back on that - I could have made a success of it, but I would have had to barnstorm a lot to become known. See, it was no good going over there not known. You couldn't get nothing. You'd have to win everything. Well, once you got there and got in the joke and showed your ability, but it was the Depression days and I wasn't a battler that way. I was always used to having a job and a home, so I wasn't going to go over there and race.

Well the same with my brother. That time we had one of the big riders come over here and we spoke to him. No, another rider who used to always go to Tasmania, he wanted to Fred to go over - over inter-state. And we spoke to one of the big guns that come over here and he said, "Is he working?" He said, "Yes". He said, "Well tell him to bloody well stop there, because," he said, "he'll starve to death getting anything". See, because once you get there, if you're not in the joke, well you're out of it, and it was the Depression days. There was no rations - no dole money - so it was a matter of go over there, so you stopped where you was.

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2. Mr Rees suggested Mr Standish as an interview subject.

Let's talk a little bit more about this side of racing. Something you've already referred to was the handicapping. Were you happy with the way that was organised?

Oh yes. You took it. You'd know what you was going to get. But of course - - -. Now, fetching that into the picture, when I first started riding as a junior, well I was placed in every race I raced in - as a junior. See, for about eighteen months any race I'd get first, second or third. Well naturally I was a scratch rider. Well then when I come into the seniors, instead of being out on a front mark, I was back on a back mark. Well, I was only a boy, see. Well I was among seasoned riders - I had no experience. My first season that I went around the summer circuit, and all those sort of races, I was placed in every wheel race but I couldn't win one - I couldn't get the big chop, see, because I didn't know enough. I was always battling against the teams, see, all the shrewdies. You can get second or third. They couldn't care less about that as long as they get the twenty. You could have the two or three pound - they wouldn't worry about you. Well the result was, I was getting rehandicapped. I was back on what they called a tough mark, you see. Just stepping stone. You wasn't on scratch and you wasn't out in the front. You was just in between the two of them.

But when Fred come along, I said, "Well now, you're going to learn from me. You're not going to win races off of back marks. You're going to get out on that front mark first". Well, he rode for about twelve, eighteen months on a little gear out on the front, and they used to all laugh at him and reckon he could never ride, but I knew what he could do. Well then, as I think I told you about at Williamstown where I told him to go on. Well, see, he went on. But he won his main races - or he started winning races - off a front mark. Well then he'd come back and he'd win another, he'd come back and back and back, but he was learning all the time he was - - -. Although he was playing around up in the front, he was learning, because I'd get him to slow the field down for me and that, and he was learning all the time. Well then when he was winning races, well he was coming back winning races - coming back. Well, see, that time when he won the race at Williamstown, he went on that season, he won several races. He won a hundred and forty pound from the different races. Well that was big money in those days. But he won them starting from a front mark, and he was coming back.

Well now if he'd have won races as a junior, he wouldn't have won half of that because he'd have lost all those that he won off of front marks.

Did you yourself keep track of your annual winnings?

No. Get it, and I was a professional - I spent it as fast as I got it. (laughs)

So you don't recall what your biggest year of winning would have been.

No. See, as I say, more or less Depression days and tough days. Well if you made a few bob you spent it. You were getting about two pound, two pound ten a week, so money was nothing. But I remember the fifty pound wheel race because that was an exceptional one race. Cost you a pound to nominate, and somebody paid my nomination. I couldn't afford it. Yes, now I come to think of it, somebody paid my nomination. I know I didn't.

I don't know whether I've got the correct impression from the various carnival programmes and so on that I've seen. There seems to often be a big difference between first and second prize in the wheel races.

Yes.

Do you think that encouraged the collusion between riders, because you wanted a bit of the big money?

Oh it would. That was the draw card. That's what you - - -. You'd look at the programme and it'd say, "The wheel race worth - - -". You wouldn't look at the other races. You'd go where the big wheel race is. That's why I said, I wouldn't go to the South East because the bigger money was down there, but all the big guns come for it. See, that was harder to win. That's like the Melbourne Cup. It's harder to win than the Adelaide Cup is. See, the bigger money it goes up. Well I'd go up there. We could win up there. Down there we might win a couple of quid. Up there we might win thirty or forty pound.

It would have been quite different sort of races if they'd fixed the first, second and third with much more balanced prize winnings.

Yes, but of course we didn't have a say in that. But they don't have too many handicap races now. There's nearly all different grade races. They'll have A, B, C, D grades. They grade them out more. I don't know why. I used to like to see a good handicap race because you see that scratch marker catching up - gradually catching up - and those others

look back and they're trying to keep away from him. There's a race all the time. They're trying to keep away from the back markers and it's more interesting.

Did you get to a stage in your career where you were racing from the front?

No, never. That's what I say. The first race I rode in I run second. I don't know what handicap I had. As I told you, a bloke said, "Let me win it" - he wanted to win it. Well, I thought, "How long's this game been going on?" I just had nobody to tell me. I just ducked my head and go and that was it, and that's way, you see, when I got in among the seniors, well I was about three quarter mark - I was half way mark. Then I won a few little races - races I shouldn't have won. If I'd known what I know now, I shouldn't have won them, but then I got handicapped back on them. Before I really woke up to what was going on, I was back on the hard mark. Well then if you won a race you didn't win all the money on your own - you had to share it. See, you were chopping it up. So whether you win, lose or draw, all you was worried about, there's two or three of you racing for twenty or thirty quid. See you chop it all up. The winner - - -.

Well now, like at Whyalla, I didn't win the race. The other lad, he wanted the sash. Now in that photo there of that group, Bill Richards wanted the sash. No, the Riley Cup - that's it, the Cup. That's why I know he won the race because I remember Bill Richards, he wanted to win this Riley Cup. He couldn't have cared less what - - -. I suppose it was only worth about five pound and the Cup, but he wanted to win the Cup. A lot of them chased the trophies. Old Count Strafford, he had trophies galore. He finished up, he went broke and he went into a hock shop and pawned them. Then later on Elliotts saw them in the pawn shop so he went and bought them all and we had the names taken off and re-presented them. (laughs) Oh Count said, "There's my trophy that I won the so-and-so race" - all his trophies. (laughs) Funny old things that happen.

I was reading in some of your cuttings how they'd say that someone was handicapped so much they'd even be behind scratch.

That's right. I struck it once. I don't know where it was, now you've mentioned that. I think it was Port Pirie. I'd won a race and when I

went up there they gave me a rehandicap and put me five yards behind the scratch or something.

Does that mean you were actually racing an extra five yards than the two miles distance?

Yes. See the scratch rider, the two mile starts at scratch. Well I was riding two miles and five yards. I remember that now. I think it was Port Pirie. But I remember I grizzled like mad but it didn't make any difference. It didn't happen very often to anybody, but now and again it happened.

Talking about that side of it - the officials, the handicappers and so on - were there any real characters in that side of bike racing?

Yes. The starter - you'll find that he was the starter on a lot of the local races - was old Bill Figg. He used to always have a bugle. See, in the early days when they used to have their bike rides and so forth, the bugler'd be in the front to call them together and blow the bugle. And old Bill used to always have this - - -. He used to start the races with a bugle - it'd go "Da ta ta" [sings the tune] - bang. You'd get "Da ta ta" and then he'd pull his gun - that was the start. In those days you'd ride around with your handles down and every kid in the town'd say, when they see you, "Da ta ta". (laughs) It was a done thing, particular where a race - - -. [was held HS] We raced for about five or six years on the old Hindmarsh Oval, on the grass track there. Well every kid for miles around there had - - -. Used to hear the bugle of a night time. There was racing of a night time - I used to race there. That sign used to go - old Bill.

Would he travel around the country?

To the major ones he would. He used to grow lucerne for horses and he used to be a lucerne grower. He used to have a couple of horses and a cart and deliver lucerne to different people that had horses - race horses and so forth. He was one notable one.

Then there was another one, big Bob Messenger. He was the ugliest thing you ever saw in your life. He was a big raw boned sort of a fellow. He had thick curly hair and big lips like an American nigger. Couldn't ride for nuts, but we always used to gee him on. They said to [my brother] Fred one time, on the Hindmarsh Oval, they wanted him to

have a match race with Bob Messenger. Did Fred put on a turn! (laughs) "Make a fool of me to race that mug!" (laughs) Because they thought he was so big, see. No way was he going to race Bob Messenger.

What about some of the other officials - some of the other non-riding people? Do any of them stand out?

Oh, there was a lot of old fellows followed the game. There was a Member of Parliament, old Coneybeer. He was the representative for St Peters - old Coneybeer. He used to always get - - -. He was one of the - - -. You can see him in the programmes there as an official in places, the Payneham Oval in particular. He used to always have a buttonhole. He used to be noted for it round town. He used to walk around town - he always had that lovely big buttonhole of flowers, and a little beard - old Mr Coneybeer - and he was always one of the officials. And then there was another, old Bill Dale, who was a little bandy legged bloke. He was always Secretary or something of the League of Wheelman. There were some quite celebrated sort of people that held good positions there. There was another - I just can't recall his name. I think he was connected with the Rosella pickle people. What the dickens was his name? He was Manager of something. Well as I said also in our talk along, I said about the Manager of 5CL was one of the instigators of starting amateur cycling in South Australia.

I don't know now whether there's too many of them about now. I think most of the officials now of the main bike races are generally old time broken down cyclists, not even the good ones. Phil Thomas told me one the other day that was having a big say. Who was it? One of the good broken down cyclists was running the show. It was the Veterans.

Was there much of that back in your day, the retired cyclists staying involved as officials? Do you remember some of the real old timers?

Yes, well there was Bill Dale, Archie White, Dump Stephens, Vic Elliott. They were all old time cyclists. Of course I wouldn't know how good or how bad they were, but most of them - Bill Dale and Archie White - well they raced in the days of the penny farthings. But they still come on, followed up the bikes. It's a disease - you never get rid of it. It's a disease, there's no doubt about that. I know my son only said to me the

other day, he says, "You waste too much time talking to these bloody old bike riders come in here". You can't stop yourself.

Would those old chaps talk about penny farthing racing?

Not in my day. They would have - they used to. They used to start - - -. The race used to start from the Elephant Castle Hotel. This is how tough they were. They would start from the Elephant Castle Hotel and they'd ride to Port Noarlunga, up Tapleys Hill and over Tapleys Hill. But their club room [was] at Port Noarlunga. I don't know if you know Port Noarlunga very much. You go over the bridge going towards Moana, and just up on the right they had their club room there, overlooking the river. They only sold it a matter of a few years ago. They had their problems. I don't know what happened. I think the Norwood Club's still going.

Did these old timers have any opinion about whether they were better cyclists on their old penny farthings than you were on your new bikes?

Oh no, never discussed it - never had a discussion. See, well they used to have their gear they used to ride in. Long socks and britches and the likes of that. You've seen the old cyclists and that years ago. But that all went out when my days come. As a matter of fact we did most of our training in long trousers, but now they all go to training in shorts. We'd use the same trousers what you went to work in to go training in.

Another side of it I wanted to ask you about was the spectators at the races. Did you draw big crowds of people?

Not very big. Christmas Day was always a big carnival out at the Payneham Oval - they'd get a fair crowd. When I say a fair crowd, three or four thousand. They used to have them down at the Show-grounds, connected with the show - they'd draw a crowd around that. But not like football or anything like that. In my time it's been a sport of one day concern. Now round those country towns, I've seen - around those country towns, Crystal Brook and that - where you can't get near the oval. When motorcars were a luxury, well they'd come in their motorcars in the country and that, and you'd see them two or three deep, but that was only for a one-off - that was that day.

See, now, Kapunda. Kapunda was always held on 26th January. As a matter of fact the Kapunda, they used to run a special train from Adelaide to Kapunda on 26th, and that goes down in history where the two trains collided in the Adelaide Railways Station. One was a special train going to Kapunda bike racing. That would be about 1922, '23. That was when I was just beginning to get interested. There was two trains collided there by the gaol, and one was a special going to Kapunda. But that's how they used to run it. Well that'd go up to Kapunda. Well that'd take the riders up there and fetch some riders back.

Where would you have been riding in front of your biggest crowds?

Oh, I don't know. I suppose down the Showground - Gardeners' Picnic day. Because all the gardeners, see, they used to have an annual carnival for the gardeners. Well all the gardeners from north, south, east and west would come. You'd get a fair - - -. A lot of them would be around the country and that - - -. Down Mount Gambier you'd always get a good crowd, but you never used to stop and worry about the crowd.

Were the crowd barracking? Were they noisy?

Oh yes. That's a thing I learnt. If you was riding around the track somebody'd say, "How you going Bert?" You'd look - you don't see them. All you see is a sea of faces. You say, "All right," or ignore it. But you wouldn't pick anybody out. Oh, you'd get a bit of barracking and a bit of urging. I know my mother and father and sisters and that, they used to go and watch with interest and that, but you'd always get a seat around the oval. You wouldn't have to stand up on a mound or that.

Would women and children as well as men come and watch the races?

Oh yes. Yes, there'd be a fair - - -. Most of the riders would have their families somewhere or other. There'd be a family concern. Joe Blow - his mother and father and uncle and auntie might come and so forth.

Were you recognised, say, on the street at the time when you were at the height of your career? Did you have this element of public recognition - people knowing who you were?

Not around Adelaide I don't think. I don't think - I don't know. But I knew it - - -. It was a time I was down Mount Gambier, I was down

there for about a week or so. Well, I'd walk down the street, they'd all know you - they'd all want to know you. I went up to Renmark one time - the first trip to Renmark - and nobody knew me. So we went into the part they had there for dressing there, and I never said nothing and my number was number one. I walked in and changed my shoes and into my riding togs and I heard the lads talking about this bloke Standish and they were arguing the point who he was and what sort of bloke. One of them said, "Little bloke" - "No, he's a big bloke". They were arguing the point and I'm sitting there and never said a word. I just got up and put my number on and they looked and saw my number. But they wouldn't have known me at the end of it. But they were discussing me. Some of them knew of me, or saw me, and some must have known of Bert, Fred, or somebody, but they were discussing what sort of bloke I was, but they didn't know me sitting there until I got up and walked out with number one on. I remember that occasion.

You've mentioned one of the older riders who toured from America - the black American. What was his name?

Major Taylor.

Major Taylor.

No, he was before my time.

You didn't see him?

No never saw him. But he was a real bike rider, they reckon, but he wouldn't ride on Sundays and they used to hold their races on a Sunday, but he wouldn't ride on a Sunday - very religious.

Were there fellows racing from overseas that you came up against?

Yes. I had a race on the Jubilee Oval as a matter of fact, against Willy Spencer. He was an American top grade. Willy Spencer - who was the others? I forget. That's right, back - I was only a boy at the time. That'd be back about 1923 - '22 or '23. There was Jack Fitzgerald. Jack Fitzgerald, he was an Australian but he'd been overseas. He won a world's championship. He come over and raced down at the Jubilee Oval. I raced down there. There was another race I was chiselled out of. When was it again? I know I won the wheel race there. That's right, I pulled my foot out of the pedal and I went up the straight racing the

bloke with one leg. I was frightened to pull on the other leg - frightened I'd pull my foot right out, it was loose - and I got beaten right on the post.

What was the local attitude to people coming from overseas? Did you welcome that sort of competition or think they were taking away some of your chances?

Oh no, no. We treated them just the same as the country people treated us when we went in the country.

How was that?

Well we can learn something from them. See, we'd learn something from them. You'd hang around them like ants round the honey pot and find out what they know or what they'll tell you. And the same thing, we used to go - lesser degree - we'd go to the country [and] the local lads would do the same thing to us. The human being doesn't alter - they only think they do.

Is there anyone who you think you did learn a lot off?

Oh little bits. Ralph Sulivan to a certain extent - taught me a lot. But a lot of it's commonsense. Over the years you learn a lot - as time goes on - if you've got the commonsense to absorb it and take notice. It's the same now with you. Now, who taught you most of your life? Some taught you little bits, but then you used your commonsense. It's hard to pin it down to one particular person, but you could look back and say there's one person you'd have liked to have been as good as.

Did you have someone you really set up as [who] you thought of as the best rider you'd seen?

Not really, because I thought I was with one of the best of them. I'd have liked to have gone on with it and gone to interstate and that but, as I say, the times were then it was impossible. But then again you look back again, is it worth the hard work? Now, as I say, with my career, who in the hell wants to know me? (laughs) See, who am I when it's all said and done? I haven't produced, or achieved anything that is world class. That's a different thing. But then again, the world class people, most of them drop away when they stop - they're forgotten. It's surprising. Who was it, the other day - - -.

END OF TAPE 7 SIDE B: TAPE 8 SIDE A

You were explaining before that one of the reasons that you didn't go interstate was it would have meant giving up steady work.

Yes.

But you do say you still harbour some sort of ambitions in that direction?

Oh, I'd have liked to have had a go. I went over to Geelong one time, oh, a long while after I'd finished. A mate of mine was interested in bikes - had a bike shop over there - and they had a bit of a carnival and he nominated me and put me in the race, but they run over the top of me. I had no training or anything, you see, but I did ride, and that gave me the feeling of just what it's like to be a mug bike rider. (laughs) When they started to sprint they went [demonstrates a rushing noise] and I was left behind.

But that was some time after you'd finished racing?

Oh yes, I'd finished then. That'd be in the fifties and I'd finished properly.

We talked the other week about how you didn't have the option to be an amateur rider when you were starting out.

That's right.

Was that peculiar to South Australia?

It was peculiar to South Australia, because there wasn't any amateur club here. See there wasn't any until they formed the one that I spoke to you about - there wasn't one here.

So that meant really that South Australians would have not had the opportunity to represent their country.

That's right.

Was that something you would have been interested in doing?

Not really. Deep down I'm a professional. (laughs) Looking back now, a room full of trophies is not worth that [snaps fingers], but a pocket full of money, see. It's nothing. As I said, when my brother my died, well he had his trophies home and nobody wanted them. I've got a trophy - I was going to fetch it up and I forgot about it - that I won when I won the amateur sash down at Kilkenny Club. You know the one I said I won down Kilkenny Club, and I won the cup for the most

consistent track rider in the amateur club down there. It's a cup, without exaggerating it's that round, it's that high - beautiful cup [demonstrates]. Did I tell you I presented it to the Hindmarsh School.

Yes, that's right.

I was down my son's shop and I was going to fetch it home and I forgot the darned thing. I thought, well, it wouldn't come in on that, but you might have been interested to see it. But as I say, that's what I thought of trophies.

Did any South Australians move interstate so they could race as amateurs?

Oh yes, we had some good bike riders that've been interstate. Whether they moved there just to ride only I wouldn't know, but they've competed right back - well back. I was only talking about one the other day - E G Moore from Whyalla. He come from Tasmania originally and his father was the Manager of BHP at Whyalla, and he went up there and he won a lot of good races. we were only talking about him the other day. He went back to Victoria. But see, well there's Deane Toseland and Keith Thurgood, Jack Conyers, Phil Thomas. They've all been good bike riders. They're younger than me. See they're in their seventies now - early seventies - well those that are alive.

Well see, well Deane Toseland won the Warrnambool to Melbourne race from scratch first and fastest. Well, to ride that race - it's a hundred and sixty-odd mile and he's riding against three or four hundred riders - - -. Now, to win that race, that's something. How he won it I don't know, but he was a good bike rider. But then again, what assistance he got I'm not going to say, but he won the race. He started off, the last riders to move off, and he went over the line in the finish. See, well, he's still going.

Let's talk about what happened during your career. You've mentioned that you retired on a number of occasions. Can you tell me a bit about that? You said earlier on that you retired soon after you got married. Was that with the idea that you would be giving it up?

No, I don't know - I suppose I got a bit lazy on it. You got a bit lazy on it. See, although I was dedicated - all my life I've been dedicated to pushbikes one way or the other - I'd say, to be quite honest, you get a bit lazy on it, can't be bothered. And then you find somebody that

says, "What about coming out for a ride somewhere or other," and you say, "I'll go for a ride". It's all started again.

How long were you out of it? That would have been in the late twenties.

Twelve months, eighteen months. You give it away for a while then you sort of - - -. How I finished up, I went working with a couple of riders - amateur riders - so they said, "Come down and give us a few lessons". Well, you go down to coach them, and you finish up, you're going as good as what they are. Of course, then see, well, you finish up, "Oh you might as well race myself". That's how I come to become an amateur.

I'd like to ask you about that, but before we do - - -. When you gave up the riding for twelve months in the late twenties after you got married, was there any pressure on you from Elliotts that you remain involved?

No. No, Elliotts never pressured me to any extent and they never really financed me, apart from giving me a job. See, they never said, "You've got to do this", "You've got to do that," but at the same time it kept me in work all my life. I don't know if I said the reason I left Elliotts.

Yes we talked about that last week, with the country travelling.

That's right. Well see, they'd finished with me more or less, see, and I was a has been.

Do you think that was connected with the finish of your racing career as well?

No. Well, it's because I wasn't - - -. If I was still racing, I wouldn't have left, I don't suppose. Because now Phil Thomas. Phil Thomas was with them for forty years. Well he finished up practically under similar circumstances as I did. He wasn't racing any more and he just got shuffled around this way and finished up doing a boy's job because he was getting old. He was only doing a boy's job. You can't do it. That's the same with everything, you see, the sport. Now here's David Hookes. They sack him - why? Because he's getting too old, that's the whole thing in a nutshell. They want to put some new blood in, and the old birds that are running the show can see it. They say, "Won't bother worrying about him. In another twelve months he'll be finished - he's out of the road". And that's why I say I'm a professional. You can't eat cups. I'm saying now, David Hookes, "Get what you can - grab the lot.

Get out of it". And all these footballers and that, and cricketers, "Grab what you can and get out, because the public soon forgets you".

I told Deane Toseland that. Deane Toseland opened up a business just after I did. He didn't know what to do. I said, "Deane," I said, "get in it while you've got your name. When your name's gone - - -." Now you don't know Deane Toseland - don't know anything about him. One of our best cyclists. I should say for a road rider, he was a better cyclist than what I was, but who knows him? To achieve that, I think he's about the only one that's ever done that - from Melbourne to Warrnambool, first and fastest. There'd be only about two and that race has been going for a hundred years, and yet who knows him?

We'll talk about that side of it when we talk about how you started your business and what influence your past records might have had on that. Let's have a little bit of a talk about you switching to the amateur side of things. Was that a clean break - you stopped competing as a professional?

Oh yes, I had stopped, and I was training - - -. I was coaching a few amateurs, you see.

Was this after you'd left Elliotts?

No.

So about what time did you make the switch?

No, I was still working at Elliotts. Or was I? Yes, yes I was. Yes, I know because I fell over one time - Christmas time - and I was working for Elliotts.

About what stage do you think it was? Of course we've got that photo of you with an amateur - - -.

Yes, well that was in '36.

'36, so you'd already changed.

Well that'd be the first year. I only raced with the amateurs about eighteen months, or more or less one season. Well that's how good I was. I started and in one season I won their cup for the most consistent rider, and also their club championship, and at thirty-odd years of age, so I must have been all right.

And then you went back to the professionals?

No, didn't come back again. Wait on, did I? Yes, I come back as a professional then. That's right, that's when I went to Whyalla. Well, it was just after the war. I thought, well now, I'd never ridden in the Warrnambool to Melbourne. I thought, "I'll do a bit of training and I'll at least say I had a ride in the Warrnambool to Melbourne," because that is the prime race of the country. They knew I was going to damned well win it, so they didn't put it on. (laughs) No, I thought, "I'll train up for it," and another chap and I were training and riding around and that and thought we'd go over and have a ride in it. If nothing else, just to say we rode in it. Of course it was postponed during the war, see, and they hadn't revived it - they revived it the year after, so I never got to ride in it.

Why did you switch from professional to amateur in the mid-thirties?

Well, I'd given up riding altogether, but then when I was urged to take on - to do a bit of coaching of a few riders - well, coaching - - -. Well I'd go around down at the track and show them how to ride and show them what to do, and finished up I was beating them. So I applied to the Amateur Union for membership and was reinstated. Really speaking, if you're a professional, in those days, you couldn't become an amateur, but seeing when I was riding there was no amateur body to pick from, they permitted me to join the amateurs. So I come back as an amateur and I rode in a few road races and then I rode in the track season.

Did you find any difference in the type of competition, the way the things were done?

Oh yes, yes. In the amateurs it was head down and go. That's how I won my consistency cup and my championship. It's not what I did, it's what I knew - see, the experience I had. I reckon there was riders in that club that could have beaten me fair dinkum, but they didn't know enough.

So there wouldn't have been much reason for riders to put their heads together and work out races?

No, you couldn't get them to - they wouldn't do it.

Did you try?

Yes, I tried to get them to put their heads together, even with the Skid Kids - I got involved with the Skid Kids for a while. They wouldn't put

their heads together. But anyhow we eventually formed a club in the Southern District - that's around this way - and we put the track - - -. Where's it to? Which one is it? Unley Road - straight through Unley Road there. As you go through towards the city there's the toilet block. Well just at the back of that we made a Skid Kid track. I had three kids used to come into the shop there, and they weren't too bad, so I knew on the opening day we was going to get some real good trophies. We'd been around and got trophies, and I bottled them up so's they'd win the trophies. So the opening day of the thing, these three kids won everything about the place. They hadn't won anything before, see, then they come up and boom, boom.

Getting back to when you were riding as an amateur, what was the other riders' reaction when you suggested - - -?

Oh just - no, they wouldn't listen. They didn't know how to - see, they didn't know how to.

What would you have thought the benefits would have been to amateur riders to put their heads together?

Oh well, you could win a better trophy. Instead of riding for a ticket to go to the drive-in theatre, well they could get a nice trophy of some sort. That's what they were riding for here for a long while - ticket to go to Wallis's drive-in theatre. Well then for the opening of the Southern District Club - which folded up after a while - - -. The Secretary and the main worker of it, he had a heart attack and died, so the whole thing fell to pieces. They had lights on it and all - had it lit up and everything. This bloke worked himself to death over it - he did too. Errol Hicks. He had two sons who used to ride, but gee he done a lot of work. He was a dry cleaner - or agent for dry cleaners. He spent more time looking after the Skid Kids.

But we got around amongst the trade one way and the other. Old Bert Edwards, used to be in town there, we got him to put a little fountain down there - drinking fountain - so they could have - - -. The part of the land we developed was the part where they used to put a lot of the rubbish for the compost heap. Then I got a mate of mine - worked for some earth removers out at the other side of town - he got on to one of the earth removers here and we got the track going for them and everything. And of course we had these good trophies, so I

said to these kids, "Now don't go winning every ticket and everything else you can get. Wait off for this thing". So they waited off and waited off and they scooped the lot.

You've mentioned Bert Edwards - that's the Member of Parliament.

Yes, he was the Member of Parliament.

Was he interested in cycle racing?

He was interested in kids. But we got on to him, we wanted this tap down there - the water put on see. He didn't put a tap on, he put this fountain affair. He did the thing the right way. I think the fountain would be still there because since then they've built a bit of a dirt track around there for the kids to do their BMX riding now on it.

Did he have anything to do with the cycling world in the twenties and thirties?

No. No, he was a football fan. He was a real red hot West Adelaide barrack.

He was of course quite a notorious character.

Oh, old Bert Edwards, yes.

What did you think about him?

Oh well, he was all right in his class. He was a good hearted bloke. I didn't have anything to do with him personally, but known of him and so forth. He was the king of West End. There's nobody in the West End - - -. You couldn't say nothing against anybody - about Bert Edwards - to anybody that lived in the West End. He'd help anybody. He spent all his money helping other people. But I never had anything to do personally with him at all.

You say you just spent about a season as an amateur. Why did you get out of it then?

Why? I don't know. But I dropped out one way and the other, and I don't know why I got out. Then I got - the disease broke out again - and I said, "We'll have a ride in the Warrnambool to Melbourne". So when I couldn't get a ride in there, I went to Whyalla and they handicapped me and I says, "I'm in it for fun, not hard work," so I got out - that was the finish of it. So that was the end of Bert Standish.

Which was your very last race?

Whyalla.

I think you said Whyalla was your second last.

Yes, the last one would be the fifty mile championship to Gawler and back - fifty mile handicap to Gawler and back. I rode up there, and coming back we got to the hotel - Gepps Cross Hotel - and you had to turn around and go up the hill towards the Stockade and around the top. I got to that corner, I looked up and saw that hill, and I said, "No, I'm going straight on". (laughs) I went straight on - didn't finish the distance. But I was in it then for the fun of it, and it was a lot of fun - we had a lot of fun at it, there's no doubt about it. The training rides that we used to go and that, we had a lot of fun, and you met a lot of nice lads. And I've said, hardly ever struck anybody bad amongst them. Most of the fellows were fellows. No criminals or - - -. You know, there was nothing - - -. They were real fellows, you know, what you'd expect to find, and they were a crowd that - - -. I always used to say, "You get a team of bike riders together. They talk a language of their own. It's just like getting a team of Italians and talking together. You don't know what the - - -. If I had a couple of bike riders standing here - sitting here now - talking about bikes, you wouldn't know what the hell we're talking about. And you can see what I'm telling you.

Yes, some of the things that you've mentioned, like so-and-so was the pea and getting your chop and so on. What are some of the other slang expressions?

Oh, sitting on. Sitting on is get behind. Taking a break. Oh, I don't know. When you're talking you just say it.

Did you have a word for the no-hopers - the ones who were just taking up room?

No. No, you didn't have them. See everybody was a mate. There was no class distinction. If there was class distinction among cyclists, you wouldn't want it. See the bigheads, there was - - -. I know of some of them, they used to think that they were somebody and look down on the others, but you could go out for a ride in those days - you could go out for a ride and you'd find some lad that'd never won a race. He'd tack in with you. There's a word again - tack in, gets in behind you.

Well you cart him along - there's another word - you urge him along and you talk. If he hadn't ridden, well if he wants to have a race, you'd tell him what to do and help him. You'd get help, like a lot of brothers. But occasionally you'd find a few of the guns would go for a ride and wouldn't want the others - they retard you - but most of them were just like brothers. You'd go out for a ride, or you'd go to the track. You get on the track and you'd go round and round the track. You'd do your half hour of training, or whatever the case may be, and if anybody got in behind you and had a ride behind you, well you wouldn't worry. It was nothing.

One thing we haven't talked about is both the road and the track conditions. What about riding out on the road? Were the roads made well enough for you or did you have a lot of problems?

Well, they used to pick the roads that were within reason, but you'd have metal roads, see. Then bitumen come it. But a good metal road is better than a bitumen road, because a good metal road gives you vibration - it keeps you alive - but a bitumen is dead. It's lovely to ride on, nice and smooth and all that, but you go to sleep riding. When you get tired, you could go to sleep on it. But on a metal road, well you've got to keep awake, otherwise you'd hit a stone or something.

What about the tracks? Were there some tracks that were notoriously poorly prepared?

Oh yes. I know Langhorne's Creek, we went down there [to] Langhorne's Creek one time in Mrs Potts's paddock. It started to rain and of course it's black soil. You wanted to start off and your wheel'd just spin around in the one spot. Oh yes, there were bad tracks. Old track at Angaston, it had a big sweep. As you come down you had a real steep bank on it on the bottom end. Well if you didn't know how to ride that bend, you'd go over the top dead easy. The thing is, it's the same with the motorcar. You're driving a motorcar, if you come to a bend, a sharp bend and that, if you put your brake on, you'll finish up going out, but you don't if you know how to drive. You put your foot down and drive around it, see. Well the same thing with a bike rider. You get on a track that's got a bend on it - - -.

Now at the Hindmarsh Oval, it always had a bad bend. Well when you come to that bad bend you rode that bend. That's when you start to go. If you didn't, you'd finish off running out.

When we were first talking I think you described helping to prepare a track by dragging an old tyre.

That's right. That's the track down there where the Hanson Reserve bike races are now, that track - that's how we made that track.

How would you do that again?

Dragged an old wagon wheel. You get a big wheel from behind. Drag that around and around and around. Eventually they got a motorcar or something to tow it around, but that's how it originally started.

What with people power?

Yes, the lads. Well, we had a track that was further over, and it had a couple of bad drains in it where it had been - - -. With cultivation they'd had spoon drains. But when you hit one of those drains you hit boom, and you'd just get out of that one and you'd hit another one. Well, there was too many crashes on that corner. Old Mrs Oatley used to have a little house just near there - that's where the spoon drains were. You'd finish up hitting that and you'd finish up in her backyard and you'd have your bandages put on. (laughs)

Which club was that?

Kilkenny - Kilkenny Club. Unofficially I was one of the instigators of the Kilkenny Club, but I couldn't take an active part because I was a professional. But I knew all the lads that were organising it and running it. Only a mob of lads that started running it. They had no seniors amongst them, of course they still lived with it. Of course most of them are dead and gone now. See when you look at that photo of all those riders - - -. How many riders did I say there were?

Twenty-nine.

Twenty-nine. Well I think I'm about the only one left in there. There's a couple of interstate fellows that they could be still going, I don't know, but I'm about near enough the last of all them. Well see, that's in '20 - 1925. Well I was born in 1905. Well what's that make me? Twenty. See from twenty - from 1925 I was twenty. Most of those fellows now would

be ninety. See most of those good bike riders there'd be twenty-four, twenty-five when I was twenty, because I was only more or less just out of the juniors - eighteen. I was just coming out of the juniors. My brother amongst there, well see, Fred'd be only - - -. Twenty, he'd be eighteen.

Did you keep on riding longer than was normal? Did a lot of chaps still compete - - -?

Oh, they still ride.

Yes, But when you were competing in the thirties, were there fellows in their thirties and forties riding as well?

Oh yes. Old Sid Rowe in there, he'd be forty with no trouble. And George Carmody'd be another one - he'd be forty. Ralph Sulivan would be thirty. Oh, there'd be a dozen, I reckon there, that'd be thirty upwards. Well to me, they appeared to me then, that they were men and I was a boy. But I know Sid Rowe was old because he would never tell anybody his age and everybody used to wonder. When he died they all found out how old he was. Of course he was the fittest bike rider of the lot, and a good bike rider.

Well, I think we might finish there for today. We've covered a lot of ground with your racing side of it, and I think next time we'll continue to talk a bit more about Elliotts and then start talking about you starting your own business.

Yes, well I can't say too much more about Elliotts because I don't think there's much more to say.

We might talk more about it in terms of comparing when you started your own business - things that were different, things you did differently, that sort of side of it, comparing it to your time with Elliotts.

See, well a different era started. See, Elliotts here - - -. When I was with Elliotts the system of business then was hire purchase. Well, since then - since I've been in business - hire purchase is not heard of. As I say, when I was at Elliotts, well if a person came in to pay cash, you'd wonder what's gone wrong. But now if they say, "What terms?", well "Cash only". I often wonder in our shops. At Christmas time we'd sell two or three hundred bikes and there wouldn't be one bike that's not paid for. When you shut the shop at Christmas time, every sale has been paid cash.

Well, that's what we'll go on and talk about is the fifties and sixties.

And the thing I found out yesterday too - a little bit more all the time - business today is not in the race.

END OF TAPE 8 SIDE A

TAPE 9 SIDE A

Interview on 9 October 1990. Fourth recording session. The interview focuses on the 1950s and onwards when Mr Standish established his own bike shops.

I'd like to start by talking about after you left Elliotts. We talked a couple of interviews ago about that whole time when you were starting to do the commercial travelling - well, the falling out with Elliotts at the end there. You described how you had difficulty getting a job. How did you end up working at [J N] Taylors.

Oh, I just went in and asked them about a job. Of course I knew a couple of fellows there - not real personally, but they knew of me. They were connected with the motorcycle game - racing. The names in those days more or less - - -. You knew who the motorbike riders were and they knew who the pushbike riders were. So anyway they made a job there, in the warehouse just as an ordinary fellow, because you couldn't get an executive job or anything like that because all the good jobs, you might say, in the firm, were taken up by their regular staff. So I just had to take over a job whatever I could get, which was more or less in charge of their Cycle Department, which wasn't very big - getting up orders and the likes of that. So I had around about, oh, I suppose about eighteen months on that.

Were you out of work for a considerable period of time after you left Elliotts?

Not really. I wouldn't be out any more than a couple of weeks if it was that long. After I left Elliotts first and went round, I did work for General Accessories - that's the Malvern Star people - but they weren't to my liking at all. They were real go-getters in those days, so it wasn't my type of work at all. They were con men, right and left, all of them.

Could you explain that a little bit more? What of their business practices didn't you like?

Well, the Manager - the General Manager of South Australia - there was crooked stuff going on there, I could see. They were going to give me the job as their Warehouse Manager, and I was to get the ropes of the job and then go on. Well in between the time that I went there, that's when I started to pave my way to what I would like if I was to be the Warehouse Manager, and I figure that I was a bit too nosy. I was

saying, "What's this?", "What's doing here?", "What's going there?", and "Oh, this is not right", and I was saying this to the General Manager. And of course just before I shifted from the warehouse - or when I was in the warehouse, just before I was to be elevated to the position - they said, oh they found a job for me up at one of their branch shops, which I didn't want to go. When I got there the fellow said, "I don't know what I'm going to do with you - I don't want you" - didn't want me there. So I was on a loose end because I figured that the General Manager didn't want me down there because I was trying to run things my way which was - in my opinion - was the right way. But I could see what they were doing, him and his couple of mates there, so he shifted me out of the road into this other branch shop, and when I got there I was on a loose end - I didn't have a boss, because the General Manager had sort of wiped me off and the other bloke didn't want me. I was doing what I wanted to do - a loose end. Nobody'd tell me what to do.

So suddenly they came up with the idea that - they had a wonderful idea. They had a position for me to take over a shop at Kadina. I said, "No way, I'm not going to Kadina". They said, "Well, that's all we've got open for you. You either go to Kadina or we haven't got anything for you to do". I said, "Fair enough" - I can see what's going on - so, I said, "I'll finish," so I walked out. It turned out that I was right in my suspicion because it wasn't long and there was a bit of a scourge went on and they were all running for cover. (laughs) The General Manager and the whole lot of them, they were all booted out of it.

Well, the General Manager had a shack up in the Hills, and he had one of the fellows working for General Accessories doing all the work up there, and when the big boss'd come over, he'd run him down quick smart to do some work down town. See that was one instance I saw.

Then there was another instance of two or three of them of a weekend, they'd load up a car of all bits and pieces and go up around through the bush - - -. I can talk now about it because General Accessories are finished. So they went up around through the bush with all this here stuff that was hard to get, which was after the war, and when they'd come back on the Monday, they'd come back with an empty car load. Well I was wondering what was going on. They kept all this stuff in bags and boxes and so forth and I thought, "What's going

on?" There was three of them in it. Well, what they were doing, they were getting stuff from the warehouse, going round and sharing it up. So there was another scourge went on with those three.

But it goes on, and that's why I got out. So I walked around to - - -. J N Taylors were in Grenfell Street, and I saw the chappie there and I said I was looking for a job - Len Brooks - and he said, "Why what's going on?" So I said, "I'm out of work at the present time". You know, I told him the story. He said, "Oh, I'll find you a job but I can only give you a job of looking after the warehouse, getting up orders and the likes of that". I said, "That'll do". So that was the start of working with J N Taylors.

Well I was there for about eighteen months. I couldn't get any better job, I could see that, because all the fellows in the good jobs had all graduated up from years of service.

A fellow came in one day and he was going to sell his shop on the Unley Road - fellow named Ramsay - so he said, "Do you want to buy the shop, Bert?" I said, "No, I don't want a shop". He said, "Oh, it's all right," and that. So anyway talked it over and he told me what he wanted for it. Well I had no money. So we finished up, I went and had a look at it and decided I'd take it over. The job then was to get some money. I had some but not enough. So a brother of mine - my brother Alf, as I mentioned in the interviews - - -. I'd never borrowed money in my life. With my tongue in my cheek I went to Alf and asked him if he could lend me a hundred quid - a hundred pound in those days. So anyhow I told him what was going on, you see. He said, "Right oh". So he lent me the money and so I went there, took over this business with this fellow.

How much did it cost you to buy into the business?

About two hundred and fifty pound in those days. I had about just over a hundred pound, so he lent me the balance.

What did that get you? Was the shop stocked?

Yes, well that was the business and we just took stock. I bought what I wanted out of the shop. There was no big goodwill in those days. It was just a matter of "Do you want it or don't you?" So it was a broken down business. As it was it was just a shop and just a business.

Well I was told by different ones that I was doing the wrong thing. Well I was in a job waiting for somebody to leave or die to get elevation and of course most of the fellows that were in there - such as a traveller or a department job or any position at all in J N Taylors - had been there all their lives and were going to stop and they were more or less my age, so I have to wait for somebody to leave or die to get an elevation. I thought, "Oh well, here goes".

But it hadn't been in your mind?

No, it was a matter of getting a job. The only silver spoon I ever had in my mouth was the hundred pound or so my brother gave me to go into business.

This was in 1954.

No, it'd be about 1952. Incidentally, it's thirty-six years ago since I got remarried - today. That was 1954. That's why I picked up 1954.

Were you still married to your first wife when you took on the shop?

Yes. Yes, I broke it up after. I was parted - I wasn't with her. I was boarding around different places, then eventually, after I got settled in my shop, I decided then - - -. I said to my wife, "Well, if we - - -". Well I said to her at the time - I was courting her at the time - I said, "Well, what'll I do? Toss my job and go in the business?" and she urged me to go in and gave me the courage to go in. But the first six months I could have jumped in the river. I thought, "What have I done here?" There was hardly any business there because the fellow I bought it from was an alcoholic and the business wasn't much. But I knew that he was a regular buyer of stuff because in the warehouse there'd always be a little order from old Ramsay - always an order there.

Let's talk about the early days in that shop. Did you go to anyone in particular for advice about setting up your business?

No. No, I took the business on more or less on my own advice. Different ones that were at J N Taylors and different ones - you know, people I knew - reckoned I was doing wrong. They said, "You won't last six months". I said, "If I can last six months, I'll last six years". Well I lasted about twenty-two years.

You said that the business was broken down. You went into it knowing that?

Oh well, I didn't give it much consideration. I went into a bike shop - a going concern. Well the first thing I had to do was more or less reconstruct the business and make it a business. The main thing in those days - of a bike shop like that - was repairs and little bits and pieces. The major jobs were with the likes of Super Elliotts, Lewis's - those bigger shops. See, you wouldn't sell a new bike once in a blue moon. A bike shop in those days was one step above working for a boss. The only difference was, was working for a boss and you're working for yourself.

When you took over the shop, can you give me an idea - would Ramsay have only had a handful of bikes in the shop for sale?

He had no bikes to sell. He didn't sell new bikes, he only repaired bikes. I knew that he didn't have much stock. I didn't want him to have much stock because I didn't have any money to buy it. (laughs)

He repaired bikes, and what sort of things would he offer for sale? Were they spare parts?

Spare parts - just bits and pieces, a few bits of pieces that he had. Well of course in those days a hundred pound's worth of stock would be two or three thousand dollars worth today. See, you'd have the usual things that people would want, but you wouldn't stock a lot because if a person came in for something you didn't have, well you just got in touch with - - -. Well, the travellers would come around and you'd order it and get it for them.

In those very, very early days, when you were just taking over from Ramsay, what were his customers - who were his typical customers?

Just the ordinary run about the street. Kids mainly. I built my business up - - -. In my opinion I built my business up on giving attention and being nice to kids. The kids were my bread and butter. If you didn't look after the kids and talk to them and treat them as they want to be treated, well they wouldn't come to you, and that's the reason I was always known, not as Mr Standish - I was always known to the kids as Bert. Never mind who they were, it was Bert. People'd come, they'd say, "I've got to see Mr Bert". They wouldn't think of Bert Standish. Hence I finished up - - -.

We were away on a trip somewhere or other. We was going to have the shop renovated up a bit and thinking of what names I'd get. It was called Empire Cycle Works, see, but I didn't want that name. I wanted something more or less appertaining to myself. I saw somewhere around like Joe's Fruit Shop, something like that, and I said to the wife then, "That's what I want, Bert's Bike Shop". Mostly bike shops in those days were called cycle shops, or the bicycle shop. Well I come to the conclusion that you didn't send a kid into the "bicycle shop" - you said, "Go to the bike shop". See, everything was bike. So I said, "Not Bert's Bicycle Shop or Bert's Cycle Shop, Bert's Bike Shop". The modern word was bike as far as I was concerned.

So anyway, Elliotts then come to the rescue. They painted the shop out for me and I took on their agency. Well then that started me going to the fact that I had some bikes [on consignment HS] to sell.

How soon after you took over the shop did that happen?

The morning I opened up the shop, Laurie Elliott came in and asked me if I'd take over their agency. Now that's, in my opinion, was their trust and thought of me. If they didn't have some confidence in me, they wouldn't have come to giving me the agency. They said, "Well, what are you going to do?" I said I wanted to renovate the shop. "Well, you work out what you want to do and we'll fix the shop," so they painted the shop out for me. So in the long run, in a way, although they treated me shabby one way, they were behind me lock, stock and barrel.

So had you kept in touch with them?

Oh yes, I took the agency on. Well in those days you wouldn't sell a bike for cash. If somebody come in to buy a bike, most bikes were sold on terms. See, so much down, so much a week. Well they would handle the terms, you see. Well you make out an agreement and the people would pay their instalments to you. Well then I'd get commission on the money I'd collect.

What kind of a commission, Bert?

Now, a big question. That was always an argument with me. I don't know - 15 percent. I think it was 15 percent - yes 15 percent. I reckoned it was worth 20 percent. That was an argument with me even

when I was with them on the travelling. Their commission to country stores was never big enough. The people would always say, "I reckon it's worth more," because other firms were giving them a better discount and Elliotts wouldn't. That was a part of the breakdown of my country traveller's job because if I go a person saying, "Here's our stock", "Well what commission if I sell your bikes?" "We'll give you fifteen." "Oh, we can get twenty from General Accessories." See, well they're not going to sell the Super Elliott bike if they can get 20 percent, but they wouldn't budge from their 15 percent.

But anyway so that's when I decided then that I'd call it Bert's Bike Shop.

Could you tell me a bit more about the shop when you first opened it? I gather it's a little bit further south up Unley Road to where the current shop is on the corner of Thomas Street.

It's about three doors.

So in that little group of three shops.

Do you know the locality around there?

Yes.

Well there's a bikini shop in there now. There's a fish shop and right next door was the bikini shop.

So you were the middle of those three little [shops].

I was the middle of those three. But those three shops were an estate through Bagots - it was a deceased estate. Well eventually the estate was wound up and the fish shop bought his shop and left the other two vacant, you see, so we just go along paying about twelve and six a week rent. Eventually they come up for sale so he gave me the first option of buying those two, for I think roughly a couple of thousand each. Anyway I went to the bank next door. This would be, oh, eight or nine years after. When would it be? No it mightn't be. Anyhow, a period after, to buy this shop you see - these two shops. Because the fish shop was already bought - they'd bought that - and I had the option of the next two.

Well I couldn't get the money for one, let alone two, so I went into the bank next door. I'd never had a red figure against my name all the time I was there, so things were a bit on the tough side, and asked him

for - - -. I think I wanted two thousand pound for round figures and I had about eight hundred. No, I wanted eight hundred. I had twelve hundred pound saved up so's I could buy it, and I wanted eight hundred. So I went to the bank and he couldn't give it to me. So I went around and chased around a bit and I got knocked back - nobody wanted it. It must have been about ten years after.

Anyway, so then they finished up, I went to the State Bank, which I had this house on mortgage with them, which was nearly paid for. Well, it was well on the way to being paid, and I thought, "Well, I'll try the State Bank". So I went in and saw them and they said, "Well, we've got to have a meeting of the Board on so-and-so day. We can't give you an answer until we hit the Board". This was on about the Thursday. So I thought, "Oh well, I've got to wait". So on the Monday morning I went into the shop - and the wife used to clean it while I went into town to do a bit of shopping around and that, and she'd clean up the shop - - -. So when I come back - - -.

No, when I got there I got a letter from the State Bank to say the offer was unattractive - no good. And of course I'm real crooked. I'd been to the Commonwealth Bank, I'd been to the New South Wales - anyhow, about three or four of them - but I couldn't get anywhere. I didn't want to remortgage the house if I could have avoided it. That was the reply I got from the State Bank.

So I went into town and the first one I struck was Laurie Elliott. He said, "How are you going?" I said, "No good - bad". He said, "Why, what's wrong?" I said, "Well, the shop's up for sale - I've got to buy it or get out," and he said, "Well buy it". I said, "I can't, I haven't got enough money". "Oh, you can easily get that." I said, "Why, are you going to give me some?" He said, "No, I can't do it". So I said, "Well what am I going to do?" He thought and he said, "I'll see what I can do for you". Anyhow, when I got back to the shop the message come - I didn't have the phone on in those days - the message come through to get in touch with a Mr Staude of the ES&A Bank [English Scottish and Australian Bank] branch in Pulteney Street about the money.

So I went in and saw Mr Staude and introduced myself and explained everything to [him] and he took all my details. I said I was referred from Laurie to get in touch through Mr Edwards, who was the General Manager of the ES&A Bank. So when Mr Staude took all the

details, I said, "How do you think I'll go?" "Well," he said, "I'll tell you now, if you'd have walked in off the street on your own, you wouldn't have got anywhere, but whoever's put you on to Mr Edwards is doing you a favour because this has got to go to Mr Edwards". So he said, "I think you'll have a chance". Well I did.

So Laurie Elliott had come to the good again. So when all's said and done, although it sounds as if they treated me rough in the first place, they did not altogether desert me. So I must have been some good to them somewhere along the track because they more or less did help me to start my business and buy my shop. So the result was that I got the money for the shop on the condition that I put my banking account in the ES&A Bank branch in Pulteney Street. Well it was the new branch. I could see the writing on the wall after, with a new branch and they wanted customers.

So anyway I went into the bank next door, which I'd been banking with - the National - to close my account. The Manager there, when I asked him about money he wouldn't give me any. He never so much as got off his chair. He just sat there and just said, "I can't do anything for you". So when I went in to close my account he said, "What's wrong?" I said, "Well I've had to go to another bank to get the money". He said, "Did you get it?" I said, "Yes". So he said, "Oh, that's bad". I said, "Well you wouldn't give it to me". Because I knew him personally more or less because he used to walk past the shop - next door neighbour you see. I'd go in and we were on ordinary names. So I said, "You wouldn't give it to me, so," I said, "I had to do something". So anyway that set me up with the ES&A Bank.

So from there on I went on. See well eventually I bought the shop and that was a good investment. I don't know if I told you what the investment was eventually. Did I tell you how I sold it?

No.

Well eventually here just recent - well within the last two years - - -. It was made over in my will that when I go that shop would become the two boys'. I made my will for the house, which I consider my wife was the backbone of my business - she urged me into it, she worked for me and she lived here - this would be hers, not the boys. The boys could have the shop, because she got her daughter to look after and the

house was to be hers. So I left the house, this part, to her to do what she wants to do with it if I go first and the boys had the other, which I thought was fair enough.

Well eventually the boys had the shop and things got on similar to what it is now - land tax and taxes on property is out of this world. There's nothing. So my eldest lad said to me one day, he said, "Nice thing you done to us". I said, "Why what's that?" He said, "Well you left us the shop - you left us a liability". I said, "Why, what do you mean?" "Well," he said, "the tax we're paying, we can't get rent". He said, "It's costing us money." I said, "Oh, you're joking". So anyhow he showed me the details. The way the taxes and all gone, they were losing money on the rent, and if you put the rent up, you had an empty shop, see, so that's why the bikini shop is there now - they took it over. I couldn't have let the shop because if your rents too high, well this is what's happening today.

END OF TAPE 9 SIDE A: SIDE B

You were saying the difficulty of getting people to rent.

Yes, difficulty with rents. So I said to myself, "Well, no good having a dead horse". They said, "What if we sell it?" I said, "Well it's up to you," because I told them in the first place when I gave it, I said, "Now there's my gift to you from my life savings and I hope you can keep it as such". So they said, "Well, you don't mind?" I said, "No, it's no good having the darned thing if it's going to cost you money". I said, "If you can't make money out of it, forget it". So they said, "We'll put it up for auction". So they put it up for auction and I told them they wouldn't get a bid for it, because it's jammed between two shops you see. Well they finished up getting a [good price for it HS], so I was quite proud of the fact that I could give my sons, while I'm alive, [a decent gift HS] which was nice to be able to do. I didn't think I'd ever be able to give them [so big a gift HS] each. (laughs)

So that's the deed that Elliotts did for me.

How long did the bike shop stay at 236 Unley Road?

In my possession for round about twenty-two years and about fifteen or sixteen years after. Well then eventually, when I sold out it was to a nephew of mine who more or less grew up with my two kids. He was

working out the abattoirs and he wasn't satisfied out there, so they talked him into to take over my business. I retired at sixty-four instead of sixty-five. I retired premature because he was going to leave the abattoirs and buy a milk round so they talked him into, instead of going to the milk round, to take on the bike shop. Well I got out of it then and thought I'd have a bit of leisure life early.

Anyhow he was there for about two or three years and the house on the corner come up for sale so he thought, well he wanted to expand and he couldn't expand because both shops each side were owned by Italians and they wouldn't sell. He tried to buy one. He was using it as a bit of a store room - not the fish shop, the other side. He tried to buy it but they wouldn't sell - they've still got it. But anyway this come up for sale so he went to bid for that and I was with him. It was going up and up and up - it was above the price he was prepared to go - and he was on the point of pulling out. Because I said to him, I said, "I think they're using you up," because as soon as he'd bid the auctioneer had another bid coming up. I said, "I think he's using you up".

With that my youngest son [Roger] was behind us - we didn't know he was there - he said, "Go on John, go another bid on. I'll stick with you". We looked around and there was Roger. Of course he's a bit of a go-getter and that. So anyhow another couple of bids and it got knocked down to him. Well then, he had to knock the house down - or a portion of the house - a rebuild the shop that's there. Well that left the 236 Unley Road, the old shop, empty, so that's the story of my business there.

But, really speaking, that little business made me from nothing - I had nothing - - -. When I say I had to borrow money to go in there, plus I had the two lads I had to pay maintenance for and broken up home, so you've got nothing. So I bought this house to get married in. I made enough money so that I could buy this house to come in out of that shop and used to have a couple of holidays a year. I had the caravan - you saw the pictures of the caravan. I'd have a holiday around about June/July in the dead season, and then Christmas time, Christmas Eve I'd shut the shop and away we'd go for the Christmas holidays, whereas I should have stopped behind because there's good money. Because after the Christmas Day there's all the kids running

around. But I was doing nice enough to say I can go for a holiday. So I finished up I bought, through that little shop, and my ability in my shop - I have to put it that way - to run a business successfully. I started off with nothing - as I say, a broken down, alcoholic's home, more or less - to a successful business.

While I was there I saw seven bike shops come and go on that Unley Road. Different ones would start up. This one would start and so forth - the garages would open up bikes - but Bert Standish Bike Shop still went on. So I can class it as a successful business.

I'd like to talk about the development of the business. Let's go back to those very early days when you just took over the shop. Can you describe to me how the shop was laid out? I only know it as far as the verandah. You've got the verandah over the footpath. Was it a single room inside?

There was a single room. The shop itself would be not much bigger than this room. Yes, it wouldn't be much bigger than this room the shop itself. Then there was a little [lean to] across the back - - -. Well it was eighteen foot wide - that'd be roughly the length of this. I could say it was as wide as this. Big as the passage way and this would be as big as the shop. Well then there's a place at the back, like a little - it was a workshop - which was, say, about eight foot wide, the width of the shop, and about eight foot deep. Well that's where I did all of my repairs and renovations. Then at the back there was a bit of a lean-to verandah at the back. Then there's a block of land down the bottom of the yard which had no back entrance and you couldn't get into it. That was the detrimental part of the land there. You couldn't get in, because the owner of the - - -.

See the fish shop owned right through on the other and the bank owned that. I couldn't get into the back of the fish shop, an entrance, and the florists that's there now - Parkers, Mayfair Flowers - we tried to get him to give us a laneway out the back so that we could get in but he wouldn't do it. So we couldn't come up through his property. I had a block of land then and all that depth there - nothing.

Did you use it for anything over the years?

Grow weeds! No, you couldn't get into it you see. There was nothing to do there. This other old joker, he used to have fowls there and ducks and all this - this bloke that was before me. He used to have a few

ducks and fowls running around the yard and so forth. It wasn't fenced in at all, only the back fence, and then the extreme outsides of the three shops - four shops. So there was nothing there. That's the reason why I said they wouldn't get a bid for it, because you had no back entrance and you only had this shop.

And that shop was originally built by an old chappie who built it - he was a butcher. It was only built of rubbish. There was nothing in it from the salvage point of view. There was nothing in the shop to salvage because it'd been there for donkeys years. It'd be one of the oldest shops on the Unley Road. The old chap used to come in at times and see me. He was an old bloke named Delaney - he had that as a butcher's shop. See he told me the story. And the walls were only made of lime, sand and river rubble, and you couldn't drill a hole in the wall. Because in the fish shop one time they were doing some renovations and they come there with a power gun to put some signs on the wall. I said, "No don't do that," I said, "You'll come straight through". They said, "No, we won't come through". I said, "Well, if you come through, you repair it". And away they go. Bang! A big hole like that comes through (laughs) where they shot the gun into it. I tried to put racks up so as to hold tyres up but you couldn't put nothing on the walls.

And that's still there so, as I say, that's why I said - - -. Well, the timber in the roof might have been all right. The roof was rusty, the floor was bad. There was nothing there.

Did you have the plumbing laid on? Did you have toilet facilities there?

Oh yes, it had an old toilet out the back, but the white ants had got into that. I didn't know what to do about the white ants in the doorway of the toilet so I got some kerosene and splashed all kerosene and I lit it. (laughs) It burnt them out.

Was that separate to the shop, out in the backyard?

Oh, that was connected up with the lean-to verandah - more or less part of the shop. But there was nothing there really speaking and you couldn't make anything different of it. When we let it to the bikini shop we went through it and put a new electricity wiring - rewired it with electricity - because it was dangerous what was there. It was all

dangling around and everything. It was a shambles, believe me. (laughs) But the land was the money - that's where the money is.

See the young chap that bought that shop now, if he sits on that shop for another twenty years - he was only a young bloke; he's got a video shop up the road - if he sits on that property for twenty years he'll walk away with anything because that property will go - the land will go. See, the land will be there.

Were you operating the shop before Elliotts painted it out?

Yes. It was some shop, wasn't it Masie, when I first went in there? [Mrs Standish replies in the background] Some shop, wasn't it? (laughs) The wife and her daughter, they come in and helped me to paint it out - climbed up around the ceiling and so forth. So we got to work of a night time, was painting it and - - -. We made it presentable. What I mean, I'm telling you the bad side of the place, but as a presentation it was quite all right. So there was nothing wrong with it. I got a nice counter. The other bloke had a couple of old boxes more or less as a counter and he had a wooden case up on the counter with birdwire in the front so the kids couldn't get in and pinch his things. It was a ramshackle. But, as I say, it was rags to riches.

That first six months, when you were saying you were pretty depressed about the whole undertaking, on a day to day basis, how many people would you see coming in the door?

Oh, half a dozen. There was many a day that I wouldn't worry about taking the money out of the drawer. There was no cash register - there was nothing like that. We just had a bit of a box under the counter and pulled it out. Oh, there was days - - -. After I was there for a while I said to the chappie that was the accountant at Elliotts - - -. He said, "How you going Bert?" I said, "Oh no good. I don't take enough money to feed me half the time". But he said, "It's not what you take today, it's what you take at the end of the year that counts". He said, "Wait until the end of the year to see how you go". Well by the end of the year I was starting to go all right.

On repairs, you see, I was getting plenty of repair jobs. And on repair jobs, well you'd collect your labour, so I was making a living by repairs.

How much in those early days - we're talking about the 1950s - how much would you be charging? Would you charge by the hour for repairs?

Charge what I thought it was worth.

Can you give me some idea of what you were charging?

Yes, in comparison today, a person comes into the shop today to have a bicycle wheel trued up - would cost anything from sixteen to eighteen dollars. In those days it was five or six shillings.

How long would it have taken you to do that job?

All depends - quarter of an hour, twenty minutes. Because that was part of my trade. I was fortunate to the fact - once again I can thank Elliotts with my tongue in my cheek sort of - - -. I started at Elliotts doing repair jobs - odd jobs, repair jobs. I don't know whether along the track I asked him one time couldn't I get on to the building of the different part of the job where he told me, "Do you want to be a bike man or a bike builder?" Well I was a bike man. The result was I knew every bit of it. See repairing a bicycle is different to building a bicycle.

Today the bicycle shops today are not bicycle shops. They wouldn't know how to true up a wheel properly. I've had wheels come into the shop that buckled up that you'd throw the wheel away. Well in those days people didn't want the wheel thrown away. Many of them I've just put them on the ground and jump on them. Well my thing was they got buckled that way - something'd buckle them - well they'd unbuckle the same way.

Then we used to clean up a bike to have it re-enamelled. People would come in and have a bicycle re-enamelled and re-nickelled - all the parts re-nickelled. Well I had a good friend of mine who used to do electroplating. He used to be in town - dead and gone now. Well I'd take my old bits and pieces in, he'd re-nickel the parts. And I had another one - he's dead and gone - he would sandblast them and re-enamel them. Well then I'd put those bikes together, you see - they were renovated bike. Well they'd come in with some dirty ..... sort of a bike, and that's where you used to have the old overalls and greasy dirty hands and go and serve a person. Get a bit of an old rag.

Then I had an old chappie used to come in there. He used to work in a couple of car places in town, cleaning old cars. He used to keep me in old rags. Every now and again he'd say, "You must be running short of rags, Bert". He says, "Here you are, here's some more to keep going".

I had quite a connection in that shop of old men - old retired fellows. They'd come in the shop and they'd sit down on a box - I had an old box there. They'd sit down and talk to you while I was working away, and they'd always do you little favours. They were from different places, and half of them - well most of them - I didn't know their names. You had nicknames. There was Old Rags, and there was - - -. One of them used to come in and prune all my trees for me. Another one used to always fetch me lemons - he was Old Lemons. He was an old farmer lived in a house round - he had a great big lemon tree and every now and again - - -. Then there was Old Shaky, another old bloke. He used to - had the shakes. He'd say, "Oh, I've got this home in the shed. It might come in handy to you Bert". He said, "I don't want it". So they'd come in and sit down and talk to you about things. But it doesn't happen now. Nobody gets inside the workshops now. But I had all these old fellows that - - -. Talking to them you found out a lot of information. They'd sit down there and talk for an hour or so.

Were they old bike people themselves?

No, no, just identities. I had another one, he was a TPI bloke. He'd run my messages for me on his bike. I'd want something in town, I said, "Jack, what about nicking into J N Taylors and get this?" "Right oh, Bert," and away he'd go. He was a little bit soft - not exactly soft, but not 100 percent you know - and he just loved it. He used to think it was lovely because he was going in for Bert Standish to - - -. Going in to say "I'm from Bert Standish," see. He thought it was quite an honour to be employed by me. Oh, I had quite a string of them.

And then again, the same thing with kids. The kids would come into the shop. They'd get what they wanted, they'd give you a bit of cheek and that and I'd kick them out of the place. Give them back what they give you. You know, they'd hang around - "No go on, tick off. You've been hanging around. Go and do your homework," I'd say. "Oh, what are we going to do homework for?" See they'd come from Unley High

School and the Goodwood High School - all the kids of the town. If I'd have put up for Mayor of Unley and the kids had the vote, I'd have bolted in.

We used to go down to the - the wife and I - we used to go down to the Unley pictures. You'd go down there and you'd hear, "Hello Bert. What, you having a night out, Bert?" (laughs) The wife'd say, "Who's that?" I said, "Oh I don't know, somebody". But it made me an identity.

About how long do you think it took you to establish yourself, to feel that the business was going to work out?

Twelve months - within twelve months. The same customers started to come in and you'd see the same ones. The mother'd come up and fetch a wheel - "Look, can you fix this wheel up?", "Can you fix this bike up? The kids at school". When they get it, "I'll fix you up an account". Well I had my little black book and very little I lost. When the kid'd take it I'd put it down in the book, and I had very, very few bad customers. I got caught a couple of little bits and pieces but 99 percent of the people were honest. I had my little black book.

In those early days, in the early fifties, you were doing repairs on a daily basis. What other sorts of things did you have in the shop to sell?

A bloke talked me into put some electrical parts in and it was a dead loss because people didn't come to me to be buying electrical stuff because I didn't know enough about electricity. That was a dead loss. Then they talked me into putting in hardware - a bit of hardware and paint. That was a dead loss. I put in paint. They'd come in and say, "You wouldn't have half a pint of so-and-so, would you?" They'd buy the half. "I've been in Harris Scarfe's. I bought it and I'm running a little bit short." The big stuff I never got. So anyhow, that went for a while. I gave that away. Then Guy Fawke's Day come along. You mightn't have seen where we used to have Guy Fawke's Day with the crackers.

Yes.

Well I got talked into putting some crackers in. I put them all in the window and you had to stand there - when the school come out - you had to stand there darned near with a gun. The kids'd come in. They'd

be talking at one end of the window and the other little bugger would be down here - - -. (laughs) "What's this for?" "Get out of it!"

But I had them all trained up pretty well. I used to have a little oil can - like a squirter one - and they used to come and give a bit of cheek. I'd say, "Now get out or I'll give you - - -". This could squirt here to the wall. Well it gave a real good squirt you see, and it was as straight as a dye. It'd go [indicates sound]. And of course it was always sump oil - old sump oil I had to oil the bikes with. If they give any cheek [indicates noise]. Ah no, as soon as I'd grab the gun they'd go for their lives. One lad wouldn't go. He defied me one time and he caught the spray on his clothes and he was going to go home and tell his mother and I was going to get hell. I said, "You tell her to come down and see me. I'll tell her what you're doing". (laughs) That's how I used to handle them.

But the kids are your money. See this is what old B J Elliott told me years ago. He said, "The working man's where your money is. It's not with the toffs". And I proved that when I was at Elliotts. The kids'd come in in their college caps and so forth - "How much is this?", "How much is that," and then they'd go home and tell Dad and Dad'd go to the wholesalers and get it wholesale. They were in the money - you wouldn't get it - because when the schools used to come out we used to say then, "Oh, here are these little buggers again. How much is everything". I said to one lad one time, I said - he'd asked me the price of this and the price of that - I said, "What you want is a price list". He said, "How much are they?" (laughs)

But as I say, it's a different life today in the shops. I get into the shops now. I get into trouble with my son. They get there and I talk too much they reckon. Some old benny come in to have a talk, or somebody comes in that's a bit interesting. Well my times my own. I couldn't care less. I'm not getting paid so if I want to stop, I stop and talk. They say, "You talk too long. Get the sale and get out". I say, "That's not my method". And it's surprising.

I had one the other day - I slapped it back. A lad come in some time ago to buy a bike - it's an illustration - to buy a bike. Asked how much the bike. Anyway, I had a talk for a while and it finished up his name was Standish. So of course I got talking who he was and what he was. Well his grandfather was my cousin, see - yes, cousin - and his

father - - -. Incidentally his father was my very first customer to come into my shop down here. See he was going to college, his father had a pretty good job with General Motors - or his grandfather, my cousin - he had a pretty high position in at Holdens. Anyhow, this lad was going to, I don't know, St Peters or Prince Alfred's College, and the very first day I opened up shop this bike come in and I looked at the bike to be repaired was Peter Standish. And I looked and I said, "Gee that's funny".

So I was telling this kid about this, you see. Well it eventually transpired that he's come back to live in the Torrensville district. So I sold him that bike and then eventually he came back and bought a bike for his wife. No, no, eventually he hit a dog and smashed his bike up and had to come back and get a new pair of forks and fixed up and one thing and the other. Then he come back again. Then he come back to buy a bike for his wife. And I said to my son then, I said, "Now see what I've got out of talking to a bloke". I said, "You remember me talking to him and telling you how he was a distant relation". I said, "Now he bought that bike then, he paid forty or fifty dollar repair job, and then he comes in and buys another bike. Now that's through talking. Now if I hadn't have talked we wouldn't have had a customer. He might have gone elsewhere". So that's it.

How long after you opened the shop before you took on the Elliott agency?

Same week.

So you had bikes for sale in the shop from the start?

Yes, well that's what the other bloke didn't have. See, right from the word go I got a consignment of bikes from Elliotts.

How many would you have had in the shop?

Half a dozen or more. See, in those days they'd give you a consignment stock. See, they'd be on consignment. If you sold them - - -. Well they knew me enough of what was wanted, because that was my last job was going round checking on agents. See I knew what the agents had to do, because agents, you'd go to some of them and they'd take a seat off a bike. If somebody come in wanted a seat and they didn't have one, they'd take it off the bike and be going to put it back later and all this stunt. Or take a wheel out of a bike or something. In the end

they'd go broke and when you go to get your stock back, you've only got half your stock. That was part of my road when I was on the job, see, and so I knew what it was. So they had no hesitation of giving me a range of bikes.

Do you remember how long it was before you sold your first bike from that shop?

Wouldn't know exactly.

But not straight away?

Oh no, it might be a month. Oh, I don't know, sales weren't so prevalent in those days, see, because it was only a pound down and five shillings a week, or ten bob down and two and six a week. Then if they weren't paying, well Elliotts'd just get a bit of a list - "Oh, so-and-so hasn't paid up". So I'd get on my bike or something, go round and collect some money, because I was getting 15 percent or so of the money I collected. It's a real trade in a way you know. People think that you go into a business and all you do is just stand there with your arms folded waiting for customers to come in to serve.

There's no two people the same. My method of selling has always been to find out how much they want to pay. If they want something - "How much? How much do you want to spend?" "Oh so much." "And what type of bike do you want?" - lady's, gent's, boy's or girl's. All right, you show your ware and after a little chat for a while - - -. If you can get a little personal touch in and find out your little personal touch, you're half way there. But if you just stand like a dummy, like a lot of salesmen, you'll find - "What do you want?" - they just stand there with their arms folded, say waiting for you to make a move. You've got to do the talking and you've got to make them talk. The hardest customer to serve is the person that won't talk. If you get a customer that won't talk, they're hard to sell. But, see, once you get them talking and you find out that - - -. "Oh, I only want this for the kid." "What, have you got three or four of them?" "Oh, we've got three of them home there." "Well, gee, they all want bikes don't they?" "Oh no, they're not going to get bikes." "They will." See, you start. Then I'd say, "Well eventually they're going to have a bike".

END OF TAPE 9 SIDE B: TAPE 10 SIDE A

I wanted to ask you, when you first started out, do you think your name was known? Do you think that helped you?

Yes. Yes and no. I'm a believer in if you've got a name, use it while you've got it. Though my name was there, it was fast going down because, as you know, with a footballers, once you're out, if you go talking Barrie Robran to the kids today, they won't know who you're talking about - "Who was he?" see. And that's exactly the same - you're in it, you're out of it, and it's no good hanging on. So I built my business up on my own personality in the shop, as I said, with the kids. I played with the kids, I talked to the kids, I amused the kids, see, and did what the kids liked to have. But you can't do that with the parents. I find it in the shops now serving - - -. Of course I'm in the position where I can say what I like, different to a younger one. Now the older mothers come in - the women in their forties and fifties - and they go crook about the kids of this and that, and my best introduction to a lot of them is, "There's only one thing wrong you know". They say "What's that?" "You should have more children." (laughs) And they come in like the tide, because they're going crook about the kids, you know, the cost and the villains and so forth and everything else, and you turn around and slap that on them. (laughs) It opens up a big door. It opens up and they say, "That's all right. Well you must have been through it". I say, "Yes, I've been through it".

Going back to those early days of the shop, when you were re-establishing the business in the fifties, we've been talking over morning tea about local councils. Did you have much to do with your local council in setting up the shop?

No. Yes and no. I didn't have much to do with them personally, but my name did. I didn't put myself out to be involved. As I've said along with our interview one way or the other, I was never one to push myself along. If I'd have gone over to the Unley Council there and made myself known to the chiefs and so forth, it might have been different. A lot of them knew me but they didn't know me. In other words, they knew of me. I'd go over for some reason or other and I'd say Mr - - -. "Oh yes, yes. I've never met you," and that was it. But I never followed them up to any big extent.

Were there any local regulations that you stumbled across in those early days that affected your running of the business?

No. I was very much involved with the widening of the Unley Road - very much opposed to it. But since I've altered my mind. My opinion was at the time, and I spoke of it in my own little way, that why should the Unley Shopping Centre there go to the expense of widening all that road for the people that can tear straight through up to the Hills. Well, my experience was in Victoria - I don't know if you know Victoria very much - out through - - -. On the Sydney road. It's a little narrow road with a tramline in the middle of it and you can hardly move along it. And I wanted to get through there one time and I said to a fellow, out on the Sydney road there, I said, "Gee you can't move on the place". He said, "Mate, if you want to get through that road, don't go there, go around it".

And that's the answer to it. See and that was my opinion here. Keep the road narrow and those people that want to get up to Belair, let them go around the other streets. Why should all those shopkeepers and owners have to go to the expense of shifting all their shops back so as to let all those people dash through, because they'll still go through.

They're getting in the same trouble with the Henley Beach Road now. My son, he's involved in it down there. He went back. He's on the corner. He's gone back, and since he went back when he rebuilt, they've altered it now. They're not going to go right back but they're going to make bays. See every now and again there'll be a bay where you you'll be able to get off the main road into the bay. That's what they're going to design the Henley Beach Road of.

You've already mentioned how your wife and one of her daughters helped in the early days of the shop. How were they involved?

Oh, just helping me. You know, they'd come out and clean up the shop and help me to paint and all the rest of it.

When you were at 236 Unley Road, did you have any paid staff at any time?

No.

So you always worked on your own there?

Always on my own.

Was the shop shut when you went on holidays?

Yes. Yes, I went away once and some relation or something took over there, but she sat down and read books all day. And even today. Now today, I still say to my sons. Now they got into a fairly big way. They had a big building over in Manton Street, Hindmarsh - not Manton Street, Adams Street - and they had shops all around the place. I said, "You're mad". I said, "Use your own," and it's gradually coming back. They're closing down, down.

The one at Torrensville, eighteen months ago he had two lads working for him. Now he's got himself. His wife comes in and cleans up. And I've said, "There's enough business in it. You've had the cream, you've had the good business, and now you get back in your shell". Now there's this one down here and the one out Klemzig and the one at Torrensville, they're established shops, been established for years and years. Everybody knows the shops are there. Now all they've got to do is work a bit.

Now, the one at Torrensville, I go down and see him more often than the others. He should have been away on holidays because of the school kids' holidays, but this year he can't go. He always did before and left a lad in charge. Well this year the lad's not there - he's running the shop on his own. So he's doing it on his own. Well I said, "Right, what are you going to do Christmas?" He said, "I don't know". "Well shut it up and go away." See it's not like a butcher's shop or greengrocer's shop. See a bike shop you can shut it up today, and if you want something, you go there, "Oh they're shut" - you walk on. You mightn't go back to that shop for twelve months again. See you're not an everyday customer or every week customer. You're only a once now and again customer.

So half the time I used to go away for my holidays. I used to have two holidays a year. We'd have a holiday round about June when it was slack season, and then Christmas Eve I'd shut the door and, bang, away we'd go. And they say, "But you're losing good money". I said, "You're not losing good money because you can't stand it. You've got to have your holiday, you've got to have your rest from it. That's what keeps

you going. But if you're going to stop there and work and work and work, well what's the good of it?"

My son was here yesterday. He went up to see his mate - he's got a farm up at Woodside, somewhere up there. I said, "Is he doing all right?" "Yes, but he hasn't had a holiday for fifteen years." I said, "Well he should have them". See you should have them.

What about when you started, was there a time when you felt you couldn't close the shop before you took holidays?

Oh yes. Oh, I used to hate Sundays coming because I'd have to shut the shop. I used to be always getting warnings [about having the shop open late HS], once again through the kids. One of the kids used to come in the shop. His father was a shop inspector or something to do with that, you see, and they were more rigid on the closing at half past five. So the kid come in and told me that Dad said something to warn me to shut the shop at half past five because he's had reports of me having the shop open after hours. See the kid come in and told me.

What hours were you open on the Saturday?

One o'clock - you opened till one o'clock.

In those first few years, what kind of a living were you able to make from the shop compared to your earlier waged days?

I don't know, you might be a taxation chief. (laughs)

Did you notice a big difference, say, in your standard of living, or were you able to keep up a fairly good income?

No, well, when I went there and when I first got married, we were just ordinary - very ordinary - people. We had nothing. I didn't marry a woman with big money. She was just an ordinary woman and I was just an ordinary man. I gave her my wage just the same as if I was working, but we always had a few bob looking around. Well, the thing is with a one man business - this is where Bob Hawke can't get into you, see, because nobody else knows what you've got but you do. Now, as I said, I used to go away for holidays. Well, I wouldn't go to the bank and draw a cheque out to go for my holiday. I'd just take the week's taking and go away and use that. And when you got away with your holidays you'd look at your money and it's getting down a bit, you say,

"Gee, we'd better go home". You don't go and draw another pound out. (laughs)

I've come to the conclusion in this life of ours, there's no advantage of being a big rich man - there's no advantage in life. If you can be a good honest, or a good comfortable middle man, you're better off. You're better liked, you've better health, and you get there just the same. Now look at poor old Mr Packer and the other bloke Bond. See they chased the big money, and it's happening all the time. I've had it said to me by people with big money, "Money's a curse. I wish to God I didn't have it".

Talking a little bit around that sort of subject, in those early days - let's talk about the fifties - did you promote the business in any way in terms of advertising?

Very little, very little. I didn't believe in a lot of advertising. I was told a very good philosophy - whatever you like to call it - when I first went there. You don't sell your business, you sell yourself - you advertise yourself. See, and as I say, people come to me even now, "Gee, I haven't seen you for years. Didn't know you were here," see. Well it's because of me, not outside of me. My kids, you can see by those adverts I show here, they did a lot of money in advertising. Today they do nothing.

What sort of avenues would you have used in the fifties for advertising the shop?

Myself.

Would you have placed adverts in the newspapers?

No. The *Messenger* come around one day and he said about the adverts, how advantage and that. "I'll tell you what," I said, "I'll give you a go". I said, "I'll put an advert in the paper, and I'll put stuff in the window at below cash - at a certain price - and we'll see what happens in a fortnight's time". I never had an enquiry. I'd have tyres in the window, or lighting systems, something like that, at a reduced price, and they'd come in to buy one. I'd charge them the usual price and they'd walk out and there it was cheaper in the window. I'd done it on purpose. They didn't look at your window. The window is a wonderful salesman when nobody's about, but when your shop is open they don't look at your window, they walk straight in.

Did you put much effort into your window in the early days?

Every week my windows were changed. My wife changed her windows every week. And every month or so I'd make some alteration - something different.

See, you listen to people that have been about. As I say, so you sell yourself not your - - -. [wares HS] See well the same thing. Your best salesman - is your silent salesman - and the best advertising is your window. If you haven't got a window there to look at - - -. And a dirty window means that people are looking in your window, because if it's not all fingermarks - - -. See, people come up and they put their fingers on the window and you know then that people are looking in at your window.

You've mentioned how, I think you said seven bike shops opened and closed on Unley Road. Did you consider any particular business as your competition?

There was one that was in big competition. Did a lot of advertising and expanded and expanded and expanded. He's down below - put himself there because work. Leo Wilson. He had a shop down near the pedestrian lights on the Unley Road there now, down by the Post Office. He had two shops - well three shops really - two in one. He started off in a bike shop. He won the competition from Elliotts as the best agent and he had the shop there - one shop - and he opened the other side. Then he got into refrigerators and washing machines and everything else, and he finished up a sick man and he's dead and gone as a young man. He worked himself to death.

When I first went there they said, "You won't last six months. Leo Wilson'll run you out of business". I said, "No he won't". Leo Wilson didn't run me out of business, I run him out of business, in a quiet way, because I used to have people come in, they'd say, "Leo Wilson'll do it for - - -". "Well look go and get it from Leo Wilson. If he'll do it cheap, well you get it there - go there." Then they used to say, "Oh, Mr So-and-so" - an old bloke who used to be round on Hyde Park Road, Mr Borthwick - "Oh, he only charges so much for it". "Well go and do it. Don't come out to me." They're all gone.

Right from the Vogue down to where the Unley Disposal is now, there's seven shop opening - they come and go. They'd open up and

they'd have a go, but I'd just go along my own little way. As I say, I didn't spend much money at all. I don't suppose, myself, I could honestly say I wouldn't have spent a hundred pound in all my life in advertising.

You've said earlier that the children were the backbone of the business. Was that the case all through the fifties and sixties?

In my opinion yes. I've even struck them now. Some of those kids come in and they see - - -. They're wanting bikes for their kids.

I read somewhere when I was doing research for this interview, someone had the sales records of the bike shop in Murray Bridge, and that showed that - - -. I think it was in the year of 1968. The shop didn't sell one single adult male bike. Would that be typical?

That'd be pretty right. I didn't tell you that did I? No, that'd be John Brook. Only spoke about him the other day. Fellow come in to buy a bike - or looking at a bike - from Murray Bridge. Once again, a twist of the subject - he come from Murray Bridge. He said to me, "You know Murray Bridge?" "I had to bit to do with John Brook." He said, "Oh he's got the shop". I said, "No he hasn't, he's dead and gone". He used to run the school bus up there and he used to run the picture show up there. I know John Brook himself because I stopped at his place overnight when I was travelling. I was very good friends with John. He left it to a brother-in-law - I think the brother-in-law still runs it. But that's always been a bike shop.

And would that be the case with your own business, that months would go by without selling an adult male bike?

Oh yes. Oh yes, we're selling more adults' bikes now than we are kids'. That's the different trend. Although the trend - - -. I only said to my son the other days, "For this time of the year it's surprising the number of kids' bikes we're selling, for little two, three year olds". It's surprising. See one time those little mini-tots - you know three, four year olds - you could forget them at this time of the year.

One of the things I wanted to talk with you about was this whole youth market for bikes, because of course when you were growing up there was no such thing as a child's bike.

No.

You just hopped on an adult size one. Were bikes being made especially for children by the time you were in business in the fifties?

No. As a matter of fact my little girl - the one, she died - she was No. 1 exhibit in the - - -. [1936 Floral Procession held in Adelaide HS] You saw the picture. Well she was the talk of the town. She was lucky. She was a lucky girl because her father was in the bike trade so he could get her a bike. She wouldn't ride it to school because all the kids, they'd all run down the street chasing her. You didn't get kids in her day and the same thing with this other lad. [Graham] In their days they didn't ride bikes to school because the other kids didn't have bikes, and you know what kids are, they're jealous and they'll have a go at them. But it's only the last, I should say, thirty years, I suppose, kids are riding bikes to school.

When you started at Unley Road in the early fifties and you got that consignment of bikes from Elliotts, would that have included child size bikes?

No.

When did they come in?

Child's bikes really come in, oh not much - - -. They only come in I suppose in the last twenty years.

So perhaps in the sixties?

The sixties.

Were they first of all scaled down adult bikes?

Nothing under about twenty-four inch wheel. See today you get twenty-four inch wheel, then you get a sixteen inch wheel and a twelve inch wheel. See today, tricycles, which all the kids used to ride then, are not about if you went around the town now to buy a tricycle for a kid four years old, you won't buy one. You'll get them for a little kid twelve or eighteen months old - the little plastic things.

See, now the stabilisers - what you call stabiliser or training wheels - they first come on the market when my little girl had her bike - that was in 1936 - but they were a once off. Elliotts got some in - a few in - from France on some French bikes, little ones. They made up some special ones themselves. Instead of importing, they copied it, and she happened to have a twenty inch wheel bike with a pair of stabilisers on

it to ride in that procession. But she couldn't handle it because she'd learnt to ride a two wheeler. When you get on a two wheeler - learn to ride a two wheeler - if you get those little trainer wheels on the side, you can't ride it. See you're used to riding on three wheels and you can't ride - - -. You can ride on that because they sort of balance you, but when you get used to riding two wheels, that'll take you - - -. If you want to go over there, you finish up steering over here.

It's the same thing with the messenger boys' bikes years ago where they used to have the wooden box on the front. Well, I could never ride one of them. Kids used to do anything - you know, lift the wheels on them, go around anywhere - the kids that were used to them. But if you wasn't used to them, you couldn't ride the damn things.

It's the same thing riding a motorbike and a sidecar. See a person who can ride a motorbike, he could do anything on two wheels, but put a sidecar on it, it's a different thing.

Was it during the sixties or the seventies that the Hi-riser bikes came in for the kids?

Now, one of the first ones - - -. A kid over the road from here. He's married with a family now. What's Mike - twenty-seven? Yes, he'd be roughly about twenty-seven, twenty-eight. Well he was about seven, so about twenty years ago. He had one of the first Hi-risers. We got a shipment in - a big shipment of ten bikes in. There was Hi-risers and he got one of the first that was there.

What did you think about them when they first came out?

Oh good. They were a good seller. Used to have the big high thing on the back. They were a good seller. That was the start of the real juvenile bike. See every kid wanted a dragster, or a Hi-riser, so you couldn't sell the kids anything else. Now you can't give them away.

Then they got away from that. They'd come up with the BMX. Now here the last four or five years you can't sell anything else but BMX's. Now you can't give them away. The only kids now that have a BMX is the kid about seven, because there's no bike made for him. But they've just brought in one now - it's just come in - for the seven or eight year old, is a mountain bike. The new mountain bikes come in, so they come down now, they've got the mountain bikes that have just come in

this year. So within the next three, four, five years, you won't sell a kid nothing else. He'll have to have gears.

I've got a little grandson up at Elizabeth there. He's got a bike with gears - sort of a BMX sort of bike with gears - and he's the envy of all the kids. But in twelve months time or so, kids'll have gears on their bikes.

They're pretty clever on them, too, a lot of these kids and what they can do. I don't know if you've been down the Bay. You go down the Bay. You know where the boat is up on the pedestal affair?

Yes.

By the jetty, that spot in from there. I was down there yesterday and there's lads there round about fifteen or sixteen years of age, and they've got BMX bikes with all the different gears on. They've got footrests on the back and on the front they - - -. They do everything. They get going. They're riding along and they lift their front wheel off the ground and spin the front wheel around, and they're down. Gee they're clever, these kids around about fifteen or sixteen. But it's a craze that's come in.

See, here like Skid Kids used to be racing and jumping through the fire and loading their bikes up. Well see that's all gone.

What sort of bikes were the skid kids riding on? Were they the Hi-riser?

No, just an ordinary bike. A bike they organised themselves. It was a low frame bike - just an ordinary bike, just low frame. So they'd get down low so they can drag their foot behind them.

END OF TAPE 10 SIDE A: SIDE B

If you want to get a good history of bikes, you'd be in the position to get it. I saw a book the other day, *Richard's Bicycle Book.*[3] Have you seen it?

Yes.

Have you read it?

Some of it.

That's the latest edition?

Yes.

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3. The author is R Ballentyne. Published in London.

They're about twenty-five dollars each. It's very, very interesting. I've read his earlier books - two of his earlier books and they were only the smaller edition and that. But I saw this one the other day. I couldn't get time to have a look at it, but Graham had two of them down the shop there, one for that and one for the mountain bike. It gives a very good history of bikes.

Yes, I've had a look at that. I wanted to talk some more about your involvement with the kids, both as customers and perhaps outside the shop. You've already mentioned how you had to get on to them a bit about pinching fire crackers and that sort of thing. Did you have trouble with shop lifting in your own shop?

Not a lot because I used to watch them. And the same thing even now, down the shop. They come in, they walk straight into the shop, and of course his shop is like three shops with an archway in between you see. They'll walk straight in, I'll say, "What do you want?" "Just having a look." And I stand there for a little while and I say, "Now come on, you've seen enough. You can see all you want to see out of the window, out the front [next door]". They look at me. I say, "I've got a lot of work to do. I can't stand here watching you". (laughs) Because the little cows, if you flick your eye they've gone. And they haven't altered.

In your day in the fifties and sixties, were bicycle shops the target for break-ins and thefts?

No. No, you could - - -. As a matter of fact, I did it one night down at Unley. I had an old bike - - -. I used to put a couple of bikes out the front of the shop of a day time, and this old thing was only rubbish and I wanted to get rid of it so I left it out the front. When I come back to work the next morning, the bloke at the fish shop [next door] said, "Bert, you went home last night and left a bike out the front". (laughs) "I wanted somebody to pinch it!" No, it wasn't - not like it is today. It's terrific.

See our shops, I reckon nearly every window in our three main shops have been broken. It's bad. And they're only after high class stuff. They don't touch the cheap ones. So what we do now, up against the windows, now of a night you go home, you put your cheap bikes in front of the window so that if they do break it, they've got to stumble over cheap bikes. Because they want to get to the back, so don't give

them an open track to where the good bikes are. As a matter of fact we chain them up in the shops.

You didn't have to do that in your shop?

No. I could leave the shop open and go down the street to the Post Office and come back. See a bike shop was considered - - -. [nothing HS] A bloke said to me once - we were out at a bit of a party or something - and he said, "What do you do for a living, Bert?" I said, "I've got a bike shop along there Unley Road". "A bike shop," he said. "You'd be on a dead horse, wouldn't you?" I said, "Oh, I don't know, doing all right. Why what do you do?" He says, "I'm in the building trade. That's the trade you want to be in". I suppose he'd been broke about ten times. (laughs) I'm still going.

I wanted to ask you about how the business developed in later years as well, because of course now we have Standish Cycles - the Standish name on the bike itself. When did that come in, that you started, what, building your own bikes in the family shops?

We started in about the 1960s a few. But this business of what we're getting now with bicycles coming in in cartons already assembled - - -. See today you don't build up bikes at all. You could build a bike up today - a carton. Take it out of the carton and just put it into place and tighten a few nuts. As a matter of fact my wife used to do it. Well, we started, we got some bikes come from Europe back in - oh, before I retired.

You retired in about '69? Is that right? You said you were sixty-four years old.

Would be about that - something like that. I don't know, time's gone too quick. Don't tell me. Anyway we got these bikes that come from Europe to a bloke in Sydney. Well, he bought these bikes in three parts assembled up, similar to what they are today. General Accessories and those big firms, they went to the government about it and they prohibited it - coming in - because they didn't want them because it was interfering with their trade. So anyhow it went back to bikes had to be built here, you know, same way. But now, the last twenty years now, they're coming in in cartons and that and there's no building a bike at all. I don't know of anything, apart from the wire baskets they fit on a bike, that would be built in Australia today for a bike. There's nothing.

People come in - you know, they want a Dunlop tyre. You can't buy Dunlop tyres. "Well can you buy - - -". They come in when they want a puncture outfit - "One of the burn on". "You can't buy burn on patches these days." "Where have they gone?" See, you've got to get the stuff from overseas. Everything as small as that. Anything for a bike today you can't get here.

As a matter of fact I was building up a lot of wheels here. I used to always have a stack of wheels out the back here, but now it's cheaper for us to buy them in from overseas. We can buy a wheel cheaper overseas than what we can build it here.

When you were building the wheel, would that still have been with imported parts? The spokes and rim and so forth?

Oh yes. During the war Nettlefolds tried to make spokes. Well, when it was built up a wheel with Nettlefolds spokes, the tighter you made them the longer the spoke got. Used to stretch the material - used to stretch. British Tube Mills used to make rims. Where the join was, it'd come round, it'd be up in a heap like this. Then they used to prime coat them - they're steel, and they'd dip them in an undercoat - and if you had them in the shop for two or three months, the rust'd eat through.

These companies started that sort of manufacturing during the war when you couldn't get parts [from] overseas, is that what you're saying?

Yes. See, well, when I first started in the shop down here, it was just after the war. Anyhow, in my day down there somewhere, if you wanted chrome-plated rims in your bike, you'd pay two pound extra for chrome-plated rims. Today, if you wanted enamel rims, you'd pay two pound extra for enamel rims. All rims today come in chrome-plated. We used to build wheels up when they were enamelled. Well you had to be careful you didn't scratch them, see when you were working those spokes through. When you built a wheel up, you wouldn't throw it on a heap or it'd get scratched. Well when you get the chrome-plated ones, well you get them and you just throw them on the heap and do another one and throw it on the heap, because no scratching.

I wanted to talk some more about the expansion of the business and how that came about. Your sons opened shops as well. Graham in, what, 1959?

Well Graham is the oldest of the two - there's Graham and Roger. Well Graham started, yes, roughly about '59. Round about - - -. Anyhow you can say early sixties. Well he was working for Super Elliotts. He started working with Super Elliotts. They gave him a job and he was managing a shop. He was only about seventeen at the time - sixteen or seventeen - and they put him in charge of the shop out at Norwood. The father of the bloke I bought out - the Empire Cycle Works, I bought that out - and that bloke's father had a shop, Empire Cycle Works, down at Torrensville. So anyhow he sold out and Graham took him over. Well that was only - - -.

See bike shops in those days were generally anything - just a tin shed and anything, dirt floors or anything. A bike shop was like an old blacksmith's shop. Well today a bike shop is more like a beauty shop. You know, they've got carpets on the floor. They've lifted it right up. But anyhow, Graham bought this old shop down there. Well he wasn't there too long and they sold the property for a car yard, so it looked like him getting kicked out. It had been a bike shop for years and years, but eventually the motorcar yards started. So the agent said, "Well, you can shift from there down - - -. I've got a shop down the road further, and go down there". So anyhow he went down there and they offered him a reasonable price, so he bought the shop. Established himself all right down there.

Well then Roger come along and he was looking for a job. Couldn't keep him at school - he was in opportunity class more than he was out of it. So eventually he wanted a bike shop, so he bobbed up and he rented a shop out on the Main North East Road. You know the OG Hotel?

Yes.

Well diagonally across there was a little tumbledown shop - it's still there. He got this shop. He never said nothing to me of getting it - he's a very silent worker this bloke. So he never said nothing. He got the shop and I suppose it was around about November - it was coming on Christmas. So we thought, "Oh gee, what are we going to do with him here?" Well, before this, I'd pulled a string and got him a job through a friend of a friend through the bike trade and the bike racing - a friend who had a fairly good job in the Electricity Trust. I don't know if I told you this, did I?

No.

Anyway, he applied for a job in the Electricity Trust and he had no chance, so I thought, "Well, see what I can pull my way". So I rang this bloke that he had to interview. So I spoke to him and told him one way or the other. No, had no chance. So I said, "Well look, I'm Bert Standish. I've got a bike shop at Unley Road. Can you give us a message if you can get him a vacancy?" "Bert Standish," he said, "How the hell are you Bert?" I said, "Why, who's this?" "I'm So-and-so." "Christ - - -." He never bike raced but he used to knock around with the bike riders. We were like brothers. I still don't know his name now and I never ever met him. He said, "Anyhow Bert, I'll see what I can do for him". So he got him a job - got him on to a job as a tradesman's help with the Electricity Trust. So he was down there for a while and he reckoned that was a bludger's job. He says, "All I'm doing is reading comics. I go round with the tradesman and just hand him a tool or something and sit down and read the book or something". So he reckoned it was a lousy job.

So anyhow I said, "Well I'll see what I can do". So I got in touch with this fellow and he said, "Well you know So-and-so?" I said, "Yes". He said, "Well he's down at the depot and he handles all these lads so," he said, "I'll put you through to him and have a talk to him, see if you can get him a better job". So when I got in touch with this bloke he said, "Well I'm going away for holidays now". He said, "When I come back I'll look into it and I'll see what I can do for him, Bert". So in the meantime Roger bobbed up - he got this shop - so he didn't get his elevation in the - - -. [Trust] But he would have got it through knowing me, you see - he'd have got somewhere.

But anyhow he got this little old shop out there right on this corner, and I said to him, I said, "Well now, don't think you're here for life," I said, "It's too valuable a corner to be a little old bike shop, so make the best of it as you can". So anyhow Graham and I, we helped him along, and he went along all right. He's got a real little story behind him.

So anyway, eventually there was a house further up the road that was - - -. It was built a house with a big front window in it, see, like a picture window. It come up for sale so he went and saw the agent

about this house, thought if he got this house he could live at the back and knock that window out the front and make a shop of it. So the agent didn't like the idea of that because it was too good a house for it, so he said, "Now there's a block of land opposite here, belongs to the PMG and it's coming up for sale". He said, "Now if you go and buy that and build a shop there, you'll be better off than buying this". So then he made the enquiries.

Anyhow the block of land come up for sale so he went to the sale. It was in July - a wet, miserable day - and there was him and another chap bidding. Of course Roger knew how much money he had. He'd only just got married a little while before and he had a little bit of money, so he knew how much he could go. So as soon as this bloke'd bid - this opposition would bid - he'd come up with his fifty, a hundred dollars, whatever the case may be, and eventually it was knocked down to [Roger]. So then the other bloke that was opposition to him wanted the block of land, went to the agent - auctioneer - and went crook because he said, "You knocked it down too quick". He said, "No I didn't," he said. He said, "The kid was bidding and I had to take his bid". He said, "Who in the hell would think a kid, sixteen years of age - seventeen years of age - was going to be bidding". You know, a pair of overalls. "Anyhow," he said, "I'll offer him five hundred pounds on his price".

So anyhow he went up to Roger to say it and he said, "Oh no, I'll have a talk to my Dad". And he said, "Who's your Dad?" - this is the auctioneer. He said, "Bert Standish". He said, "Bert Standish on Unley Road". "Yes." The auctioneer was a customer of mine. He come out to me and he said to me about it. Of course I didn't know anything of what was in the picture there. So when the auctioneer come out and said it, I said, "Well, as far as I'm concerned, I've got nothing to do with it". I said, "If the kid wants it, he can have it. So if he wants to sell it to you, you let him". Roger said, "No, I'm going to have it and I'm going to build a shop on it," so away he went.

So he got that shop there, and then there was a block alongside of it and it was cut off in the surveying - cut off. Evidently they were going to make a main road of the street down the corner, so the old minister - - -. They altered their minds and the old minister on the church was on the other corner. They were in the same position so

they went to the council - Enfield Council - and asked them if they'd take a price for this little block so as to square it up. So they got it for - - -. The council gave it to them as a matter of fact - for the church. So the old minister was telling Roger about this.

So Roger said, "What'll I do?" It was just when decimal currency was coming in. I said, "Well offer them fifty dollars instead of twenty-five pound". See, fifty dollars might sound better. So he went and he offered them fifty dollars for it and they took it. Well he got that block of land then which had the corner cut off it. Now he's squared his land right up which put - - -. [the value up HS] Nowadays it's put thousands on to it. So then he built another shop on to it - it's two shops. Since then he bought the house - was a Housing Trust house, a timber one - he bought that. He let his mother go into it until she died. She was in there. Then he bought the next one, then he bought the next one. See, he got the block now from this street to that street on the Main North East Road, so that'd be worth some money.

But he's one of these real silent workers - doesn't say much. You ask him, he'll say, "Yes - mm".

So with these - at that stage -three bike shops with the Standish name attached to them, was there not any formal business relationship between the three?

No, each shop was individually owned, but they used to buy through their firm that they called Standish Enterprise. That's where they bought the factory over at Hindmarsh. But anyhow, as things got going, what with staff trouble and so forth - - -. That's your biggest trouble in business, is getting honest people. There's none - there's none. I told them that years ago because I know what - I saw it with Elliotts. That's why Elliotts wiped all their agencies - all their branches off for - same reason. Malvern Star did it for the same reason. You can't get honest people to run your business, and that's the reason why they're closing up the businesses now. They took one chap for round about, nearly twenty thousand dollars embezzling, and they reckon that they didn't get half of it.

Before you retired in about 1969, were you at all formally involved with the purchase of other shops?

No.

The Mile End, Adelaide, West Lakes and so on?

No. No, all I was involved was with we'd buy in a shipment of stuff and then we'd share it three ways.

So had Standish Enterprise been formed before you retired formally?

No. We used to - - -. I don't know which way they bought it. I didn't have much say in it - I let them do it. That's where they - with the photo I showed you there - with the facts of where they used to go - - -. Every twelve months they'd go over to Taiwan or Japan. Japan first, then they got to Taiwan. But it doesn't pay today. You can't compete because nearly all bikes are coming in from the same firms. [My impression has been that HS] in Taiwan, which most of them are coming from, one firm will build front forks for everybody. That's all they build. Another firm will build wheels - do nothing else but wheels. Another firm will make nothing else but rims, another one saddles. So there's no firms overseas that specialise making a complete bike. See, you've got to buy a bit here and a bit there and a bit there and get this bloke to build them up for you, and that's what all the big firms are doing, and that's the reason why they've come to the conclusion now that they can't compete.

Well, it doesn't pay them to compete with the big firm because now, if they bought in a thousand bikes to do them say for twelve months, you're paying interest on that money for twelve months, whereas now if you go to Repco, for argument's sake, you get twenty bikes. When you sell those twenty, you get another twenty. Well you're paying, but as you've sold them so you're filling up, so it doesn't pay. And that's where the big man is killing the small man.

Before you retired, were there Standish Cycles as such being sold?

No. Well, only through our shops.

But with the Standish name on them?

Yes.

How had that come about?

Oh just the lads registered - - -. Well no, register, you can put your own name on anything. Anybody can put Standish name on a bike, but if I altered the name - put another letter on to it or anything like that - - -. Now that's how the Porshe bike - - -. See there was a firm here

that made up their bike and called it the Porshe. Well, that's a registered name, the Porsche motorcar, but they reckon they were shrewd. They cut the letter C out of it. Well that was all right while they were here, but when they started manufacturing bikes and sending them to interstate, the Porsche motorcar crowd went them, see, because that's a registered name - Porsche is a registered name. Standish is not.

So unless you register it as such you can't do it. Anybody can call a bike an Elliott bike, but they can't call it a Super Elliott bike, because Elliott brothers had that argument. One of the brothers was out at Payneham and the other ones come to town. The blokes that come to town called it the Super Elliott, the other bloke had to call it Elliott Payneham, he couldn't call it a Super Elliott.

When Standish cycles were first being built, where were they built?

In our own shops. We just brought the parts in and assembled them. You didn't build. They intended to do the building down at the factory - down at Hindmarsh - but once again staff is your trouble.

You've explained how you're pretty limited in the way you could assemble a bike with imported parts. Who was making the decisions as to what the final bike would look like?

Graham, my son. Graham, he was the backbone of the thing. He did all the advertising and he did all the ordering and all the shipping. He was the backbone.

So he had strong ideas about what the Standish Cycle would look like?

Yes. He was the brains of the - - -. [party HS] He made a few little blues, but taking it round, he did a good job. If anybody wanted to know anything about advertising or any promotion, you go to Graham - he was the one.

Still talking about the early days of Standish Cycles, was there any way that you talked about the Standish Cycle being different from other cycles being offered?

Yes, in the first place, the first Standish bikes were 100% Japanese and the Japanese bike was the best bike. Their bike was far superior to anything else because as far as Graham was concerned, price didn't matter, quality mattered. But the biggest trouble now with manufactur-

ing of anything now, is cost. Today there's the Speedwell, the Malvern Star, the Repco Bike, or Ricardo Bikes. They're all made by same - all handled by the same firm with different offices. But out of those four bikes the Repco bike, in my opinion, is the best finished and the best article. When you get working on them and competing - assembling them up - and you take them out of the carton, you can always tell. The Repco bike goes together neater, is better finished and it's a superior bike. I should say deep down Dunlop - - -. See Dunlop Pacifics run that. Well deep down, Dunlop Pacifics is right. Repco's going to be our best bike. You can't get a special discount on that. But they say, "No, we can't do you a discount on that, but we can do it on a Malvern Star, or we can do it on a Speedwell". So the cheap-jacks come along - most Coles, Woolworths and that - and they buy the cheaper bike, but the ordinary consumer can't see the difference.

I'd rather sell you - - -. If you said to me, "Do you want a bike?" I'd rather sell you - knowing you - I'd rather sell you a Repco bike than a Speedwell or a Malvern Star, and yet I know that they've more or less come out of the same factory. But they penny pinched. See, the enamelling is not quite as good. It's done with a cheaper method, you see. There's little bits and pieces that the average person wouldn't notice.

END OF TAPE 10 SIDE B: TAPE 11 SIDE A

When Graham started assembling the Standish Cycles, was it common for Japanese built bicycles to be on sale here?

Yes and no. But once again, there was a cheaper grade, and that was the trouble. Our grade was a little bit higher grade, but Graham set out to have the better grade because we were in a smaller way and we could afford to - - -. We didn't have to pay somebody else to sell them. See, if you've got a - - -. How would I put it? If you've got to resell it again wholesale - - -. See we were selling it direct to the public. Well the other firms now, as I say, with Dunlop Pacifics now, they buy, Repco's get a chop - although it's the same firm but it comes through for taxation - then it comes to us, then it comes to you. So there's all those people get a chop.

Why was the decision made to assemble your own bikes and not just continue as agencies for other people's bikes?

Well, they wanted to expand their business. But I told them from the word go, if you get big, you fall big. See I'm only - as far as I'm concerned I'm the little man, always was. But they were young. I used to have my little say, so Graham said to me once - I was saying something - "Oh Dad, shut up, you're old fashioned," and I stopped and I thought, "Now I am". I'm looking back. See naturally I'm look back. I'm talking to you now what we used to do. The kids - the younger generation - are looking what we're going to do, and that's it. Now see, right, I've seen all the faults. They haven't seen them, but now they're seeing the faults. Now they're starting to sneak back in to what I was. See they've been - more or less each one will be running their own - - -. [business HS] See once they get rid of their two or three branch shops, they'll be back to what I was, and that's happening with all sorts of businesses.

Will there still be Standish Cycles - bikes with the Standish name on them?

If they want to. They can change their name if they want to. See the Standish name can be just scrubbed off. See, as a matter of fact now, there's not many Standish bikes about. We've got a shipment coming in now of bikes we're getting through Malvern Star agency - the lesser grade one - with Standish name on it. Well people think they're buying a Standish bike. Well that's not the Standish bike of yesterday. The Standish bike of today is the same - - -. Actually speaking, it'll be a Malvern Star bike as far as - see, as it comes through. See they went over to Taiwan and they used to say, "We want fifty bikes of this model". They just say, "Right, there's a row of bikes - fifty". Put the Standish name on it and that was it. Joe Blow comes along, he wants fifty, put Joe Blow on there and that's it. When you get them back home you've all got the same bike.

So that's how it did develop?

Yes. They'd get something different, but it doesn't pay you, not these days. The public are demanding rubbish, there's no doubt about it.

But you were saying that in the early days of the Standish cycle - the bike itself - you were assembling them here in Adelaide.

Yes. See, we've still got bikes on our floors - at least Graham has and Roger has, I don't know about John - but the real genuine Japanese

Standish bike, and people won't buy them. They'd rather buy a Repco or a Speedwell bike which is Chinese or Taiwan, because they don't know the difference. You say, "Now there's the best bike - that's Japanese," but of course it's another ten dollars or twenty dollars dearer, or it hasn't been flashed up as flash. See, it's the older model. They say, "No, I'm going to have a - - -". They say they'll have the flash model. The public demand - the public control you, there's no doubt about that. They control you.

Before you retired in the late sixties, had you ceased to be an Elliott agency?

No. Before I retired we were more or less independent.

So you were continuing to sell the - - -?

I just drifted out of the Super Elliott agency.

You had?

Yes. Yes, when Laurie died and that, well I more or less drifted away from it.

Did you develop a relationship with any other particular cycle manufacturers?

No, that sort of business dropped out altogether with everybody. See, years ago, when I was first started, well I could have had Healing agency, I did have J N Taylors - a bit of their agency. Well then you could have Malvern Star agency. You could have four or five agencies for four or five bikes if you wanted to. But gradually - - -. See that's consignment stock. Well gradually consignment stock has dropped right out. See today you can't get consignment stock at all. They give you what they call a floor plan. Well, a floor plan, they'll put so many bikes on your floor and the same thing with the motorcars. They'll put so many on your floor. Well, you're responsible for them until you sell them. In other words you're storing them there. But it's a different set up. It's the same thing only different. They call it a floor plan. Well, as you sell it they put another one its place and they keep a rigid stock of it.

Well, when you was on consignment, well that was your bike until you sold it, more or less.

How do you account for both of your sons following into the bike trade?

They just fell into it. Their mother was a little bit that way. Personally I always said - I always had an opinion - that there was only two sort of jobs for a person to have, a government job or work for yourself. That's the reason - - -. Well Graham got into Elliotts because his mother used to run the Glenelg Dry Cleaning Shop alongside Elliotts shop at Hindmarsh, so when he wanted a job she just spoke to the Manager and he put him on. Well then he was observant and capable so they put him into their shop out at Norwood. That's how he got into it.

Roger, well, as I told you, I wanted him to get into the government job in the Electricity Trust, but he didn't want to. He could see Graham going all right so he wanted to be in it. So that's how it worked out there.

How did you feel as the Standish name became more and more prominent again through the shops and the cycles?

Oh, all right. I never had much say in it - I didn't want to have much say in it. When I broke my home up, well I didn't make myself a nuisance. Like a lot of them, they fight over the kids - the kids are going to do this and do that. Well their mother was handling it well and what I could see they were doing all right so I just kept quiet. Because I always reckon if you stir the dirty bucket up, it'll stink. (laughs)

Has it been gratifying for you, for your sons to follow on?

Oh yes. Yes, even now they reckon now the worst trade to be in is the bike trade, but I said, "Why?" "Because you can't get far." I said, "Well - - -". As I told you what Roger has gained out of being in the bike trade. Now Graham owns quite a big block, oh - when he's finished his mortgages which will eventually happen; because he's always buying - - -. [short portion of transcript deleted] See, we're in a stage today where money is worth nothing, but assets - - -. See in ten years' time when you've got it paid, you're sitting pretty.

That's a leaf from the book that's come from old Elliott. Old Elliott never had any money, but he died that close to a millionaire that it didn't matter because he owned property. See, anything was up for sale, if he could see anyway clear to buy it, he bought it.

This is B J?

Yes, and Roger and Graham have done the same thing. [short portion of transcript deleted]

But they're doing all right. Graham was here yesterday in his LTD Ford, all paid for.

I wanted to backtrack just a little bit to ask you about another area of your involvement in the bicycle world, and that's with some of the organisations associated with the bike trade. The Australian Retail Cycle Traders' Association - you were involved with that fairly early on.

Yes, right from the word go.

Can you tell me a bit about how that came to be formed?

How was it formed? Yes, a few of us got together and called a meeting and we formed it up.

That was in the fifties?

Yes, early fifties. But it was very, very weak for a while and it's never been overstrong. There was always too much bickering going on. When we opened it first there was about seven or eight of us. We were real fair dinkum bike men. There was old Les Gill, Arnie Pascoe, Don Poland, Jack Bickmore, Don Munro and myself. Yes, Arnie Pascoe was in. Yes, there was about seven or eight of us, which we more or less consisted of the bike trade of South Australia. Those few shops - - -. There was another one - what's his name? Was out at the Enfield terminus - - -. But there was about a dozen, I suppose, real bike shops similar to mine in the whole of the metropolitan area from, you could say Enfield in those days - Enfield through to Edwardstown, all that block - and we were all little bike shops and we all knew one another. We could all do the job - we were all tradesmen, proper tradesmen. Well today, half - - -.

I've always said in those days you could put the bike shops on those ten fingers. Today they're on every corner, but there's no real bike trade about. I've got it in our own shops. People come in and I say, "Now wait a minute, we could do this, we could do that". See I could make money with that staff because I know what you can do.

Why did those businessmen, including yourself, feel the need for an association?

We were fighting the Wholesale Association. The Wholesale Association - - -. Now it all started before the price control come in. When the

price control and the - - -. No, what's the other? What's the ones - the fair - - -?

Trade Practices?

Trade Practices - when the Trade Practice. Now before that come in, if we'd sent to England, for argument's sake, to buy some Sturmey Archer three speed hubs, that firm over there would refer you to the Wholesale Association of Australia - see, it was right around Australia - and you couldn't buy anything. If we wanted Dunlop tyres - if you went to Dunlops to buy tyres, they'd say, "No, you've got to J N Taylors or William Hudd or one of those wholesalers to get them". See, they were in between us and them. And this was our beat, you see. We had nobody fighting for us, but the wholesalers, you couldn't buy anything without you went to them. If you went to Dunlops and said you wanted a hundred tyres, they'd give you a hundred tyres, but it'd be the same price as what you'd get them from J N Taylors, because J N Taylors would get the corner.

So that's how we got together. There was Don Poland, Don Munro, myself, Jack Bickmore, Les Gill - he was one I didn't mention - Les Gill, Arnie Pascoe. We were all real bike men.

Was the Association able to alter those circumstances?

Well the Trade Practice come in in the meantime. When that come in, well it opened the doors. They couldn't do anything. So that settled it altogether so I don't know how it would have finished if the Trade Practice hadn't come in. See then we could import then. Before that we couldn't import - see they wouldn't let you import. Then there was old Sampson, he was another one, old Healing, A G Healing [Elliott Brothers, too, of course HS]. There was a band of them - the real hard tough old blokes. Been in it all their life and they couldn't even trust one another. So we were always fighting them and so we joined this united association. Oh they gave us hell for a while.

In what way?

Oh, made it harder for us to get stuff and all this - made it all rigid. For instance, we were getting - I think it was less fifteen [percent]. If you paid your account at the end of the month, you'd get 15 percent discount, see. Well I reckon that 15 percent - I think it was fifteen, or

ten; anyhow it's near enough - I always reckon that that 15 percent run my motorcar, see. Well eventually they cut it out. They said, "No, it's not being done". Well we banded together. We said, "Well we're going to get it," but they beat us. See they cut it out and of course they'd boycott you - they wouldn't sell to you unless you did, and they could do it. Well the Trades Practice come in and stopped it and they couldn't do it.

As a matter of fact that's how Graham first bought his first shop. I said to the wholesalers then, when their travellers were coming in, I said, "All right, if you want a bad payer, you've gone one. I'll pay you when you sing out". And I said to Graham the same thing. Graham had only just started in the business. I said, "Now don't pay an account until they sing out. When they sing out they want their money, well give them some of it. Always drag your feet". And he still does and I did too.

Even now I do. I've got a bloke coming here later on this afternoon to get me for my insurance on my house. It's due - been due about a month. I don't pay until I've got to. Well old Elliott told me that. See he said, "You don't run your business on your money, you run it on other people's money".

You mentioned one or two of the old chaps involved on the wholesale side. Were there particularly memorable characters there? Did you mention Sampsons?

Well Sampsons, you don't know Sampsons. No, well he had a little shop in Rundle Street, more or less opposite where Thwaites was before they rebuilt. I think right where Cunninghams have got their shop, in amongst there. Well he sold anything, and he was as hard as - - -. He was a real Cunningham sort. They'd sell anything about the place. He was a funny bloke - a real wit. Well then there was - - -. Oh, they were all in their own way. There was old Bill Devling from Healings. He was the General Manager of Healings - was big firm in those days - and he was bald. Just had a bit of hair round here [indicates]. Old - what's his name? Bill Devling? Yes, Bill Devling. Then there was old Elliott was on it, and then there was a bloke from - - -. Oh, Cornells were on it, and all those firms that were - - -.

They'd amalgamate together into this big company - or this association - and they tied everything up, but it was Australia wide.

See, if you sent over to Melbourne to get something - to a warehouse in Melbourne - they'd refer you back to the wholesalers here. They were very strong when we got in, but as I say, how I would have finished up in the end I don't know, but Trade Practice really got it in the end. That's how we were importing bikes from Europe. That's how we got stopped, the same way. The Wholesale Association of Australia stopped it.

When you say "we" were importing, who was that?

Standish's. We were getting them through a bloke. A bloke named Corlis in Sydney imported them first, and he come over here with an agent or a salesman, and when they come around we got them here. We bought a certain number on the condition that he could only supply our shops, and he was satisfied because he got an order. We were big enough then to buy a quantity because we had three shops, and we could talk as one, and that's the reason why we had Standish Enterprise - you could talk as one. You could buy a thousand tyres and then split it up between the three of you, but you wouldn't buy a thousand tyres for yourself. And that's how it goes on.

You say you were thwarted in that. Were you not able to continue importing through that fellow?

No - General Accessories, Malvern Stars - they stopped us. Well they stopped the bloke in - - -. Because I went over to Sydney - he had a lot of bits and pieces and bikes - and I went over to Sydney and bought all the odds and sods that he had at a price - went over and made a price. He had frames over there that'd been the wheels taken out and this taken out. But that could have worked into it very good. They were a European bike, but of course today that European bike would be a Taiwan bike. See, the same thing. The Taiwan, Chinese are all over the world.

After the Trade Practices Act came in, what was the role of the Retail Cycle Traders Association after that?

No, it's still going.

What's the emphasis, or the aims of it?

I don't know, I don't have much to do with it. Graham was Vice President or something or other. He kept his nose in just to see what

was going on. As I say, Graham was always the one that more or less had the brains, in my opinion. The other two - John, the one that bought the shop down here, and Roger - well they're too quiet, they're backwards. Graham got up and will have his say, and you won't pull the wool over his eye.

Of course you were President of the Association in 1960 I saw. Were you still battling the wholesalers at that time?

Yes. But I was the worst President they ever had.

Were you?

I told them that. When they put me in I never wanted the job, and I've even said to Graham, even now - I say to the kids - all these committees and that, "Go on the committee but don't take on the top jobs. You get too much work". (laughs) But be in far enough to know what's going on. Once again the old fox comes out in me. (laughs) Know what's going on but don't be in where the work's thrown around, because if anything happens, you get in it.

I also saw your name mentioned in regard to the Cyclists' Protection Committee. Were you involved with that?

Oh, to a certain extent. But I never got into the top ranks of any of it, because as I just said. The same thing now. I couldn't be an official at a bike race as a rule because I was a rider. When I stopped riding, well I stopped cycling. I didn't do much. But in the initial stages I was the first handicapper of the amateur club when it first opened up - unofficially. I couldn't be official because I was a profession. But I'd do the handicapping - give it to somebody else to do it. I was publicity officer for the amateur association when it first opened up, but I gave that away after a while because you were on a dead horse. You could sit down and write a book as you would know, and you'd give it to the papers and they'd put in that much. [indicates a tiny amount] You'd chase around and get all the information - good information - and they'd give you nothing. You're battling with the big man again. You'd know that. (laughs)

Very much so.

Isn't it funny how things work in together?

Talking about the protection side of it, of course safety has become a big issue with cycling - helmets and road safety and so on. Had helmets come in?

No. No, they've only just come in in the last two or three years. But they don't take any notice of you. See now, I was mixed up there for a while with the Safety Council. Well, as you would know, on a lot of these things there's a lot of high pressure types of people get in there. Know nothing but have all the say, see - you've seen them. They have all the say - they know everything - and when you tip them upside down they don't know anything.

Well, we were at a meeting out at North Adelaide there one night - it was the National Safety Council - and I was sitting alongside of Graham and they were talking about safety on bikes, and it's always been a bug to me, but it's come about eventually. A bike in those days - this is going back - - -. Oh, it could have been before I retired or just after round about. They were talking about the safety of bikes. I said, "What about a lady's bike?" No, "What about a free-wheel back brake on a bike?" They said, "Oh no, nothing to do with that. You can't touch that". So they were talking about the lady's bike, so I said I didn't think that a coaster brake was safe enough. Graham gave me a dig in the ribs and he said, "Shut up. We're in enough strife as it is, don't go to more," because he knew what I was going to say. Because in my opinion - - -. Of course in those days a free wheel with a back pedal brake - you know the ones we used to always have - is the most dangerous bike on the road, because if you're riding along and you've got one foot up and one down, and you've got to stop quick, you've got to go there before you can come back here. By the time you've gone there you're in trouble. Plus that, all chains in those days - they're not so much now, but in those days every chain had a little weeny spring clip on it. Well if that spring clip comes off, you don't see it come off - it's only a little thing - then the plate comes off and the rivets come out and the chain drops off and you're going down a hill, you're going in traffic, you've got no brake. You didn't have to have a handbrake, see. My opinion was that all bikes should have at least two brakes.

See well the law is now, you must have two brakes. See they've brought it in since, but I could have told them that ten, twenty years

ago, and only for Graham I'd have stirred a hornet's nest up because every bike then - if I'd have brought that up - every bike in the town would have had a front brake put on. Look at the brakes we'd have sold, see. But Graham gave me a dig and he said, "Shut up, we're in enough strife as it is".

END OF TAPE 11 SIDE A: SIDE B

But even now, I got on the bike the other day and went down to the service station on my bike.

So you still do ride a little bit?

Yes. I went down there, but I ride on the footpath now, or go down Duthie Street. You're committing suicide to get on the road. No, I envy them - people - they don't know what they're missing. I still maintain, I still argue, and I'd win the argument every time, that cycling is the best exercise you can have. Only heard it last night somewhere or other - could have been on the talk back; I only come in at part of it - where cycling - - -. They said cycling is the best exercise of the lot. Well it uses every bit of energy. I was listening last night to *Four Corners* - I don't know if you listen to it. Did you hear it?

Not last night.

You didn't?

No.

They were on asthma and the asthma is caused through - - -. There's runners, that girl that swam the English Channel, she was asthmatic, and a lot of athletes - big athletes - are asthmatic. Jim Nestor was asthmatic. Oh, I think a couple of the big tennis players were asthmatic. And I tell you what it is, by being an athlete, I think it extends your lungs. What I could see of last night is the lungs contract up and this is the whole trouble with - - -. But I think by doing the exercise, I think myself that you're expanding your lungs. That's the reason why I most likely said to you, I've always had a cough. So I should say to a certain degree, after looking at it last night, I reckon I've always had asthma, because they reckon there's twenty or thirty different sorts of asthma. But my asthma, I cured my asthma, or kept it in control, by exercising.

So you say you've just kept up a little bit of riding. Did you keep in touch with the actual racing world?

No.

Did you go and watch races at all?

Not much. I'm away from it. Now, see, most of the racing nowadays down the Hanson Park. Well it's too far, I'm not going to go right down there to see it. And the trouble is, when I do go - or used to - you'd find some of the old timers and you stand around in a corner and you'd start talking bikes and you'd see nothing. If I went to see it, I'd like to sit off and be able to say, "Well, now I can see the whole race". As a matter of fact I was only thinking to myself the other night - they're building a new velodrome out there by the Abattoirs. Well we talked about that velodrome fifty years ago, and I only thought to myself the other night, I thought, "Now when that comes on, I'm going to go and put myself in the front line". I'd be one of the oldest competing cyclists in the State. I'm going to ask them for a VIP ticket to the opening ceremony and see how I get on.

Good idea.

And I thought I'd like to go, but I wouldn't go right out there as a spectator just to see the bike racing. It's too far. But to see the opening of what I - - -. As I told you, I raced a billy goat. We were always talking to get money to put in a decent velodrome. That's always been talked about in the cycling game, and I can go right back to 1920s. So I thought, "Now when that comes off, I'll write in to the controlling body, whoever they are, and just push my frame in and say who I am and ask them". If they knock me back, well I'll tell them to stick it. (laughs)

In your opinion, does cycling still offer a good spectacle as a race?

Love it. Yes. If it's on the TV I'm right in it. I grizzle because they don't show enough of it. And here of a Saturday afternoon a couple of years ago, they used to show it from Victoria and I'd never miss it. You can ride every inch of it - you can pick the riders, you can see who's going to win and who's not going to win and all about it. Incidentally, last week one of my relatives that was in that programme - I said the

only one, Ralph Standish - he died last Wednesday. So that's the last of the Standish's with the bike racing, apart from me.

Well I'd like to thank you very much indeed for talking with me over the weeks.

As long as I haven't bored you.

You certainly haven't, and I think it's going to be a very valuable record of bicycles in South Australia.

The happiest man in this whole universe now will be Jack Rees.

That's right.

When I get the reports from you, one of those copies, I'll soon get some - - -. The lads have got the machine to run - - -. What do you call them?

Photocopy.

Yes - make up the photocopy.

Well it's going to be a very sizeable transcript and he'll fall off his seat.

Yes. Oh look, he'll be that thrilled because for years he's been whacking me to do it. He's been at me and at me. Every time, "Now have you done anything about that bloody book," he'd say, and he'll be the happiest man in the country, and I've got nobody to thank more than him.

That's right. Well thank you very much.