Full transcript of an interview with

FRANK & CONNIE LAW

on 13 November 2002

By Mandy Paul

Recording available on CD

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Mandy Paul interviewing Frank and Connie Law at their home at 18 Dunbar Avenue, Lower Mitcham on 13 November 2002 for the South Australian Home Builders’ Club project.

TAPE 1 SIDE A

Perhaps if I could start by just asking you both to tell us your full names and dates of birth?

FL: Mine’s Frances William Law, is my full name, and what else did you require?

Your date of birth.

FL: 1st February 1928.

And Connie?

CL: I’m Constance Violet Law.

What was your name before you were married?

CL: Merritt. I was born on November 6th 1925. I live at 18 Dunbar Avenue Lower Mitcham.

Whereabouts were you both born?

CL: I was born at Medindie in South Australia.

FL: I was born at Edwardstown, South Australia.

Frank, what sort of a house did you grow up in?

FL: In what respect?

In Edwardstown.

FL: My parents moved around a fair bit. They never owned their own home until later in life so they were always in rented homes. We just moved around wherever the work was.

What were their names and what did they do, your parents?

FL: My father was William Law, my mother was Edna, and my father the last work he did for the last a few years, he worked for the Department of Supply and Transport in Currie Street, driving a bus for the passengers to go to Woomera. They did a lot of work taking people to Woomera and that sort of thing and he drove a bus for those people for many years till he retired.
Connie, what did your parents do and what were their names?

CL: My parents’ names were Jack and Violet Merritt and they lived in rented homes. They did have their own home early in their married life but that was sold and we moved around quite a bit – we had a number of homes, rented homes. And my father was a labourer and my mother didn’t go to work. She stayed home to look after the children. There were five children, five girls.

Do you have a particular memory from childhood which encapsulates the idea of home for you, or is there one home that you remember?

CL: Oh, no I don’t think so. We lived in North Adelaide for quite a number of years. Not as a very young child, as a teenager up until I was married and we were married from my home in North Adelaide.

Frank, are there any particular memories from childhood that relate to home for you?

FL: No not really. During the war when I was coming towards leaving school we were up in the country and I had to come to the city to work because there was no work in the country, and I boarded for many years in the city at different boarding houses. That’s the sort of accommodation you could get those days. You were in boarding houses and there wasn’t a lot of money around. I lived like that until my parents came back to the city round about 1948. Might have been a bit before that time. It’s just dates I can hardly remember. And then I went back home and lived for a while and we got married from there.

Whereabouts did you go to school and how far did you go to school?

FL: Well, I went to Edwardstown School, Black Forest and Glenelg and I spent most of my primary school education at Glenelg Primary School, Brighton Road. From there I went to the country and I went to work from there. I didn’t go into high school. Those days it wasn’t a very big thing and people left school and went to work.

Connie, what about your schooling?

CL: Well we did have a number of schools that we went to, but the last school, primary school, was at North Adelaide. Then I had two years at high school.

Did you go from there to work or did you stay at home?

CL: I was home for quite some time, then I went to work, yes.

What was your first job?

CL: Oh, crikey I don’t know. About the first one was at the theatre.
FL: That’s where I met you.

CL: That’s when I met Frank, at the theatre. I was an usherette there......

Which theatre?

CL: Well it was the Mayfair, which you probably wouldn’t know, but it’s where the Lottery Commission is now.

And it was a theatre or a cinema?

CL: It was a theatre.

What work did you do when you left school Frank?

FL: Oh, I did half a dozen different types of work. I started off at Gladstone in the paper shop, in a butter factory. I moved around a bit there because I was only about fourteen at the time. Then we moved to Kapunda and I went to work for Hawk and Co. at Kapunda. They used to make weighbridges. They were quite well known at that time. Not in existence any more. From there I came back to the city to board, to get work, and I went to work in a butcher’s shop, and this was about the end of the war and there was a shortage of meat on at the time and I got put off there. Then I went to work in a place on Prospect Road.

CL: Horne’s.

FL: Horne’s, A. S. Horne – couldn’t think of the name for a minute – making women’s kit gloves, and I worked there for about two and a half years. From then I decided I’d go into the Electricity Trust and I applied when I was nineteen to go into the Electricity Trust and they said, “Well come back when you’re twenty”, and I came back when I was twenty and I retired when I was sixty-four, starting off as a junior on the lines side, the maintenance side of the Electricity Trust doing overhead maintenance and on the ground and I retired when I was sixty-four. I retired as a foreman in the depot I started work.

So forty-four years?

FL: Almost forty-four years – forty-three years and eight months to the day.

It sounds like it was a good decision to come back.

FL: Yes, it was the best decision I ever made actually. They were good people to work for.

In what ways did the war affect you then? You would have been a teenager during the war?
FL: Yes, the war finished when I was eighteen, so the war didn’t really affect me at all in as much as I wasn’t old enough to go. We had the rationing. Food and clothing rationing, with coupons. Things you couldn’t buy. To get a bit of chocolate ...... was a bit of a luxury. How I met Connie, I was at the time working in the glove factory and money wasn’t very much and I got a job as a tray boy in the theatre where Connie worked and that’s where we met. I worked in the theatre at night and carried a tray to get a bit extra money.

What were you selling from your tray?

FL: Ice cream, you know, Dandies in a small container with a small wooden spoon.

Like a Dixie?

FL: Yes, those sort of things. We used to get about twenty shillings in the pound commission. It wasn’t a lot of money.

So that was your second job. You had a full time job and a second job for a bit of extra money?

FL: Oh yes, this was just after hours to make a bit of extra money. There was a few funny experiences with that. The last one I had was at the Theatre Royal – used to be in Hindley Street – and I did serve in most of the theatres at the time wherever they were short. Mostly I was at the Mayfair which was in Rundle Street. One night I was carrying a tray in the Theatre Royal in Hindley Street and it was just coming up interval time. We always dashed down to the front of the theatre and then start to walk through. People would buy ice creams and that sort of thing. Well this night I rushed down – it was the first time I’d been in there – and I rushed down the front and it had an orchestra pit, at the front of the stage, because it was a live theatre as well, and this was a time they were showing ...... pictures. The orchestra pit had no guard rail around it, and I dashed down to the front and the next thing I went too far and I was in the orchestra pit. Lucky there was no furniture in there but I lost everything and it went over everywhere and I was most embarrassed and couldn’t get out there fast enough. I never quite forgot.

So you didn’t make many sales?

FL: I didn’t make any money that night. I lost quite a bit of money actually because whoever cleaned it up, he got all of the money.

So you were working at the Mayfair as an usherette Connie?

CL: Yes, I was.

Did the two of you see each other for a long time before you got engaged?
CL: Oh, we knew each other about two years before we got engaged.

FL: I suppose the time gets away from you.

CL: We met in about ’48, 1948, and we were married in 1950.

FL: That was the year I started in the Electricity Trust, it was 1948.

**You were living in Parkside you were saying, when you were married?**

FL: I was living with my parents at this time and they were living in a flat on Greenhill Road.

**Whereabouts did you go to when you first started living together when you were married?**

CL: Well we had a room opposite my own home at North Adelaide with an elderly lady. We were only there about three months and we went to Rose Park and we had a couple of rooms from an elderly lady at Rose Park. We were there for twelve months and we went from there to Goodwood Park.

FL: Goodwood Park. Yes.

**I notice that this house is called Rose Park. Is that in memory of that time?**

CL: Rose Park, the first place that we had, yes.

**You say you had some rooms from an elderly lady. Were you boarding with her or what was the arrangement?**

CL: No, we just had two rooms and we looked after ourselves.

**So you had a stove?**

CL: Yes, we shared the kitchen.

**Tell me a bit about where you lived at Goodwood Park.**

CL: In Goodwood Park we lived in a room not attached to the house and used the bathroom and toilet in the house.

FL: The lady who we lived with there, her son was a returned soldier. He was a carpenter and he built a prefab room on the side of the house which was eighteen by nine and he lived in it until he built a house. This became vacant and someone told me about it and we saw her and she let it to us to rent and we stayed there for the full period of time until we moved in here. As I say it was divided up in the middle with a curtain and we had a double bed and a couple of wardrobes on the side and in the kitchen we just had a stove, a kitchen cupboard and a fridge, a table and four chairs, which was pretty crowded. We weren’t there very much and, you know, we
were just there to sleep sort of thing – we were both working. That was where we stayed until we finished the house and moved in here on the long weekend in January 1955.

**Do you remember how much rent you were paying for Goodwood Park?**

FL: Twenty-seven and six or two dollars and 75 cents.

**Did you have a honeymoon after you were married?**

CL: Yes, we went to Victor Harbor for about a week, ten days.

FL: A pretty big deal in those days.

**What do you mean it was a pretty big deal in those days?**

FL: Well people didn’t have cars. I had a motorbike up until I got married and we sold the motorbike. Because none of us had a lot of money in those days. We were just the ordinary average working people. You didn’t get too far because you didn’t have the money anyway. We went there. We went down on the bus and we stayed there for ten days. As Connie says we stayed in a boarding house, and the place is still there actually. We’ve seen it a couple of times.

**What time of the year was this?**

CL: March.

**So March ’50 you got married. You say you were both working at that period. Connie, you were working still as an usherette?**

CL: Yes.

**Daytimes and evenings as well?**

CL: Well I worked as an usherette for a few months after we were married, and then I went to a pharmacy and worked in the pharmacy, as a shop assistant, yes, for the rest of the time until our daughter was born in ’57.

**Do you remember what you were earning as a shop assistant in the pharmacy?**

CL: Oh no, I don’t, but it wasn’t that much. But no, I can’t remember what the money was.

**Frank, do you remember what you were earning?**

FL: ….. Because I was getting four pound six a week in the glove factory and I went to the Electricity Trust for four pound a week.

**So it was a cut in pay for the long term prospects?**
FL: Yes. Well I mean factory work didn’t seem to me like a good prospect. I wasn’t going to better myself and it seemed to be a government job was always there, and it was and it was a good job. I quite enjoyed the years I worked there. It’s changed now markedly. I’ve lost track of all the people I used to know and there’s so many people that took packages and left round the time that I retired. So that was my life. It wasn’t a lot of money those days and, you know, you couldn’t do a lot with it because mostly money was taken up with living and there wasn’t a lot left. Oh we managed all right didn’t we? We both worked and Connie worked right through those years until Josephine was born. We did pretty well really. I wouldn’t have done any better if I did as well.

How did you hear about the South Australian Home Builders’ Club?

FL: I’d read an article earlier, round about late ‘40s. I think it started just after the war actually, the Home Builders’ Club, and there was an article published in the Advertiser or one of those papers at the times. This person, and I think he lived up around Torrens Park, in that area or Linton, which is just up here a bit, and he built his own home and he put an article in the paper about it and I think the club started from there, and I’m not 100 per cent sure of it because it was a little bit before my time. And someone I knew told me about it and I think he might have started but it didn’t work out for him, and he told me about it and I thought at the time, “Well this seems to be a good idea”. We’d been to the Housing Trust and they said, “Well, come back in three year’s time”. You’d have had a choice out of three designs and two bedrooms and we thought, “Well, I think we can live a little better than that”. So we heard about the club and we went and saw a few people. We saw Colin de Laine’s home and another couple of people around that Clarence Park area that were building – there was quite a few built around that district. We just took it from there. We decided, “Well this is what we’ll do”. So I joined the Home Builders’ Club on the January weekend 1952.

Can you just fill in for me a bit? What were your housing options at the time? You say you went to the Housing Trust and had a chat to them.

FL: Yes.

Would it have been possible for you to build a new home in another way?

CL: No, I don’t think so.

FL: We investigated it. We were living at Goodwood Park and houses weren’t available. Like builders that build subdivisions now and open all these homes for inspection, there was nothing like that. There was nowhere you could go to get
advice those days. You sort of learnt. In the club, but once I joined the club we just helped one another and one would tell the other where you could get advice from. There was no place like advisory places like there is on the Anzac Highway, the advisory place there. There was none of that sort of thing those days. There wasn’t the mechanisation to get it. It was just after the war things were scarce. Just for argument’s sake, when we bought this block of land we paid two hundred and fifty pound for it, and it’s a fairly slopey block and it has about nine feet fall across the whole block and there weren’t many back hoes, that type of thing, around those days. I heard of an old chap over in Brownhill Creek and I went over and spoke to him and he said yes, he’d do it for me, and he had a horse and scoop. He levelled the block out with the horse and the scoop and dragged the soil from the front and put it across the block. That’s how the block was levelled off. Otherwise I would have had more of a step in the foundations than what we did have by getting it levelled off.

An example.

FL: There wasn’t the back hoes and that type of gear around to do those sort of things so you improvise. It might sound pretty primitive now, but that was all that was available at that time.

What were your peers at ETSA doing for housing? Were they with the Housing Trust or were they renting or thinking about purchasing a house?

FL: Some were in Housing Trust houses – and there was quite a number of them. There was a Housing Trust area down off Winston Avenue, down Edwardstown, and there was a number of them bought places there. Because you had to go on a waiting list and we didn’t bother. We just thought, “Well this is not for us”, so we decided this is the way we’d do it.

Can you remember going to your first meeting of the club?

FL: Yes I can.

Can you tell me a bit about that?

FL: Well I suppose I was a bit nervous at the time. At first, as far as I can remember, it was the first meeting I ever attended was in the Stowe Hall in the city. I think it was the Methodist Hall, I think, and the meeting was there. I think I only went to one or two meetings there and then they moved from there and they went to the Trade Union Hall in Grote Street. The meetings were held there all of my time I was in the Club. Meeting were always well attended. We were all after the one thing, to get as many man hours behind us as we possibly could to get a start. A start in those days was the person had done most man hours work got the priority of a brick team,
because prior to this you would have had your foundation down anyway and you was building up your hours.

**Why would you have your foundations down, because you did that yourself?**

FL: No, we did that through the club. When anyone carried out plans and specifications and it was all approved and you could get enough cement, then we’d say to the club, “Well I’m ready to put a foundation down. Can I get a gang of men to help us put the foundation down?” and they had a foundation team available.

Frank’s just back after getting a glass of water. We were talking about the system for foundations.

FL: You had to have done all necessary preparation. Because you was an owner/builder you had to organise everything else and I remember we were all working full time jobs and we were trying to build a house at the same time and life was pretty busy. You never had time to spare. You bought your own block, you got your own plans, and in our case we got a plan which was this particular house but it was the wrong way for the block so we turned the plan over and we had to get someone to alter the plan for us and there was a few things on the plan that we changed around. And then we decided, “Well this is what we want”, so it was put into the council and it was approved. We went to the bank, to the State Bank at the time, and we got a loan approved. We then worked on getting ready. The block was levelled off. I got an old shed I built at the back of the block where we store our materials, because you had to have somewhere to put all this gear. And the next thing was I had to get enough cement to do it. As I said it was just after the war and materials weren’t easy to get. Anyway after a lot of difficulty we got enough cement.

Then you went to a meeting and said, “We’ve got enough cement”? 

FL: Yes, “We’ve got the cement and I’m ready to go”. They had a foundation team and they came on site. We had Club foundation boards and all that sort of thing, enough gear to put down a foundation and box it all up, and they came here and they spent a weekend getting it all levelled up and all the boxing put in position.

The boxing was the club’s or was yours?

FL: No it was a boxing, the Club owned. They had their own scaffolding and foundation boards and the pegs and that sort of thing to do it. We hired a cement mixer because while I had a one and a half cubic foot mixer, electric mixer, it wasn’t big enough for a foundation so we hired a mixer. At this time I would have had a
contractor to deliver me enough sand and metal to put the foundation down and the club would allocate me a gang of men. It’d probably be six or eight of us would land on site on Saturday morning. We’d start up and we’d work all day and we’d pour the foundation and by the time the night time came, the foundation was finished. Some foundations took 2 or 3 days depending on the amount of preparation required.

One day?

FL: Yes, we’d box it up on the Saturday and pour it on the Sunday, and that was standard procedure in the club, which we’d do that. From then the foundation was set until I had enough hours then to get a start. The system was then that you’d go to a meeting of the club and they’d say, “Well the brick team looking for another job. Who’s got the most man hours worked?” Nobody’d tell the next one how many hours you had because they’d go and work a few more hours and just beat you, so you kept that pretty quiet, how many hours you had. So once you got the number of hours and they said, “Right, you’ve got the most hours, you’re allocated a brick team”, so then the brick team would come on to your site. Because I had all my bricks made prior to this. We’d made twenty-seven thousand cement bricks on this block. Myself and three others made these bricks. We’d make two and a half thousand bricks on a Saturday. We stacked those two and a half bricks on a Sunday morning and make another two thousand bricks. The owner builder would stack the bricks made on Sunday ready for next weekend.

That sounds incredibly efficient.

FL: Yes. And of course they had to be watered every day. We’d have to come up here every night after work and water these stack of bricks because they take about a month to cure. That took us quite a few weeks to make all these bricks and they were stacked around the block everywhere.

Were you accumulating hours for the club while you were making your bricks?

FL: No, that was time lost. Well not lost but I was working on my own block so that didn’t count.

You chose to do that alternatively from working on someone else’s?

FL: Yes, when I was doing that sort of work I wasn’t available to work for the club. And when I went into the ...... club in 1952 I started off making cement bricks on other people’s homes and I did that for about two months. And brick making is the hardest work I’ve ever done we were using four and five brick machines. The cement was shovelled into the hopper of the brick machine and you ram it down and
then they top it up and you ram it again, then you’d tip the bricks - - - . Grab two handles on the side and you’d lift it up so that it stood the bricks upright and then you had to carry them away and put them on the foundation, and then you’d come back and put another pallet in, then you’d do the same again. And we were working ten hours a day at this, every day, Saturday and Sunday.

Are the cement bricks the same dimensions as a normal clay brick?

FL: Yes, they were nine by four by three.

So they were quite heavy lifting ..... 

FL: Oh yes, they were.

So that’s actually a lot of physical work?

FL: Yes, that was all hard physical work. Anyway there were all made and they were stacked in the block ready to go. And then it came up to the time that I considered I had enough hours and a brick team became available.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A: SIDE B

FL: And they’d turn up on the job and I’ve had my own cement mixer. I had a temporary service pole for electricity out the front of the block with a meter in it and we just used electricity to run our little concrete mixer and everything was here for them. Connie would cook every Saturday and Sunday, she’d make up a lot of cakes - she’s a very good cook – morning and afternoon tea for the boys and they all used to enjoy that because she made very nice cakes and we’d supply the morning tea and afternoon tea and the cups and the glasses – the cups and the billies and that sort of thing to make the tea in. Everybody did this, just as a standard thing through the club, and some people had good morning tea and some didn’t. You got to know who supplied a good morning tea. Anyway once you got a brick team, that carried right through and one gang followed another to finish the house once you got that start.

OK, so once the place was started, it was then fairly - - -?

FL: That carried right through.

So it was continuous from then on?

FL: Pretty well, yes. The only things we didn’t do, we didn’t do deep drainage, which we wouldn’t have been allowed to do, we didn’t do ceilings and we didn’t fix roof tiles, but everything else was done by the Home Builders’ Club.

We’ll come back to the detailed process in a minute but you’ve given me a great idea of the overall system. Just back to that very first meeting again, can you
remember what your impressions were, apart from you said you were a little bit nervous going there?

FL: Well I didn’t know. That’s a hard thing, trying to remember back fifty years ago.

Was it all men there?

FL: Oh yes, as far as I can remember. I don’t ever remember too many women at a meeting. There was one or two, but there wasn’t very many. It wasn’t, you know, something that the women did. No, I suppose I was more or less suitably impressed because otherwise I wouldn’t have gone. And it was all very strange to me because building a house was quite unknown to me. That was something I hadn’t ever thought of. I had no knowledge of how to build a house. But strangely enough you soon picked things up and you soon learn and people guide you in the right direction, because we’re all the same, we’re all there for one reason, that’s to get a home. Because, you know, we couldn’t get homes and we wanted something a bit better, and this is the way to do it without spending a lot of money which most of us didn’t have anyway. Anyway that carried us right through. Once we started with a brick team, each gang followed through. I had done my time brick making. Then they asked me would I like learn plastering and I said yes, I wouldn’t mind plastering. Because I was no good at carpentering, that wasn’t in my line, but I did enjoy plastering. And we had three groups of plasterers. Initial group was the rendering team which put the first grey coat on the wall, then we had a setting team which was a gang to put the white coat on – putty coat – and then we had a white cement team that did the outside plastering. Because a lot of houses those days couldn’t get or couldn’t buy red bricks or those finished bricks that you want on the outside of house, so a lot of them were plastered on the outside and then they were white cemented. With the white cement they usually left it with a finish colour of the sand. White cement was a sort of a creamy white colour and was left plain or sometimes they would line it out with horizontal lines which then divided up with vertical lines to make a pattern in the wall.

To look a little bit like blocks.

FL: What you’ve seen in my home is that was called a random line. I think when I was in the club it was round the peak of the time of the club’s history, you know, where they were building the most houses. Because up until that time it was just building up to about 1952. Well between the fifties and sixties I would consider to be the height of the club, where they were building most. Then they started to go down after that period of time until it finally wound up.
**Did you stick with the plastering team?**

FL: Yes I did, most of my time. I started off and I worked right through the three phases of the plastering and I became a group leader of the plastering teams, each trade had a group leader and was responsible to allocate where the chaps would work, and that’s what I did. I did that for, oh, probably over three years, and then the last twelve months of the Home Builders’ Club I went into the finishing team – what they called a finishing team. That was to tile kitchens and bathrooms and laundries and that sort of thing, and I finished off the last of my time doing that sort of work I quite enjoyed. It was very satisfying as much as you see something for your work, and it was very good.

**One of the women I interviewed, who wasn’t from the south area I think – I think she was from the north area – one of her jobs was picking out the tiny flecks from the plaster on the wall, little black flecks. Could you explain what that was?**

FL: It might have been what they called a blow. The lime might not have been slack ed properly. We used Victor Hard lime. In the old days they used to slack the lime on the ground and make a big ring and they’d put the lime in it and they’d slack it with water and they’d mix it up. This would slack the lime making it usable for the work that it could be used. At a later time we used hydrated lime or hydro-lime. Hydro-lime was more of a grey colour. It turned out quite grey on the wall. Limal was more white colour when you mixed that with Victor Hard. Victor Hard was a plaster that set it off. They were mixed in containers, mixed together, fifty/fifty of Limal and Victor Hard. They were mixed together to a putty cake consistency and then they were trowelled on to the wall and finished with water, and trowel it till you got a smooth wall.

**Very skilled work.**

FL: It took a bit of learning. People became quite efficient in what they did. It’s amazing how fast you learned, because the better you did your work, the better everybody else did, because you were all learning. New people were coming in all the time and you’d have to teach them. We were only learning ourselves. When I used to go round working for ETSA and I see someone plastering I’d stop them and be asking questions and that sort of thing. Because people don’t tell you too much if they think you want to know. Those times they kept things pretty close to their chest. But you picked things up as you went along.

**Did you say that if you did your work well, everyone else did theirs better? Was there a feeling of applying your skill and lifting?**
FL: Yes, I think so, yes. Because everybody was trying to do the best they could. Some people do things better than others and I’m a bit of a perfectionist I suppose. I always like to try to do things as near as perfect as I can do them and you can’t always do that. Most people in the Home Builders’, I think, were pretty honest and did their best. They were all trying because they all wanted a home and they wanted it the best they could get it, kind of simple as that.

The slogan of the club is “Not for myself alone”. Do you think that accurately reflects what you’re talking about?

FL: I think so, yes. It was a good ......

Connie, I was wondering if you remembered when Frank came home from that meeting? Do you remember sitting down and having a chat about this new idea?

CL: No I don’t. I guess we did but I don’t remember the first meeting.

FL: We were both pretty young and full of enthusiasm, those days. You couldn’t really visualise. It was a pretty big step to try to build. With no background in it, and then suddenly decide, “Well I’m going to build a house”. Just to organise the materials and all that sort of thing is a big job on its own. You know, people will tell you how much you want and then you’ve got to sort of go and chase up people and get all these things. Materials wasn’t easy to get those days. I mean it’s a different story now. They can get so many things and their choice is so vast. In those days you just didn’t have the choice.

You mentioned making twenty-seven thousand bricks. Can you tell me a bit about how you acquired the rest of the materials for the house? Anything in particular that stands out?

FL: No, not a lot. The people that we were living with, their son was a carpenter and he offered to get me timber. So the club worked out the amount of timber that was required for the job and I passed it on to him and he was able to order the timber on his account for me from where he dealt and he gave me the discount that he got, not a lot of discount timber at the time, but it all added up. That was about the only thing. Mostly other things, the club, they’ve got contacts at various businesses, and they would give the club members a discount on different building materials and that sort of thing – plumbing and things like that.

Because they knew there’d be a fair volume of business?

FL: Yes, there was a fair bit of volume of business going to them. Some of these places we deal with those days, they’re probably not still in existence, plumbers and that sort of thing, but I don’t think today I’ve ever heard of them. One business, it
was Pettit’s Hardware. I don’t know whether they’re still in existence – I haven’t heard of them for years. I can’t quite remember, down the beach way somewhere, down towards Henley Beach or down that way somewhere. I can’t quite remember, but as I say that’s going back fifty years and my memory’s starting to fade a bit now. But no, it was quite a big thing because you did your eight hours a day at work and then for the rest of the time you’d be chasing up material. You’d be running somewhere to find out where you could get something, or buying something or getting somebody to deliver something. You was always on the go. There was never any time to spare. Actually your life was the club and building the house. That was what you did for that period of time. It was totally taken up. You had no other things that you could do because your time was there.

This block was, did you say, two hundred and fifty pounds?

FL: Yes.

Can you tell me how you found the block and what made you decide on this one?

FL: Well as I say I was working for the Electricity Trust in those days. We had a depot down Unley and I knew that they were going to shift, because it was only a normal house block they were using as a depot, and they were going to buy land. At the time that they bought land, they bought it on a block off Belair Road opposite where Woolworth’s supermarket is on Belair Road now. I knew they were going to shift to this particular site and we were at this time thinking about building. I saw this block advertised I think in the paper and we came and had a look at it, and I knew then I could walk from here to work in approximately ten minutes, and I thought, “Well this would be a site for me. I’ve got no transport problems”. So we bought the block of land and it just went from there. And ETSA built this new depot down on Belair Road and it was there for, oh, some thirty-eight or forty years from the time they built it until it finally closed. When they were closing up a lot of depots, this was one they closed and that’s now a shopping centre, where the old depot was. It served its purpose and this block was very convenient just to go to work and I always worked in that depot so life was easy as far as getting to work – there was no hassles. In the last part of my working life anyway I had a company car so it wasn’t a problem anyway, but in the early days it probably could have been if we’d have been further away.

So you didn’t own a car at that stage?

FL: No. Oh I had a motorbike.

CL: Yes, we did have a car in the finish.
FL: Yes, but not when I started in the Club.

FL: I had a motorbike, an old army BSA and a side box. I used to put all my gear in the side box. Con would never ride in the side box. She rode pillion passenger. She wouldn’t get into the box. I had that for some time and then we finally got an old single-seater Morris Cowley and had a dinky seat in the back. It would carry a hundred bricks in the boot without much trouble. A couple of planks on the running boards and it never hurt very much at all.

So it had a bit of go in the engine did it?

FL: Oh yes.

So this site was close to work. Were there any other houses in the street at that time or was it just an empty street?

FL: Oh no, this house on the south side of us, that was there and that was a war service home. And on this side there was a Latvian chap bought that block and he built that house next door. He never married. He lived there till he died actually and he built that house, and most of that house was built at night. He never worked in the daytime. As soon as it come dark he was out there working and hammering all night long.

Was that because he worked at something else during the day?

FL: No, he did work for Chrysler’s at Tonsley Park for a while but he had an accident there and he didn’t work after that. But he built that house on his own and I would say most of it was built at night time, after many arguments. It just didn’t make any difference. He said to me, “I have to do my working Mr Law”, and he did too. But in the end I just had to sort of live with it because it was just causing too many arguments. You never know quite what these people are going to do if you took it further so we in the end just lived with it. My daughter’s bedroom is on that side of the house and she got used to him shouting and carrying on at night. He wasn’t one of the most ideal neighbours.

Did you need to take out a mortgage to buy the block?

FL: No.

Did you go to the State Bank?

FL: No, it was two hundred and fifty pounds those days.

CL: To buy the block we didn’t.
FL: No we financed ourself for the block but to get the loan to build the house we went to the State Bank, and that was taken over a thirty year term but we paid it off before that time. We were able to top the walls of the house with our own money. A lot of people would get a draw at sill height but we were able to, with the both of us working, to manage to get enough money to buy the materials to top the walls. From then on we had to get the loan to buy roofing timbers and that sort of thing to continue on.

**Did it make a difference to the bank that you were building with the Home Builders’ Club?**

FL: No, not a bit.

**Did they come and inspect the building?**

FL: Oh yes, yes. They were quite satisfied. The standard of the homes built by the club was apparently very acceptable.

**I’ve heard that from a number of people, that the banks were actually very please.**

FL: Yes, they were. I never had any problems at all, and it would have been inspected by the local council as well I know. Never ever heard from anybody so what we did was apparently of a good standard.

**You mentioned the fall of the site which you had levelled by a fellow with the a horse and scoop. Any other particular features of the site? Did you have to clear it?**

FL: No, I didn’t have any other trees or anything on it. It was just a bare block of land and being on the wrong side of the road made it a bit difficult as far as getting our rainwater piped to the street.

**Because you were on the down side of the road?**

FL: Yes on the other side of the road, well you just naturally just run into the gutter, but when you’re on the wrong side it just creates a few more problems.

**What did you do about drainage?**

FL: In the end I had a bit of trouble with water at one stage under the house. A chap came to check for white ants, and he said to me, “You’ve got water under the foundations of the house”. It had to be water from the underground. Because there is an underground stream under here. Apparently this must have been a wet year and water was coming under the house. So I got a chap in and we put a strip drain in. I took time off from work and he and I dug from the other side of the house round the front and down the drive and put a drain sump in down by the garage. I had a hole.
drilled down there, twelve feet, and filled it up with road metal – forty mill. road metal I think it was. I filled it up and put a pipe in the middle and cut the pipe so the water could drain into it – a six inch pipe, plastic sewer pipe, and the water drained into that. I rigged up a system of pipes. I put an electric motor in the shed and put a switch in the sump and when the sump fills up it pumps it out. I put a pipe from the motor to the garage roof, a water pump in the garage, and I’ve got a pipe work running round the fence and it takes it out to the street.

What year did you do that?

FL: Oh, this was done, more than twenty years ago. Prior to that, well there was no regulations. The council didn’t have regulations to say well you’ve got to take your water to the street, where they do these days. All you did was let it run away and so the people at the back would probably get flooded out. On this block the house water was piped via pipes attached to the fence to the street. Later I connected those pipes to the shed roof and all went to the street. It’s done the job and you can hear the water when it’s been a wet winter, running into the sump.

That’s great.

FL: It does the job quite well.

You mentioned a little bit about the design of the house. Could you tell me a bit more about that? Where did you get the design from?

FL: This person was a draftsman or an architect, something like that, and he had a lot of house designs. Other club members had been to him as well and so I think that’s where I would have got the information from, because I didn’t know him, so I would have been told by other members of the club. And we went to him and we sorted through a lot of his plans until we decided on this particular plan. We decided well this was the one we wanted. It wasn’t the right way for the block so we turned the plan over. I can’t even tell you now how much it cost me.

What was it about this design, if there was a whole book of them, or a whole selection of them? Why did you settle on this one?

FL: I don’t know. This one just appealed to us.

Connie, do you remember anything particularly?

CL: No, I can vaguely remember going to someone, but it was just the design we thought that suited us.

How many bedrooms is the house?

CL: It’s actually three.
FL: What you’re sitting in now was actually the sun room, which would have been the third bedroom. So we’ve got a lounge, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, a bathroom just in the centre of the house and a sun room at the back, toilet and laundry at the other end of the verandah. There is a verandah in the middle, enclosed porch in the middle, and the sun room is not as it was originally because we’ve put a bigger picture window in and we’ve panelled the walls here with timber – to make it into a lounge room which we use as a lounge room because being only two people it’s a cozy place to sit and to watch the TV at night, and it’s quite a nice room to sit in, quite pleasant.

I think last time I spoke to you, you mentioned that restrictions on plans just changed as you were laying your foundations. Could you explain that?

FL: Yes, well houses were built under a permit scheme. It stopped round about 1952. This plan was about fifteen hundred squares and I got a permit that I was only allowed to build twelve hundred square, twelve fifty I think. That meant leaving off the sun room, the back porch and the front verandah to get it down to the required number of square feet to be able to put the foundation down. And just prior to putting the foundation down, they lifted the restrictions and we were able to put the whole foundation down, which pleased me immensely at the time because I didn’t particularly want to do part of a job and not finish it. We were able to put the whole foundation down and the house went on and the whole place is actually as it was built fifty years ago. We haven’t changed the actual structure of the house at all. It’s just basically as it was built by the Home Builders’ Club.

Do you recall what the restrictions were related to? Were they related to size of the family?

FL: No, I don’t think that came into it. I think it was the size of the house. That’s as much as I know.

Do you recall, Connie, if you had any particular things that you were keen on out of a house that you were going to build? Any particular things that you were after?

CL: No, I don’t think so. I was just, I guess, just pleased to think that we were actually building and we were going to have a far better home than the Trust home, you know, for the same sort of money.

You mentioned reversing the plan to fit on the block. Can you just explain to me what that was about?

FL: We were on the low side of the road and the fall goes across the block. If I’d have put the house the other way around the drive would have been on the south
side of the house and that’s on the high side of the block. To me, to turn it over and put it with the drive on the north side of the house made sense to me.

**That’s the low side.**

FL: Which is the lower side of the block, it just seemed logical to me at the time and it suited the house to be this way rather than have the drive the other side.

**Were there any other considerations about siting? Like whereabouts on the block? Did you want to put the house close to the front of the block?**

FL: No. Basically the house was round about thirty feet from the front fence in this particular area and I think that was mostly houses around about twenty-five or thirty feet back from the street.

**That was a convention or a regulation?**

FL: No, I don’t really think so. I just think it was just that something was done. I don’t know whether was regulations to say that or not. It was just what people seemed to do.

**Apart from just the general layout of the house and how it related to the block, there wasn’t anything particular about this design that grabbed you. I notice it’s got columns at the front. Was that part of the original design?**

FL: Yes it was. I don’t think from the original plan we never altered anything. It was as the plan was how the house was built, and we just didn’t deviate from that.

**If we go back a bit to the process that you were talking about. You joined the club in ’52. When did you do the foundations, do you remember?**

FL: No not really. I can’t quite remember exactly when I put the foundation down. It would have been late in ’52 or early ’53.

**END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B: TAPE 2 SIDE A**

**We were just talking about the wait between the foundations and the brick team.**

FL: Once the foundation was down, I searched around and found that I couldn’t get bricks so then I had to chase up for cement because I needed roughly ten ton of cement. In those days you just didn’t go and order ten ton of cement. You just went down and say, “Please can I have some cement?” and if you got a half a ton or a ton you did pretty well. You did that all the time, you had to. There was so much demand for it, you just couldn’t get it. You just had to go along and almost beg for the material and so it was hard. Anyway I had to get ten ton of cement and over the period of time I did get it, but it was a bit of a struggle. Once the foundation went down there was a period of time, lead time, between there and the brick making
because I had to get materials and get it organised and get sand and metal (stone) and that and all the stuff that you needed to make bricks. Once that was on it would have taken me quite a few weeks – I don’t know maybe six weeks – to make these number of bricks.

**What made you go for cement bricks that you made yourself. Were you unable to source other bricks?**

FL: Yes, we couldn’t get bricks. There was demand, that much demand for it that you just couldn’t get them unless you knew somebody, then you might get them, but I didn’t know anybody. It just became too hard and it was just easier at that time to say, “All right, I can’t get them. I’ll make them”. There was quite a lot of people made bricks in those days.

**Did the club own the forms, the brick-making things?**

FL: Yes.

**Do you remember who the people working with you on your bricks were?**

FL: No, who would have been here? Not really. Vaguely I can but I just can’t recall the actual men who were at the time making bricks – I don’t know. I never kept a record of the people that did the various trades because it became just too hard. There was so much going on that you just didn’t have time to do all that sort of thing. I’ve kept a record – or roughly I started to keep a record – of materials that I bought and the cost of them, but things caught up there after a while, I couldn’t do it all. That went by the by after a while. And surprisingly you look back now to the price that we paid for things but then again you look at the wage you got for working.

**So it took you some time and you’d made twenty-seven thousand bricks, although not as long as I would imagine if you can make two and a half thousand on Saturday and two thousand on Sunday.**

FL: I can’t remember the exact time that it took us, round six weeks.

**I’m very impressed by the numbers here. So then the bricks were curing and you were off working on other people’s houses, building up your hours.**

FL: Yes. You worked on like making bricks. That time wasn’t counted. That’s dead time so as soon as I’d done what I was going to do on my block, then I was back on working in the plastering and that started adding the hours up. So, you know, you had to do so much yourself. Like plastering, I would have been here all the plastering time and things like that. I did take a week off and I did plaster the outside of the house on my own and it took me a week to do that. That was a rendered coat,
the first coat, I did that. Holidays, you just didn’t have them. That was it. The holiday was Lot 73 Dunbar Avenue.

That’s this house, Lot 73?

FL: Yes, Lot 73, number 18.

You were going round with the plastering team. Do you remember any in particular of the houses that you worked on?

FL: Me? Many.

Any particular stories that you’d like to tell me?

FL: There’s lots of funny things went on. You get a gang of men and there’s lots of funny stories go around, but to recall them is another story. Time sort of wipes those memories out a bit. You had to have a bit of fun because it was all work, you know, and it could become quite a drag if you didn’t make a bit of fun and blokes always did that. No, not really. There was some funny stories that went on but recall them is another story. at the time that was quite funny but that’s another story. Too long ago.

Let’s come back then to the building of this house. If you could take me through the process step by step. We’ve done the foundations and we’re up to the beginning of the brickworks with all the bricks cured and ready and stacks around the site. One day you put your hand up and they said it’s your time.

FL: The Club had a bricklaying gang that was nearing completing a job and they just called the organiser – at that time was a bloke by the name of Stan Moore - - -. I forget the name of the bloke that was before him and I’ve tried and tried and I can’t think of what his name was. Anyway Stan Moore was a bloke I knew mostly in my time, and Stan lived down at Camden. He was the organiser at the time in the Home Builders’ Club. We had a president and an organiser and then we went down to the group leaders, which I was one of them, and the group leader would run so many gangs and at this time I had three plastering gangs. We had a big increase in the amount of houses that wanted plastering and we had to start another plastering gang, people to do the rendering side of the plastering job, and I had four gangs at that time for a number of months. Then as the demand dropped, I’d probably drop one gang off and they were sent to do other types of work. Had to be a bit versatile to tackle anything. Just send you there and you just learned. You didn’t know anything about it but people on the job would tell you and you sort of built your skills up from that. It took a period of time but you learned as you went along. That was about it I think.
Once we got the brick team on the job, well it was a matter of I had to have everything here for them, like all the window frames and door frames, any other material they wanted – sand, cement, lime – sand, all that hardware that goes with it. They would then proceed and they’d top the walls. Once they’d topped the walls, and then they’d do the dwarf walls inside which support the floors and that sort of thing. They’d do that and their work was finished. They put the four pillars in the front. They got those and they stood them up and they poured the concrete roof over the top of that, so the walling was complete. From then I had to tee up timber, which I told you about. When that gang came available they would start on the job and they would put the roof structure up, put the door jambs in, all the door jambs in on the inside.

So they went in after the brickwork?

FL: Yes, they went in after the brickwork. And the electricians would come in then. We had our own electricians and we had our own plumbers, and they would put in the conduits, because we were using conduits those days. They chase the walls out and put the conduits in. The plumbers would come in and they would chase the walls out and put the pipes in for the water, hot and cold water. Then the plasterers would move in. We’d move in and probably half a dozen blokes. All gangs had their own scaffolding and the person who was having the work done would organise to get the scaffolding there for them. Just ring up a carrier and they’d come and pick the gear up and deliver it to the next man. The gang would turn up and they would do the rendering and after that they’d move out on to the next house and another crew would come in and do the white putty coat. From there on the ceiling fixer would come and fix the ceilings. That was a private contractor and we didn’t do ceilings. Then the carpenters would come back and they’d start putting your floors in.

The floors come after the ceiling?

FL: Yes, the floors come after your ceilings. Once they got the floors in it was a matter then of putting the glass in the windows and the doors on and making it lock up. Once it was locked up you were on the way to getting in. They would come in and do the finishing off work and the electrical one and the plumbing and the tilers would come in and they would tile the bathrooms, the laundries, toilets and kitchen. Then the last one would be the terrazzo. We did have a gang laying terrazzo – one of the chaps, the organiser before, Stan Moore. I just can’t remember what his name was at the time. Anyhow he started this terrazzo team and he made the rubbing machine. Terrazzo was polished by rubbing stones and he had three of these rubbing
stones mounted on a machine, they’d polish the floor using this machine over the floor to polish up the surface. You always had to hand rub around the edges, around the doors and all that sort of thing, and the tubs and whatever was on the floor. That was actually the finish of it then. From then on, well your amount of hours are then tallied up and you knew how many hours you were left to pay off. It was just a matter then of working those hours and your obligation was finished.

**Do you remember how long it took between when the foundations were laid, or perhaps when the brick team started here, and when it was done to lock up?**

**FL:** I reckon it would have taken the best part of twelve months.

**Was that work on this house every weekend or was it weekends in between when the teams could come when you’d be off working on another house on the plastering side?**

**FL:** Teams would come if there was work available here. They’d come and do it. They’d do whatever was required to this house and once they’d finished all the work they could possibly do here, then they’d move to the next one.

**There might be a gap then between that and when the next team was ready?**

**FL:** Yes, because naturally by just doing it two days a week, there became a lag between one crew and the next one. That’s the way it was because we didn’t have enough teams. We weren’t building enough houses to the follow on.

**When the teams were working on this house, you wouldn’t be off with the plastering gang? You’d be here supervising?**

**FL:** No, I was off working, I only worked if the team I was a member of was plastering on our house.

**You were off working. I hadn’t understood that.**

**FL:** The only time you worked on your own place was when you were doing work of the trade you worked with.

**Foundations or the plastering?**

**FL:** Yes, if I was the plasterer I’d be out plastering. I’d come and start them off in the morning, make sure they had everything they required, then I’d go to my own job and I could work there for eight, ten hours and then I’d come back here. Sometimes I’d come here or I’d go home and we’d have tea and come up and we’d pick up the cups and wash them up and do whatever had to be done around the place – tidy up – and then by that time it’d be dark anyway and we’d go home.
Connie, can you tell me what you remember of that period? You were obviously doing a lot of baking.

CL: Well yes, I would bake for the weekend. You know, one day for the next day, for the morning teas and afternoon teas.

Did you bring the morning teas up?

CL: No, Frank brought them up when he came. No, I didn’t come to the place while there were workmen here.

Did you look forward to coming up with Frank at the end of the day to see what progress had been made?

CL: I don’t know about looking forward, I suppose I did, but it was hard enough work to come up, particularly when the bricks were made – you know, to shift the bricks and keep them watered.

So you had a hand in that?

CL: Yes, I did help with that – I helped Frank with that. And we’d pick up the cups and stuff and take them back home and wash them for the next day. Then he would bring them up in the morning, the morning tea and that, and we’d come back Saturday and Sunday evening and pick them up again for the following week.

FL: Yes, you’ve got to remember too that those bricks I made on Sunday had to be stacked through the week for next Saturday, so there was never a dull moment. You never had time to scratch yourself really. It was a busy life, it really was.

I was going to ask you in particular about the bathroom, because we had a bit of a chat about it last time I saw you. Can you describe to me the bathroom as it was when it was finished?

CL: The bathroom was pink and black. Well it was actually black and pink, actually. It was a beautiful bathroom and I believe all Home Builders took pride in their bathrooms. They did seem to have lovely bathrooms.

FL: ...... ...... 

CL: Oh well it was, it was a lovely bathroom and it was beautifully done with it.

Were the fixtures pink, the bath and the basin and the shower recess?

CL: No, the bath was a dusky pink and the pedestal was a dusky pink. The tiles around the wall were black with white mortar and six inches down from the top there was a deep burgundy strip that followed the tiling around, up round the window and type of thing. It was very, very effective and it did look very, very good, beautiful in fact.
FL: Had pink glass in the shower screen.

CL: [break in recording] The shower screen was just the dullest pink, with a duck on it, or a water fowl on it, in a chrome frame and it didn’t have any wire in it. It was the pink glass, which did look very effective, and we did have a lot of trouble to get it. The only place we could get it was Simon and Simons, but it was a lovely bathroom.

**It had a terrazzo floors?**

CL: Yes, it had pink and black terrazzo with the brass edging around it and it kept beautifully.

**You mention that Colin Delaine worked on the bathroom?**

CL: Yes, he did.

FL: Colin Delaine tiled the bathroom. He was very particular. He was pretty much of a perfectionist himself. He did very good work.

**You also mentioned last time that the bathroom has been changed.**

CL: Yes, the bathroom has been changed now, for the fact is we wanted to get rid of the bath so we took everything up, even the floor. But the terrazzo didn’t even have as much as a crack in it when it was taken up, but the pipes were definitely due to come up because they were badly corroded. While it wasn’t leaking, it just came to pieces in Frank’s hand when he actually dug them up, took the terrazzo up and took the sand away that the terrazzo was sitting on. But of course we have had that re-done. We’ve had a toilet put in where the bath was and a larger shower alcove. Frank prepared the bathroom for the contractor, so all he had to do was alter the plumbing and do the tiling.

**A larger shower recess?**

CL: Yes. The whole thing and the vanity cupboard put in instead. And the contractor did a very, very good job of that so we’re very pleased with the bathroom.

**I just wanted to capture that because it was so interesting when we talked about it last time. Just back a few steps again to when this house was being built, and you mentioned your neighbour on one side. Do you know if your neighbours had any opinions about the way your house was being built? Did anyone hang over the fence and tell you what they thought?**

CL: No. I think that the people were very pleasantly surprised when they actually saw the house being built.

**Why was that?**
CL: Well I guess they didn’t sort of really quite know what to expect, but they found that there was far more to it, and the building and that sort of think. I think in a way there were quite a few – well in my own family and Frank’s family – that were quite envious of us. But I don’t think any of them would have put the time in, the hours that had to be put in to get it.

**What stage was the house at when you moved in?**

CL: Oh, it was finished.

FL: It was finished, yes.

CL: They might have had one lot of rubbing of the terrazzo to finish.

FL: Yes they did.

CL: If I remember rightly. I think the final rubbing it might have been, but the rest of it was completed.

FL: It wasn’t painted.

**So you had to do painting and soft furnishings and things?**

Both: Oh yes.

**We’ll talk about that in a tick, but I just want to focus a little bit more on working teams. So you were a group leader of the plasterers and there were three and then four teams of plasterers?**

FL: Yes.

FL: There was quite a few of them. Les Long, Jock Blakie – Roy Lewis, he lives down here. You’re putting me on the spot.

**That’s all right, we can come back. If names occur to you as we keep talking, just pop them in. How big were the teams, these four teams?**

FL: Oh well there’d be about half a dozen. Depends on who turned up on the day.

**So you’d adjust them each time?**

FL: Yes.

**How did you enjoy the role of supervising?**

FL: Oh, I quite enjoyed it. I didn’t have a real lot to do. Mainly I was a plasterer myself. Part of my job was to put the crews together so they worked together as a team. I didn’t have to watch them because it wasn’t necessary. There was no
malingerers there because if you didn’t do the right thing. The person would be told
or altered to another trade. They didn’t need a lot of supervision. We were all there
for a purpose and the purpose was you wanted a house. Everybody did the best they
could and ...... ...... turn up on a job. You didn’t have to stand over them or that sort
of thing. The supervision was very minimal. Most of my job was to keep the number
of men in each team as near as possible to the same number so they were an
effective team.

You mentioned that you were always alert for ways of learning a bit more about
what you were doing. Was there a system of passing on information within the
teams? How did that work?

FL: Well that was only just word of mouth. A new man would come in as plastering
and you’d put him on the mixer first up, mixing up the mortar, or mud as we used to
call it. You’d get him working, making that mixture right, the right consistency and
that sort of thing. Once he got the hang of that, and if he was adaptable, you’d put
him on to a trowel. We use what they call a hawk – it is a flat piece of steel about
twelve inches square with a handle in the middle and you hold it and you use a
trowel and you’d scoop it on to your hawk. Until you get the hang of that, that’s
quite heavy because you hold it in one hand and you’ve got to take it off with your
trowel in the other and sort lay it on the wall. Well you finish up with a lot on the
floor to start with until you get the hang of getting it from the hawk to the trowel and
then get it on to the wall. There’s a bit of a knack in it but once you get the hang of
it it’s easy.

CL: But then I believe Jock was very good. He was a professional plasterer.

FL: A chap that came in about half way through my time in the plasterers, a chap by
the name of Jock Blakie. Jock was a Scotchman and he learned to be a plasterer in
Scotland and when he came out to Australia – I suppose he migrated out – he
worked on the Adelaide Railway Station when it was being built, as a plasterer, and
from there he got a job in the Electricity Trust and that’s where I met him. I suppose
I told him about the club and he was interested and he joined as well, but he joined
about half way through my time. I think I was probably well on the way to building
the house by then. Jock showed us the finer points, but we were plastering houses
long before Jock came in, but he just had the professional finish and how to do
things and he made quite a bit of difference to our work. In the finish of it. Just the
way of doing jobs. It’s hard to explain. You might be doing something but he sees a
short cut, or different method of doing it. It’s just little things. While we were
plastering houses and we were doing it quite well, it was just those little things that a professional would do.

**So he lifted the standard a bit more?**

FL: Lifted the standard, yes.

**Can you just reflect for me about how learning these skills altered your sense of - - -? Did it alter your sense of who you were?**

FL: Oh, give me far more self-confidence. Even to contemplate building a house before I started, I wouldn’t even have considered it. I’m not very handy at woodwork, I never was. It’s something I just don’t like very much. Playing around with plastering I did enjoy. That’s something I just sort of had a knack for.

**END OF TAPE 2 SIDE: SIDE B**

FL: ...... part that I wouldn’t try and I reckon I’d turn out a reasonable sort of a job. But prior to that I wouldn’t even attempt it. That’s something I wouldn’t have even dreamt of doing without the Home Builders’ Club.

**When you were working on a team, you were a leader of whatever team you were working on? Is that how it worked?**

FL: Yes.

**Do you have any memories of what you talked about while you were working, or whether there were disagreements or things that needed to be resolved?**

FL: No, there was very few disagreements. There might have been one or two arguments between people because not everybody gets on, but mostly the blokes all got on fairly well together. I don’t really know of anyone that really had any real falling out. As I said, we were all there for one purpose and we made it as pleasant as we could. That was the main part of it. There was no fighting as such. Mostly the people’s interest was what they were doing and what they were going to get and how they’re going to go about it. It was all related to building. There wasn’t a lot of disharmony between the people. We all got on pretty well I think. Most of them were friends, not probably close friends. There were a few that we did keep in touch with afterwards, quite a few. But no, they were good people. All out for the same thing – they all wanted a house. That was the whole thing.

**Do you remember any particular incidents or injuries?**

FL: No, no I don’t reckon we ever - - -. I can’t ever remember anyone being hurt to any extent. Might have been a few. Might have fallen off a scaffold or something like that, but I can’t remember anybody being really hurt. There might be odd things
but no accidents that I can recall, in my time anyway. It’s a bit hard for me to put some of these things together. But no there wasn’t any accidents as such, that anyone got seriously hurt, that I can remember in my time.

**Can you describe for me a typical week and weekend during this period, when you were working on the plastering team, just in terms of how you fitted everything in?**

**FL:** Well it all seemed to fit in all right. I don’t know how we did. In the case of any gang that was on a job at the time, you got up in the morning with morning tea and all the material would have been here prior to that. We could organise that through the week. So you’d have all the gear here because you didn’t want blokes rolling up on a job and you haven’t got gear to work with because that’s time lost. It was all booked to you so what hours you had on here you’d like to know that they would do what they were here to do. So it’s up to the person who was building the house to have everything keyed up for the blokes to go straight ahead with what they were doing, because if you’ve got to muck around and prepare things, well you’ve only lost hours. So most blokes are pretty good organisers and you had materials on your job. In the case of us, our scaffolding would be there. If we were rendering the place, which is a first coat, we just get our scaffolding and set it up round the walls. We usually use forty-four gallon drums just to put the planks on. The floor joists they were in and there was no floors, only just the joists, set the drums in place and put your planks on. [break in recording]

**We were putting the scaffolding on the forty-four gallon drums.**

**FL:** Set the scaffold up and put the mortar trays on the planks and it had probably at least two to three men in a room and the labourer – the chap who was doing the labouring – would bring the mortar in, in a wheelbarrow, and then they’d just shovel it on to the trays and then we’d just go round and we’d put the screeds up, which is a line of mortar, about a foot wide at the top of the room and then about half way down we’d put another one, level them off with the straight edges, and then once they get levelled off and they’re plumbed up vertically, we’d fill that in with mortar and you’d use your straight edge, rub it across the wall to flatten it all off and then just fill up again the low spots and level it all off and then float it up with a wooden float. Then a bit of water on a brush and you just flicked on to the wall and float the dry spots off. Once that’s all done you just take the trays away, drop the scaffold down to the bottom and repeat the same thing at the bottom. And then you’d just go through that in each room. The same applied with the putty coat. The putty coat would be mixed up in a bucket with Victor Hard and lime to a nice consistency, not
too thick and not too thin, just so you could take it from the mortar board on to the hawk and take it off with a trowel. And you’d put that on to the thin slurry coat first right across half the top of the wall and you’d let that dry for a minute or two and then you’d go over and put a final coat on. Then you’d float that up with water with a brush again till you get almost a mirror finish. You do that right across the wall with brush and water and after a period you can see where your low spots are or any blemishes in the wall and you just touch them up. The same applies, you just drop the scaffold down and do the bottom. The white cement crew would basically do the same thing on the outside. The outside would be rendered first and then you’d mix very fine sand because any pebbles in the sand would scratch the finished coat. You’d sieve sand and white cement, a mixture of four to one, four of sand, one of white cement mixed up to a consistency and we’d trowel this on and the same procedure again. Then put the horizontal lines in or leave it plain, whichever they wanted – whatever finish coat they wanted, whatever design, whether it was just plain wall or whether it was lined out with vertical and horizontal lines, called random line.

What was the rate of a work team? How many weekends would it take you to do the inside of a house – plaster the inside of a house for example?

FL: Oh dear! That depends. It would really depend on the number of people we had turn up. Mostly they were pretty consistent with their time. Most of the people would turn up when they were told to. Most of them would work at least eight hours and some ten. I worked mostly ten hour days because you’re chasing time and that was the thing. No, I don’t know now.

If you were working two ten-hour days on the weekend and an eight hour day every day during the week and then running around at night chasing materials or curing bricks or whatever, that’s a fairly full week.

FL: I didn’t have any time to spare. You was tired when you got home to bed – you were tired.

What about you Connie? Did that mean you didn’t see much of Frank, or were you involved in chasing round for materials?

CL: No, Frank did all the organising for materials. Well I had a full time job as well so by the time he got home. You know, there was never really time to go anywhere or anything because you were working through the week. And if there was a holiday weekend, of course there was three days work up here.

What year was your daughter born?

CL: ’57.
What stage was this house at when she was born?

CL: Oh well it was finished.

So she was born when you’d moved in?

CL: Yes. We moved in ’55. When did you finish with the club?

FL: ’56.

CL: ’56, but then Frank and Jock Blakie did a lot of weekend work themselves, you know with plastering and that type of thing.....

This is after you’d finished?

CL: It was after he had finished.

A bit of a business?

CL: Yes. They did - - -.

FL: If anyone wanted a job done, we went and did it.

Putting your skills to good use then.

CL: Yes.

Did that provide a bit of extra income as well?

CL: Oh yes, yes.

FL: Well it did. When we moved into this house we didn’t have a lot of money and we walked on bare boards for the first twelve months before we go floor coverings, didn’t we?

CL: No, we had the carpet put down – we had the carpet put down – but we didn’t have the kitchen one put down because we wanted rubber.

FL: Yes.

Underneath the carpet?

CL: No, on the floor, on the kitchen floor.

Is that similar to lino?

CL: Well yes I suppose, but rubber squares were used a lot and it was very, very serviceable but it took a lot of upkeep. You know, when we actually pulled it up – and I can’t remember when we actually took it up - - - . But we waited twelve months to get this put down to be able to afford to pay for it, and it was beautifully done. You know, it followed the cupboards all around and that sort of thing.
CL: But it was a lot of work to keep it nice.

Polishing?
CL: Polishing.

Every week?
CL: Oh yes. As the polish would build up with doing it every week, eventually you had to get the polish off and that sort of thing. Anyhow I got tired of it and we got rid of it in the long run, but it wasn’t worn in any part. Absolutely it was just like new when we pulled it up.

Let’s just go through. So you moved in and then you had to paint and to furnish the house. Did you have much furniture to bring with you from Goodwood?
CL: No, we didn’t have a lot of furniture.

How did you decide what colours to paint the walls?
CL: Oh, but was that in the early stage?
FL: We had a colour consultant give a colour for each room but a lot of the colours were a bit bright.
CL: Oh I think that they wanted to get rid of a certain paint that weren’t selling. We decided to use the paint colours but we changed them later.

So you had disagreements with your colour consultants did you?
FL: We used the colours for each room to see the effect.
CL: We thought, “Oh Lord, whatever have we done?”
FL: A bit hard to live with.

Can you tell me what these colours were that you weren’t so keen on later?

Was the sun room we’re talking about?
CL: Yes. And this wall here where the windows were was the vividest sort of a pink colour and this was olive green.

That’s the wall opposite?
FL: Yes.
CL: But this one was all right but I remember that one, the window one.

The pink one you were mentioning?
CL: The pink one. Oh crikey! I wasn’t very well when Frank started to paint it and I remember when I came down and I thought to myself, “Oh crikey, I’m never going to live with that”. But we did - - -.

How long did you live with it for?
CL: Oh well we did for quite a few years I think, didn’t we, and that was a chap that came and give us the colours.

What about the colours in the other rooms?
CL: No, I think mostly we picked our own after that. We thought, “Oh, no more”.
FL: Then we went to wallpaper after that.
CL: We did use wallpaper for quite a long while.
FL: Many, many years.
CL: A number of years. I’ve always been a bit partial to wallpaper, but we’ve gone back to the plain, you know, wall now. We haven’t got wallpaper.

Was moving in an occasion? Do you remember it very well?
CL: Oh yes, it was - - - . It was a wonderful thing. I can remember thinking to myself, “Oh, even if we haven’t got any furniture, I can live with that”. But that didn’t last for very long. You soon thought, “Oh gee, now I need some furniture to put into the place”. We were still both working. You know we were really here only to sleep really, until our daughter was born and then I gave up work.

Did your feelings about the house change then, when you were here much more often?
CL: Oh well I’ve always been very happy in the house, and with the house. You know, it’s been wonderful to have your own home and to know that it was far more than a Trust home that you could have.
FL: Well there’s a lot of us in it, put it that way. It reflects yourself I think. You put a lot of yourself into it. In a case like what we did, there’s a lot of us in this house. I’ll be sorry one of these days. I’ll probably sell it. We’ve had fifty years in it so I suppose I quite like the place. In fact I love the place. Sometimes you’ve got to move on. That’s another story.

I can well understand when you say you put a lot of you into it. Did you feel that from the moment you moved in? Did you feel comfortable in the house or did it ...... ?
CL: Oh yes. No, we certainly felt comfortable enough with it, you know.
I'll try not to keep you too much longer.

FL: That’s all right.

I’ve just got a few questions about the garden. You obviously had to do quite a lot of excavation work before the foundations were laid.

That’s fine. Tell me about the garden. When you moved in was it just earth?

CL: Oh yes.

FL: Yes, I had to build the retainer walls. I built those. The first we did, we put a concrete path, right round the house, and that was like that for some time. Then I built the garage. That had wooden doors on to start with and over a period of time we replaced those, and the carport went on for the caravan. And then we built a shade house round the back. It covers the whole back yard actually. And the neighbouring trees, they just take everything out of the ground and nothing would grow. We did have trees here originally but they didn’t do any good after a period here because the trees got too big in the house next door.

I notice you’ve got roses out the front. Roses and a little bit of lawn.

CL: Yes. That’s like a sunken terrace garden really.

Was it always planned to have the roses out the front?

CL: Yes.

What did you have out the back originally? The garage looks like it was here fairly early on?

FL: It was.

CL: Yes.

What was there originally before the garage?

CL: Well there was a wall across in front of the carport, when the carport wasn’t there. There was a wall there when we had fruit trees and things down there. There was a brick wall and a barbecue. It sort of kept the back part of the yard from the yard here.

What did you have before the section with the fruit trees?

FL: Fruit trees were planted very early before we started to build.

So there was the house and then lawn and then that little wall, and then behind that you had the fruit trees?

FL: Yes, that’s right.
Where was the clothesline?
   CL: I think it was always there, wasn’t it?
   FL: Always there.

It would have been in the lawn originally?
   FL: Yes, that’s right.

What sort of fruit trees did you have?
   CL: Oh, crikey.
   FL: Apricot, ......, peach, almond, orange, lemon. I think there might have been a plum at one stage.

Quite an orchard.
   FL: Yes. As the time went on and the trees next door got bigger, we just had to get rid of them in the end. Then we decided to build a shade house. We started with the back of the garage and put a shade house up there. By the time we put everything into it, we still had a lot of stuff to put into it, so we decided we’d continue it on.
   CL: And then we decided to grow orchids, so we thought, “Well, the best thing is that the shade house comes right across the back”.

Do you know where you got your ideas for the garden from or did it seem obvious?
   CL: It just seemed to fall in place, you know, that’s what we thought - - -. We brought the shade house from the back of the garage and then thought, “Oh well, we’ll bring it right up to the front of the car port”.

What about originally, when you were planning a garden, when the house was just built in the fifties?
   CL: Yes, well of course we didn’t have the shade house then. That was the lawn and garden, just cement and garden.

How did you decide that that’s what you were going to have there?
   CL: In the early stages?
   Yes.
   CL: Well I guess we had a plan of what we wanted then Josephine was small so of course I didn’t want her to be able to have the whole run of the back, that depth of the yard, so that’s when the garden wall was put in – the wall was put in and the barbecue. Oh, and there was a little gate there that fenced that completely off, that
she couldn’t get down to the back part of the yard. But the front one certainly, that was always done the same and it has been the same always, hasn’t it?

FL: Yes, we haven’t altered that.

CL: It’s terraced. It was about the only thing you could do when we were on the lower side of the road.

FL: Yes, a bit limited in what you could do like this, a sloping block.

**So the sloping block has played a major part in it?**

CL: Oh yes.

**Did you ever have chooks?**

FL: Did at one time.

CL: We did have chooks at one stage. That was when our daughter was born.

**It sounds like there’s a story attached to it.**

CL: It was only when Josephine was born. We decided then that if she was going to have eggs, it had to be fresh eggs and that we knew that they were fresh eggs. But it didn’t work out that way.

CL: Frank had to go to the council to get permission to have the bloomin’ chooks, and I think there were a half a dozen or something. He had to build this chook house with a cement floor in it and put straw down and that for them. There was one rooster with these half a dozen. They were supposed to have been all hens but there was one rooster and eventually the rooster wouldn’t even let him in the yard to go in to get the eggs. And anyway when Josephine was old enough to have eggs, she was allergic to eggs, so she didn’t need the eggs anyway. So eventually the chooks went.

**The best laid plans.**

CL: Yes. But oh yes, this rooster. Oh he just wouldn’t let him in the yard at all, and I would never go in.

**Apart from the slope, were there any other particular features? Was the soil of a particular quality?**

CL: No, the soil wasn’t, and it’s very much clay.

FL: Black clay.

CL: We’ve had to bring in a lot of loam and that type of thing, to make the garden work.
Just back to social things for a minute. You obviously became quite close to the fellow – Jock was it? – that you did plastering with after the Club.

FL: Jock. Yes.

CL: Jock Blakie.

After you’d finished working with the club. Did you maintain any other friendships with people you’d met through the club?

FL: Oh yes, there were two or three.

CL: Oh one or two, but not a lot.

FL: Not a lot. A chap across the other side of the line, John Cox, he was one of them.

CL: Yes, he was one.

FL: We stayed friends with for many, many years, until he passed away some time ago. And Jock of course.

CL: He passed away.

FL: Les Long. He’s still alive. Haven’t seen him for a little while. He went up to the last meeting on North Terrace. So there’s quite a few of them that passed away. The ranks are getting a bit thin.

In the sixties and seventies, did you get together with those people every now and then?

FL: Oh yes.

What sort of events did you get together?

FL: Oh more or less social. Visit in one of those homes and that. That was most of it. Mainly just keeping in touch by visiting one another, not actually doing things with them so much, although with Cox’s we did go to Canberra with them many years ago when the children were small, with the caravans. He had a caravan and we had one. But mostly no, not really. After a while you do drift apart.

Connie, did you make friends with some of the women involved?

CL: Only four or five women.

Or was it as a couple, did you go and visit?

CL: As a couple. We did with Cox’s, we did, and Blakie’s. There were very few of their wives that I’d actually met.
Isn’t that interesting? So did the club organise barbecues or parties or any events?

FL: Never had time. We were all too busy.

CL: Didn’t they have a Christmas party or something?

FL: No.

FL: I can’t recall. If they did I’ve forgotten.

So if they did it wasn’t particularly memorable?

FL: No, I don’t really think so.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B: TAPE 3 SIDE A

We were just talking about social things with the Home Builders’ Club, and Frank you were just saying probably half a dozen people that you kept in touch with at the time.

FL: Yes.

Do you think working, building your house with the club, made a difference to your relationships with your own family? Did you have less time to see them than you would have otherwise, or anything like that?

FL: Well I don’t think it worked out too well. People get funny when you do something that’s a little bit out of the ordinary. I think with my own family they didn’t like the idea. They thought I was trying to do too much and it didn’t go down terribly well with them. I don’t think they really liked me doing it. It’s just one of those things that it didn’t work out my family-wise very well at all.

Do you know what was behind them?

FL: I suppose a bit of jealousy. It’s a bit hard to say. You’ve got probably a little bit different house to what they’ve got, plus the fact that I never got on terribly well with my family. Let’s just leave it at that I think.

That’s fine. It’s just an interesting thing. What about you Connie?

CL: No, my family didn’t mind at all. The only thing I think they were a bit afraid of is that we might get ourselves into something that, you know, was going to cost us a lot more than what we expected.

So they were a little bit concerned for you?

CL: For that, you know, but I guess they could see in the long run that everything was perfectly all right, as far as my family was concerned.
FL: Connie’s Dad couldn’t do much anyway, but if he had the heart he would have. Just couldn’t do it. He was T.P.I.

CL: My family were a lot older. My parents were a lot older than Frank’s parents at the time.

FL: So we never had any help from my side of the family at all.

Just summing up now, I’m just thinking about the house itself. Last time we talked a bit about how the bathroom’s been altered, but last time you mentioned something about changing the cornices as well.

FL: Oh yes.

What prompted that?

FL: Well, the wallpaper had been on for many years. The last time we put it on would probably been for twenty years ago, and it was getting to the stage it had to be replaced. The cornices were original and they were starting to get a bit dated and I was getting to the stage in life where I don’t really be having to doing these sort of jobs much longer because, you know, I’m getting to the stage where I’m starting to get past it. But I’ve always been pretty active and I’m still pretty active but I get a bit tired of having to do these sort of jobs now. Anyway we decided we’d go through the house again and take all the wallpaper off and use lighter colours, which gives the house a bit more modern. Makes it lighter and the paper tends to make it a bit darker. And in doing this we decided we’d replace the cornices and make the rooms more modern in appearance. So as we done each room – we started in the kitchen and we did that first – and took the small cornices off there, it’s only about three inches at the most, and put a six inch quarter round cornice up in there. Then as we’d gone through the other rooms I pulled the cornices down, removed the wallapers and repainted the walls and the windows and the doors and that, and done the whole lot as I’ve gone through to a colour scheme which is virtually what people use these days, lighter colours. It makes the rooms sort of lighter and airier. I’m pretty well finished now. I’ve only got a bit to do at the back and all the rooms have been done. So actually I won’t have to do them again for a long time. I guess.

How many times in that fifty years have you gone through? You make it sound like a very orderly process. Start with one room and move to the next.

FL: Yes.

Is that sort of cyclical maintenance something that you’ve done throughout the life of the house?

FL: Yes.
How often would you say?

FL: Oh, three or four times over the years.

CL: Of course you’ve only changed the cornice once.

FL: I’ve only changed the cornice once but I’ve changed the wallpaper.

CL: As it’s needed, yes.

FL: And I painted it a couple of times prior to that. The colour schemes have changed a number of times over the years – we’ve changed the wallpaper a number of times over the years. As you go on in life your tastes seem to change. What you start off with originally and you think, “This is really good”, when you get down the road about twenty or thirty years you find that, “I don’t like this so much now”. You know, you change it. It’s surprising how much your taste does change over a period of life. You know, what you were satisfied with originally, it’s a bit mundane when you get down the road a bit. You think, “Well that wasn’t so good”. And now we’ve got back to where we started from. We’ve got painted walls instead of having wallpaper.

But not vivid pink and olive green the same ......

CL: Oh no.

FL: And we’ve upgraded. You see we’ve updated the bathroom, we’ve updated the kitchen and the rest of the house has all been done through so virtually everything is pretty well up to scratch now.

Do you know what the total financial costs of building the house were? There was the seventeen-fifty from the bank.

FL: I would put it around about three thousand pound – around about. I didn’t keep a real tally on it, but I would have thought about that amount of money.

CL: To actually build it?

FL: To actually build the house. The block as I said was two hundred and fifty pound, and then we borrowed that seventeen hundred and fifty pound and we put our own money to finance the rest. So it’d have been around about the three thousand I would think.

CL: Oh well wait a minute. Seventeen hundred and fifty, you’ve got to double that for dollars.

Oh no, just in pounds.

CL: In pounds. To leave it in pounds?
Yes, just leave it as it was at the time, because if we try and put it in decimal and then add - - -.

FL: It might have gone a bit over three thousand, but I don’t know.

You said last time that you thought there was a total of four thousand man hours that you worked – four years and eight months.

FL: That’s right. Yes, the house cost me four thousand man hours to build, not counting my own time. That’s what I paid back to the club working for other people.

CL: And about three thousand in money.

FL: Four years and eight months from the time I started to the time I finished, and that included building our own home through that period.

Were there any other cooperative projects that you were involved in?

FL: No.

Back to people in the club, you mentioned last time that there were some people who didn’t make it in the club.

FL: Yes.

Can you just explain that to me?

FL: It’s a bit hard.

You don’t have to name names. I’m just interested.

FL: Well everybody’s different. When you ask someone to commit their life to the best part of five years to build a house, I don’t think you’d find too many starters today. Times were completely different. You can’t compare today to then. This is fifty years later.

What about then, that time fifty years ago, there were some people who joined the club and worked some hours and then - - -.

FL: And fell by the wayside?

Yes.

FL: And there was one or two that - - -. One case I did know, and I can’t remember the person’s name and it doesn’t matter, who reneged on his payment and - - -. I don’t know how the matter was solved and I don’t know whether it went to court or not, but they did strike a figure of so much an hour and he had to finish up paying that money to the club because he’d reneged on his hours, and there was very, very few people that did that. This is only one particular man. There was a few that tried to be smart and walk away from it, but they all came back to the fold in the end. I
don’t really know it because I wasn’t involved in that side of it, but anyone that was in the committee side would know about it.

**Those people who did fall by the wayside, do you know why they fell by the wayside?**

FL: Not really. Probably they couldn’t handle it, because it’s a big commitment to make, to tie yourselves up every day, seven days a week. Work for five days, two days hard manual work and then tie yourself up after work to get to chasing materials and organise things. Your life does tie up around the whole thing for five years and it’s not a lot of people that would do that. I think I’m not any smarter than anybody else or better, it’s a big commitment, and it’s not only a commitment on me, it’s a commitment on my family, because they’re involved just as much as I was. Particularly that they didn’t do the work, physical work, but they were tied up with it mentally and whatever they had to do as well to keep the home front – everything organised.

CL: Yes, but of course I think also in those days it was something that we had to do if we wanted to have a home. Today you wouldn’t have to do that.

FL: That’s the difference.

CL: And I mean now we wouldn’t have to do that because we could sub-contract or something or other. We wouldn’t have to do it the same way but in those days it was - - -. We could see that we could pay off the hours, the man hours, where we couldn’t pay the money, so it was a way of getting a home and I think everybody that joined the Home Builders’ joined it because of that. They only had to pay the working hours – they had to work those hours off.

**And just purchase the materials?**

CL: And purchase - - -. Well you had to purchase the materials yes, of course, but if you had to pay the man hours as well, well it meant that the home was just out of your reach.

FL: See this house was valued by the State Bank at the time we moved in at about five thousand pounds. Today we had a land agents come and have a look it to give us a rough idea what we’d possibly get for it and they said round about three hundred thousand. So I mean that’s over fifty years. By today’s standard that’s probably worth the same as it was then but the value’s so much more.

**But just to reflect on the five thousand pound figure, that’s five thousand pounds - - -. If you think you spent about three, so that’s still of two which has been made up for by your labour.**
FL: Yes. There was just very little outside work that contributed to the cost of it because most of the man hours were done by us. By my labour I paid it back. There was no money involved. It was all on an honour system. There was a lot of honour system about it.

**If you had to reflect on the club and your involvement and the club’s motto, which is “Not for myself alone – not for ourselves alone”, it seems to have been a positive experience for you?**

FL: Oh definitely yes. Yes, it’s something I never regretted. To this day I never regret it. I was pleased with it. It taught me a lot. I won’t say it wasn’t ever easy but we got there. That’s life, that’s my life.

CL: I guess we were fortunate to some extent too that we didn’t have children when we were doing it. You see if they were people that had families, like Stan Moore would have had a family – he had five children and one was a handicapped child - - -. So I mean I guess he would have had things harder, but there was only the two of us and we were both working so I mean we were occupied all the week, and then the weekend, although Frank was up here, I had the little home to look after and to get things ready for the following week to go, plus to see that the men had morning tea and that sort of thing. So as far as we were concerned, I guess we didn’t have it as hard as some perhaps had it that had families and still had the husband going out every weekend and if there was a long weekend, well he had three days that he would have been out. Most of them did it that way. I know Frank did. If there was a long weekend, well he had that extra ten hours that he put in.

**OK well we might leave it there. Thank you very much, both of you. Very enjoyable.**

FL: Thank you. I hope it’s of some use.

I’m sure it is, yes.

FL: As I say I’m not very good with words and I apologise for that.

I don’t think you need to apologise at all. Thank you both.