

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH - NORM CAMPBELL (1923 -)

INTERVIEWER: ANDREW ALLEN (Local Information Librarian)

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Andrew: Where were you born?

Norm: Born in Campbelltown, in a private hospital in Lithgow Street. Two houses up from Lindesay St. It was run by a Lady, I guess, as they were in those days, very primitive place. Dr Mawson and Dr West used to practice there. I think all the people around my age, born in Campbelltown were born there.

Andrew: That was before Milby Hospital then?

Norm: Yes, a long time before Milby Hospital. Milby Hospital, I don't think happened until 1950's. I may be wrong but I think about that period time. It was possibly after the war, I think it was built originally by the Bursill Family who had their store in the back of Dumaresq St.

Andrew: When were you born?

Norm: 1923

Andrew: Where did you live as a child?

Norm: I lived with my mother and grandparents in a house at the back of the shop, in Queen St. It was brick building, what has become Legacy House. It is one of the historical buildings in Queen St I am, not sure what it is known as now. My mother was adopted by George and Margaret Chinnocks. She lived with them for a number of years. My father and mother were divorced, when I was very young, therefore have very little recollections of my father. I think that it was the time leading up to the Depression, and times were pretty tough. Mrs Chinnocks, I called her Grandmother, had a heart condition and wasn't very well and she died around 1936. George died around 1938. I am not quite sure about those dates. My Mother inherited the shop then I finally inherited it after she died around 1949.

Andrew: So you would have known Alf Cooper?

Norm: Yes, Alf was part of the household. George and Margaret couldn't have children. They adopted my mother and also looked after a lot of State Ward children, most of whom were very

happy to live there. It was part of their life, I guess, to form some bond with the children to help them on their way. Most of the children ended up with perfectly good jobs, on the railway and various other places. George and Margaret seemed to enjoy looking after the children. You mentioned Alf Cooper, he was a bit of a character around Campbelltown. As a matter of fact I was only reading, a couple of days ago, a story in a St John's school magazine about Alf, and what happened back then. Grandfather Chinnocks was fond of horses. All through the house instead of family portraits we had portraits of race horses. He used to race them or lease them out and they would race mainly out at Menangle at the horse track prior to the war. Another interesting thing about Grandfather was that he had a contract with the State Railways to provide sand from Glenfield during the building of the Harbour Bridge and the Sydney City underground railway. They used to get the sand out of the Georges River at Glenfield and load it on horse and drey, then cart it to Glenfield where it was loaded onto rail trucks then sent wherever it had to go. At one stage I think he had about 10 or 12 dreys, and local men doing the work. One of the interesting things I did when I was very young was a taking a trip to Glenfield with Grandfather where he had to pay the railway or make arrangements with the railway to order trucks for the sand. He used to meet with the Station Master, Mr Wainwright, who looked after things. He then go across to Downes General Store, then I think pay for all the feed and stock for the animals. Also about that time, in the Macquarie Fields area there were a large number of wild horses. If local people wanted a horse they would go there, grab one and break it in and away we went. The time I am talking about there were very few cars, and everybody had a sulky and horse or a cart of some kind and that was their form of transport. Another interesting thing, to get to Glenfield you drove down Queen St to Location, which is now near the overhead bridge, go through a gate, shut the gate, go through a large vacant paddock to Leumeah Station, opened another gate and then travel down to Glenfield. The other way you could go was down Campbelltown Road to Leumeah Road down through the railway gates then join up where I have just explained.

Andrew: So Pembroke Road was still there?

Norm: Yes

Andrew: So it is a similar route as today, just slight differences.

Norm: Yes, I think the other way you could go was up through Waminda Avenue and Macquarie Avenue then down Leumeah Road. About that time there were railway gates both ends of Campbelltown, Camden Road and down what is now the overhead bridge, was called Morgan's Gates and at night around about 9 o'clock – 10 o'clock at night those gates were locked. To get out go

Campbelltown you had to get the gatekeeper to open the gates to let you through. It was fairly primitive, as I said, there weren't many cars, and not many people wanted to go to Camden or Sydney. It was one of the strange things about Campbelltown. In those days the main town was built on the Eastern side of the railway line and extended roughly from Waminda Ave to the railway line from Chamberlain Street to Fisher's Ghost Creek. The main area ended in Allman Street for the housing. It was fairly limited. I read somewhere the population was 5,200, I am not quite sure of the date, either way there were not very many people. During the Depression years people found work on the dole. The main employment was the Railways, there were engine drivers, guards, station staff. Campbelltown was a depot and it housed 6 to 8 steam locomotives, which were serviced at night. They formed the running between Campbelltown and Camden also Campbelltown and the City. It was a Railway town.

Andrew: So the Gatekeeper's house at the Morgans Gates was near the Gates?

Norm: Yes. The gatekeeper's house was down near Morgans Gates and the people by the name of Morgan used to man the gates at night and railway staff would man them during the day. There were also gates in Broughton Street manned by railway staff during the day and a lady gatekeeper came on at night. Camden had permanent gatekeepers they lived outside and boarded in Campbelltown and they used to man the gates 24 hours a day. A rather interesting story about the Camden road coach. One Saturday morning, all hell broke loose, when a man set himself up on the hill and opened fired on the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper had to take shelter behind an electric light pole This was great news for the papers, it was Saturday morning and Sunday was a big day for news. The place was riddled with reporters and staff. Fortunately, Mr Ashford suffered no injuries. Police eventually caught the fellow and he was dealt with. Campbelltown has a lot of funny stories.

Andrew: There were some accidents on the railway weren't there? The Scattergood girl and the level crossing Camden Road deaths for example. Do you remember any of those?

Norm: I don't remember those. One of the big things that happened was down at Glenlee. During the coal loading days. One morning the Melbourne Express was derailed by a coal train leaving the Glenlee siding. That was in the early days of television. I got involved in that in two ways. I was captain of the local fire brigade at the time and was called out. I soon lost interest my work wasn't required as a fireman I was able to utilize the news side of it with the TV cameraman, it was a funny story, I did two coverages, one for channel 2 and one for channel 7. Ch 2 said it was an excellent coverage, Ch7 said it was the worst thing they had ever seen.

Andrew: After you lived in Queen Street, did you live anywhere else?

Norm: I lived in Queen St until the 1960s when the state government decided to purchase the full historic houses and restore them which they did. I found that it was impossible for me to do it or any private individual because of the cost. The bank would not lend any money because they had never heard of the venture. I then sold the property to the State Planning Authority and I moved down to the property that I live at now in Cooks Crescent.

Andrew: So you lived at Queen Street until your forties.

Norm: Yes.

Andrew: Norm, can you tell us the Pram story. How old were you when it happened?

Norm: When I was very young, the neighbours, the Merediths, Cath, Frank and Charlie lived in the boarding house next door. And for some reason they used to put me in the pram and take me for walks. They were friendly with the Allen family up at St Elmo, and apparently I ended up St Elmo in the pram and outside I suppose the pram bolted down Broughton St and ended up near the Railway. I not sure how far I really went but it is quite an interesting story to tell.

Andrew: Did you still have contact with Cath after that incident?

Norm: Yes. Cath Meredith and my Aunty Hannah Chinnocks lived around in Oxley Street and they were mad movie goers. Cath and Hannah. They used to go to the Macquarie Cinema on Saturday nights and Wednesdays and their friendship continued for many many years. Cath had a fall in her home in Queen St and injured her leg and she was unable to continue to go to the movies. It was quite an event to go to the movies, everyone had their own particular seat and it was something to happen.

Andrew: Where did you go to primary school?

Norm: I had two schools. I went to St John's Church School for a little while, then because my friends were all going to the Campbelltown Public School in Lithgow St, I wanted to go and join my friends. The first experience was with Miss Denate, a real straight laced old time school teacher and she boarded in with Mrs Meredith who lived next door to me. Old school and strict also a very kind lady. As I progressed through to 6th class there I was under the guidance of Mr Hubbard. Mr Hubbard was and ex WW1 veteran, so a little bit eccentric in some ways. He had a vegetable garden in his back

yard. I don't know if it was punishment or not, but the senior boys had to spend time looking after his vegetable garden. On one occasion I had the misfortune of hitting his son, Billy Hubbard, over the head with a shovel. The ground at the time was very dry, there wasn't much rain about and there were large sods of dirt. I decided the best way to break the sods was to belt them with the shovel, but Billy got in the way and ended up flat out on the ground. The rest of my school days after leaving high school were spent at Parramatta Intermediate High School. Where I spent 3 years, where one of my friends was Greg Percival. The thing about going to high school was that you left home on the steam train at 7.30am got out of the train at Liverpool and joined an electric train that took you directly to Parramatta. At Granville they used to shunt the train around and then go over to Parramatta, the same thing in the afternoon. A pretty long day, I got home about 5.10pm of an afternoon.

Andrew: Did you do your homework on the train?

Norm: Wasn't much homework. This was the period leading up to the war. I think I ended my school days in 1939.

Andrew: What do you remember of the war years?

Norm: I was rejected for medical reasons for war service. I joined Western Suburbs Cinemas as an assistant projectionist at Concord then at Parramatta. I used to leave home at 11 o'clock in the morning and get home at 1am the next morning. Fairly long day, you put up with it, happy times. During the war I haven't great recollections of what happened in Campbelltown. I remember that Perce Marlow was chief warden and he lived in Cordeaux Street opposite St Peter's Church. Most of the younger people were called up and did service. Many of them unfortunately killed in action or wounded come back but the local people looked after those going away they had a farewell going away, they gave them a wallet containing money and gifts and they sent them parcels. When they returned they received a similar gift. The town was rationing, you had petrol rationing, food rationing and coupons, things your business side of it was fairly bleak which was only natural because war effort. Campbelltown was the centre of troops they started off with Camperdown the showground, which they had a large number of people there. I think the air force was at Camden and Menangle and then at Narellan they had quite a big camp there, not very far from Oran Park. During the time the only transport for those people was through Campbelltown and they had buses running from Campbelltown Station through the thing. The Ingleburn Camp was in its' infancy but it was built up and it became one of the main destination(?) points training areas for the troops as well as Holsworthy and camps around Liverpool. Of a night, on the trains, there were hundreds of people,

soldiers, going to and from leave, passing through Campbelltown. It was quite an activity. There is a story, often hard to confirm, that there was a fight outside what is a Coach house between the soldiers, permanent soldiers and the conscripts, and one of the men was killed there. Something that is not widely talked about or heard about it was sort of hushed up a bit I suppose, war time you know. The reason why there were so many soldiers at this particular point was that there was a brothel at the Coach house. That's the reason that there were so many there.

Andrew: Oh, ok I think I have heard that. So it is true is it?

Norm: Yes, the brothel part is true. I have not read anything about this happening, all I know that is was hearsay at the time. Also there was a funny story about a lady, called the lady in red, during war time and she used to travel the country lecturing. She used to ride a bike and pottered all around, and it's believed that she was some sort of a S? Another story I remember seeing this person and I remember that there were ads in the local paper about her lectures in the Town Hall. As far as her activities go, I haven't been able to point anything about that.

Andrew: But you do remember seeing her?

Norm: Yes, Campbelltown, as I said, has almost been in some ways a strange place. Things have happened out of the ordinary. Starting from the time, I suppose, of Fisher's Ghost and there are good things and there are bad things. Luckily there are more good things than bad things.

Andrew: So the first job that you got after school would have been the projectionist?

Norm: Yes. During my days at school I was friendly with Ed Nicholas whose father with Fred Eves ran the Macquarie Cinema and I used to deliver pamphlets around for coming attractions at the thing and I got interested in projection. Mr Nicholas was unable to get staff for assistant projectionist at the time because of the war and he employed me for a short time as assistant projectionist. Then the opportunity came that there was a job offered at the Concord Ritz Cinema where I went and spent 18 months or so down there travelling on the train to Burwood then by tram to Concord. Then because of the call up for the war, the job at the Astra Parramatta became available I spent all the time during the war at the Astra Parramatta as assistant projectionist. When the war was over, the management from Western Suburbs Cinemas became Hoytes and they moved me over to the Roxy where I spent another 12 - 18 months there. Then Mr Nicholas had a stroke and he couldn't do all the work Fred Eves asked me to come back to Campbelltown where I started off as projectionist at Campbelltown.

Andrew: Did you like working there?

Norm: Yes, it was fun because every couple of days you had a free movie. It was, you entertained the people and it was all good happening.

Andrew: Did you have any memorable moments there? Any funny things happen, any disasters?

Norm: One of the things, when I was at Parramatta, at the Astra, I had to look at *Gone With The Wind* 13 times. Down there we used to run the one program for a week and on Fridays we had three and a half sessions and two sessions daily, plenty of activity in the cinema. Another funny thing that happened, during school holidays they used to put on matinees for the children, anyway we got this old silent movie and started off the movie and half way through one of the reels everything went backwards, and we wondered why, on close inspection somebody had cut the film and put the end in where the start should have been they reversed this section of the film. Also another funny incident down there at Parramatta one morning a group of school kids broke into the theatre and the projection room and stole part of a documentary. Everybody came to work and of course there was part of the movie missing and I had to go to Merrylands to replace the film. The way they found out and got the kids was the fact that one of the kids came to the theatre and asked could they have a portion of the film. On close questioning it was decided that someone was handing out parts of the documentary to their school mates. They had to have two in the projection room in those days, it was a safety factor, the film was highly inflammable, and it often caught alight the fumes that got off the film burning was highly poisonous, I think it was phosphorene gas, and that's the reason that they had to have two people, mainly to be close handy to a projector while it was running.

Andrew: So the Macquarie had two sessions a week? Wednesdays and Saturdays was it?

Norm: Saturday and Monday was the same program and Wednesday was a change of program and as the town built up they increased the sessions. Prior to the Macquarie Cinema the movies were shown in the old Town Hall. My recollection was that Mr Fox showed silent movies at the session on a Saturday night.

Andrew: So I guess it would have been a sad day for you when the Macquarie was pulled down?

Norm: Yes, I suppose with Fred Eves ran the business after I left for a number of years. As television started up people drifted away from the cinemas and then I think the Macquarie Cinema they sold it to Jack Heffer who used it as an ice rink for a number of years. Television sort of ruined the movies.

Every town and suburb right throughout Australia had a cinema and some were pretty primitive and some were luxurious. Then television started off, the funny thing about it is that the movies are now killing television. The cycle has completely changed.

Andrew: At one stage you were a shop keeper Norm. Can you tell me where that was?

Norm: That was the building where I lived, we had the general store, I ran that for a number of years after my Mother passed away.

Andrew: How old were you when you joined the Fire Brigade?

Norm: That was 1949, 1950 I was there for 17 years, 1951 and became Captain in 1960 and remained Captain until 1968. The Fire Brigade, Harold Greaves, who had the general store next door to the fire station in Queen Street, he was captain from the start of the fire brigade, 1900 or whatever it was, until after the war, then Reg Hayes took over, Reg was the local cordial manufacturer, then he remained there until 1960, then I took over from 1960 – 1968 then Basil King took over. There was a disagreement amongst the men and Brian Farrell took over until the permanent staff arrived at the beginning of the present situation. At one stage with the permanent staff in Broughton St was the busiest fire station in Australia. They handled more fire calls than any station in NSW it was extremely busy. At one stage they were going from call to call it was amazing then they built stations out at Rosemeadow and St Andrews and that relieved them. For a long time they were the busiest station.

Andrew: Just because of the area that they had to cover?

Norm: They covered Campbelltown, Leumeah and down to Minto. That was the original fire district, at one stage in the early parts of the fire brigade the fire district ended just out here in Camden Rd on this side of Camden Rd was in the fire district, that side wasn't. When the disaster happened at Menangle when the Mutton family were perished in the fire there Campbelltown was unable to go to their assistance, Camden was unable to assist because it was outside their fire district. At the time, they didn't have an efficient bush fire brigade at Menangle, Menangle Park I should say, to handle the situation. It was quite a sensation, Bob Mutton and his wife and I think four children perished in that fire. It was a dreadful happening. Immediately after that, I believe, the Government stepped in and they altered it considerably.

Andrew: So the worst fires were the 56, 57 fires that you were involved in?

Norm: The worst fire, I think, in Campbelltown was in 1929. The fire started from Railway engine at Leumeah Railway Station and raced through Leumeah, into East Minto and Kentlyn and wiped out the whole of the farming district there. I remember, I was only a youngster then, the glow of East Minto and Kentlyn at night, it was enormous. In the early days you mentioned 1960s?

Andrew: 1956/57?

Norm: Yes, um there were bad times then. There was one fire that started in the Holsworthy area on the eastern side of the Georges River and travelled from there to Wedderburn and back again, and back again, crossing the river zig zag across the river. I am not sure of the date of that. I the privilege I suppose of receiving an award from the Royal Humane Society and the Fire Board for an effort by myself and Ted Baldwin, who was the sargent at Ingleburn, we went in and got some people out. The fire had caught up on people at East Minto on Saturday, that was a bad time. Fires have been a menace at Campbelltown in early days, not so bad at the moment, because of the fire protection. Local Council with their Rural Fire Service and the NSW Fire and Rescue we are covered pretty well. One of the things from harping on fires and fire stations after that incident I showed you in the news clip about the council not wanting the fire engine, that model fire engine remained in use from the 1929 to 1964. It was a little Dennis capable of pumping 250 gallons of water a minute. That particular model stayed there. Then when the new fire station opened in Broughton St next door to the Civic Centre they replaced it with a Bedford model fire engine that remained for only a matter of 12 or 18 months. It was replaced by another 4 tanks then a little while later that was replaced by a Bedford Jaguar which was really up to date, then the permanent staff came over and they replaced it later. For something to last from 1929 to 1964 is not bad.

Andrew: Not bad at all, it is a long time isn't it?

Norm: Talking about fires you have got the history of the Fire Brigade out there in your store room.

Andrew: Yes we have. What about house fires, are there any in particular that stand out? Apart from the one you have talked about.

Norm: The one I spoke about, the Mutton Family, that one was possibly the worst. When the permanent staff was appointed to Campbelltown the Housing Commission fires increased no end. There were fires at Minto and Airds, Claymore and fatal fires it was the fact that the construction of some of the Housing Commission homes did not have proper preventative construction. If a fire started it raced through the house and also went onto the next door place there were common walls,

common added parts of the building. For some reason they just happened and there were quite a few. One particular shift of the permanent staff, handled practically all the fatal fires that occurred over the period. It was an unusual event for the same staff to come across this happening.

Andrew: Can we get on to your newspaper days?

Norm: Yes

Andrew: What year did you join the newspaper?

Norm: I started off with the ABC, the local correspondent, the ABC decided that they would run what they called the Central Coast and Regional News which went to air at 6.30 they allowed 2minutes of local news to cover the whole area of the Sydney Metropolitan area and the Central Coast. They appointed various people around that area. Some were journalist and some were just ordinary people that had an interest in it. Within 3 days they had to increase the time, they had so much news they decided to increase the time to 5min. That was Monday to Friday and covered the area I speak of. It was something like our local newspaper with all little snippets about what the Council did, what Joe Blow did and what the school kids were doing, it was very well presented, people looked forward to listening to it. Although it was 6.30 in the morning it still had a big following. I used to go down to their Sydney office, I became quite friendly with several of the staff, and then television started, and they moved over to Gore Hill, one of the fellows I knew said, if you buy yourself a camera we will give you some work. So I bought a camera, a movie camera and I started do work for the ABC. One of the first jobs I had was out here a Maryfields, on Good Friday, for the Via Crucis. I covered that. Things I might say were pretty haphazard in the television news it was hit and miss job. They had various methods of processing the ABC had a contractor outside the studio and he processed a film then sent it back they used to screen the movie. Just like you would with home movies they would all sit around and pick what they would do. I was friendly with a chap from The Sun, who joined Ch7, he said what about doing some work for us. I said fair enough and did some work for them. I did more for work for channel7 than anyone else. Anyway that was processed, what we did you took the film of the event down to their epic studios where they a processing laboratory, which was ATLAB and they processed the film and then they would edit the film. The Journalist or producer would look at it and say yes I want a minute of that, or 30seconds of that. Then the Film editor would tear it out and hanging it up on a rack, again a bit haphazard. Roger McKenzie who was the ex-projectionist, we were all pretty friendly, and the people were all people that I knew from somewhere else. The production side of Ch7 wanted some takes for the Mavis Branson show I used to go down on Wednesdays and

around the back streets of Appin and we film sequences for the Mavis Branson show. On one occasion we went down to Martin Place and one of the actors, I think it was Ronnie Fraser was representing and playing a drum in the band during the Anzac march in Martin Place, what happened was, he walked down to the men's toilet. When it appeared on television it was as if it was part of it. They doctored it up and it became part of the Anzac day march. Although it was only one man walking down the stairs and into the men's toilet. That was really fun I enjoyed that. After 1959/60 Jim Merry approached me one day and said would I go down and meet the owner of the Torch newspaper at Bankstown, Phil English, who was looking for somebody to look after the Liverpool office for three weeks. So I went down and spoke to them, although I didn't have any experience about local papers and newspapers, they decided to give me a go, so I went down there for 3wks, the 3wks ended up as 18 months. Then the local paper, under Jim Vernon, the Campbelltown Ingleburn News, Camden News and the Picton Post and Macarthur Advertiser, they decided it was time to hire a photographer and they approached me and I left the Liverpool Champion and joined the Richardson Group. The rest is history. I stayed there until I retired in 1988.

Andrew: So almost 30 years you worked there? Or 25 to 30years?

Norm: I was 18 years at Campbelltown. '57 with the television. Rather fortunate that the cinema job finished and the television sort of took over.

Andrew: What were some of the more memorable stories that you covered during the Campbelltown Newspaper days? Did you do the Glenfield siege?

Norm: That was an interesting happening. I was with Ch7 in those days. One the local citizens, Tim Stuart who had Stuart Homes, was a friend and we used to swap ideas, (everybody in the town were quite friendly people), rang me about 10o'clock this morning. He said what is happening at Glenfield? I said I don't know, he said well you better get down there, there is a bit of activity happening. I rang Ch7 and said there was something happening at Glenfield and they said what are you waiting for. I ended up there for nearly a fortnight down there. Wally Mellish set himself up in the house. Two Liverpool detectives come along and wanted to get him out, the local detectives, one of them was Campbell, the same as me, not sure who the other one was, wanted to kick the door in. The next thing that happens, a superior officer arrives and then they said no. They wanted to solve it peacefully. Wally Mellish made some outrageous demands, so Police Commissioner Allen decided to take charge and gave Mellish an army rifle. Mellish said he wanted marry his girlfriend, I think it was Beryl Muddle and then he arranged for the wedding. Then Mellish wanted to join the army. The army

said no the whole thing developed over a week/ fortnight. Things went bad, one Saturday afternoon they were so bad that they were interviewing each other and sending the interviews to Melbourne. The whole thing was a real farce. They closed off Glenfield Rd to the Crossroads that was one of the most amazing things that happened.

Andrew: So you were one of the first at the scene?

Norm: No, the first newspaper at the scene was Campbelltown News.

Andrew: Oh, ok so you were with Ch7?

Norm: Yes, I was with Ch7. They scooped the pool, by having the story on a Tuesday, as their paper came out on a Tuesday and they had the full story before the Sydney papers or anybody else. The television of course didn't go to air until 6pm, so they scooped the pool, something to their credit.

Andrew: What about any memorable photographs that you took during your newspaper days some that you are particularly proud of?

Norm: A scene on television one Saturday morning I received a message we went to a Weir in which during the night some young people decided to hold a party at the weir. And they drown. 44 gallon drum The police divers were they searching churning up drum smashed into the diver and injured him they used the film to demonstrate what not to do. Over Camden, police were very co-operative, at the time there were floods, the Camden bridge was in danger and the road into Camden was closed. To get to Camden you had to go the long way around Macarthur Bridge and in through the back way there. We came back to Elderslie to watch the river I started to take pictures at that very moment the bridge began to breakaway it was destroyed. Rather dramatic. You had to be on the spot. The reason why we had this co-operation with the police, during the early days of my work career with the newspaper and television there was very little scientific work done by the police they had only one scientific detective and he worked from Penrith. The Newspaper and the Officer in Charge of the Police agreed to allow me to take scientific photographs. I did that for about 25 years. That is how the co-operation began. The strange thing about doing this, was that people criticized me for doing this work, but on several occasions taking pictures and doing this early work they were able to prove exactly what happened and what the event was. A couple of occasions, people that were obviously guilty because of the photographs were proved not guilty. A plane crash at Camden, the investigators there asked me to take pictures. They couldn't work out why the light plane had crashed. In the photograph it showed that twenty cent piece had lodged in the rudder and had stopped the controls

from working, that helped them out. The other one, do you remember when the plane crashed at Lake Burragorang?

Andrew: No I don't, but tell me about it.

Norm: Well, there was a light plane, it crashed into Lake Burragorang which is Warragamba Dam. The access to it was through Camden. You had to go down to the Burragorang Valley it was a Sunday night and it was pouring rain, I remember it quite well, the pilot and a Labrador dog got out of the plane a Father and son drowned. I went out there and took a photograph of the pilot, he was later charged with manslaughter, I spent days out there with this happening. Vic Drummer was found guilty of manslaughter. Another thing, there were a series of train fires. It was caused by LP gas in the guards van. With the television I used to cover from Penrith to Bowral and over in Sutherland

Andrew: So just getting on to Campbelltown Norm. We've touched a little bit on buildings from the past, are there any buildings that you used to go to that are not there anymore, for example, hotels, doctors, cafes.

Norm: Where the Mall is now it was Alfa House, it was 2 stories at the front and 3 stories at the back. It was a home for people to rent out. One of the people who lived there was Miss Whitaker, who ran a private school. She boarded upstairs and used a room as a classroom. Everyone used to go to the Lacks Hotel. It was a bit of a disaster when Clive Larsen left and it disappeared as Lacks Hotel. Another Hotel in Queen St near the news office was the First and Last Hotel, where grandfather used to drink there and take me in I would have a lemonade and raspberry drink. Dr. Mawson's home in Cordeaux St had his office there and Dr. Jones continued on. There was a café next door to the fire station Mrs Muholland ran that. Ces Muholland was an alderman on Campbelltown Council for many years. Tripp's Garage was another famous place on the corner of Dumaresq St & Queen St. Charlie Cooper had the first wireless in Campbelltown. Bunero's Saw Mill in Patrick St. One of the Bunero family was killed in a disastrous saw mill accident. The Campbelltown news used to be next door, where the News is now was the Commercial Bank. I spent more time in there, in my younger days, with the Walker family. Mr Walker was the Manager. Arch Walker former member of Nepean County Council Deputy Mayor. The cinema of course, the courthouse was a place in the early days that you went to vote. Max Penfold, son of Bob Penfold, top news Ch9 in America one of the judges, I knew one of them very well, an old time character, Judge Byrne. Just after the war Campbelltown had a terrible telephone service. If you wanted to ring Sydney, it would take anything up to 3 to 4 hours to ring Sydney. Anyway this particular morning something happened in Court. They wanted an urgent

message sent to Sydney to get someone out to handle something to do with one of the cases. The judge I am sorry Your Honor but it will take 3hrs to get the message through and the judge exploded. He threatened to bring the manager of the PMG in those days for contempt of court and he raised merry hell he let fly about the poor service and within a week we had extra telephone lines.

Andrew: Oh really?

Norm: Yeah. He was real character, one particular day I was sitting in court and the fire siren went off and I got up, he said before you go, approach the bench I want to say something. If any member of the jury wanted to attend I will excuse them, but there is a catch what you have got to do is report to Mr Campbell that you have attended now if you don't and he comes in tomorrow a tells me that you didn't attend then I will deal with you. With that all the jury got up and left and there were people coming up to me saying you'll tell the judge won't you? Max Penfold was a bit of a character. Max was a very kind hearted man. He was fairly well qualified, he was a CPS, he was also a fairly inquisitive sort of fellow, he wanted to know what was going on. Somebody that I knew had a problem and they went to talk to Max, he asked a few questions, after it was all over, the fellow came to me and said Gee that bloke asks a lot of questions and is pretty inquisitive and wants to know a lot. I said well he's got to know what is happening. So nothing else happened then a couple of days later, the fellow said to me I have a different opinion about Max. I said why? And he said He's fixed my problem. No more worries. Max has this business that he wanted to know exactly what was going on so he could deal with it. He knew everybody and everybody knew him. Even the top people in the legal profession knew him. There is a story about him being at the Sydney Cricket Ground during the test and one of the supreme court judges said oh there's Max over there, I must go and talk to him. That man went to talk to Max Penfold. Max didn't go and to talk to them, they wanted to talk to Max.

Andrew: So maybe that inquisitive sort of nature has rubbed off onto his son?

Norm: Bob was employed by the Campbelltown News and he arrived on his first day, and there was a bit of a bloody accident out at Appin so Hugh Vernon said take Bob out and start him off on the right foot. So we went out there and we really gave him a baptism of fire on his first day. The fire brigade from Campbelltown were out there, and they did a rescue. The officer in charge, Mr Robinson, told me later on in Bob's career said he impressed him from that very first day. Another thing Bob was working for one of the television stations 7 or 9 and there was a murder down at the motel. I have forgotten the details about the murder, but had they wrapped the body up in a sheet and took it out to Wedderburn this side of the gorge. The idea was to dump the body, it was Friday morning and the

council would cover it over, they dumped the body alright but something happened and council didn't cover it up. I went out and Bob Penfold went out and we met up and they said you cannot come on the land. So I there was a fence, I said to Bob we will fix that, I knew the people who owned the property, I said to Bob, come and we looked at all the action through the fence. The other thing I didn't mention was the Appin mine disaster.

Andrew: Oh yes, in 1979?

Norm: Yes, that was one of the biggest things that happened around here.

Andrew: So, you covered that story did you?

Norm: We had just installed two way radio, two of the photographers had two way radios, we used to relay the messages back to the office late in the afternoon during the disaster. That was absolutely amazing. I will never forget one of the fellows that I knew, was part of the rescue team, he had just come up and the look on his face, and knowing him well, that impression sort of lingers a bit.

Andrew: Just going back a bit, you mentioned Charles Tripp, do you remember the wireless broadcast from his shop or is that before your time.

Norm: Broadcasting started in 1923. I remember his house was up here and a garage down here. In the back yard was a big aerial he had to string up a wire between two poles. I didn't quite understand what you meant about his radio?

Andrew: He used to pick up radio signals, from Melbourne and Sydney, I think he used to broadcast from his shop and around the street and people used to come to his shop to listen.

Norm: There were very few radios in Campbelltown at the time. He had radio, and I think the other person who had radio, was Leo Gamble. He lived a couple of doors from where I lived. Then later on Tommy Munro had a radio during the Tests. I remember going down, he lived opposite the News building in Queen St, and they had a radio I remember going down and listening to the Tests when they used simulcast the

Andrew: McGill Gray was the commentator

Norm: Yes

Andrew: Are there any Campbelltown characters from the past that you remember fondly?

Norm: I spoke earlier of Perce Marlow, who was mayor, and he had a store he lived in Cordeaux St opposite the park. In his later life he used to sit on the verandah, if you didn't go in and spend half an hour talking to him, he was very disappointed. You used to have to go and visit him. One of the other characters were Walt Clissold the barber who was also an alderman he had his barber shop opposite Tripp's Garage was then he moved up next to Bursills' shop, then they moved over to Vatican House a new building, which was next door to the old School of Arts. If you wanted any information you used to call in and catch up on all the gossip. One of the regulars there was Charlie Nichol, who was the local undertaker, and Barkly Hayden who was the council gardener. Barkly Hayden was a former gardener for the nursery located in Badgally Rd. They used to swap ideas on everything that happened in Campbelltown. Barkly Hayden was quite a character, marvelous young man, you've heard about him no doubt?

Andrew: Yes I have.

Norm: Charlie Nichol was the local undertaker and builder. Charlie Nichol says that Fisher's body is buried in St Peter's Church close to Broughton St and Howe St where others have said there more down towards the bowling green side.

Andrew: There used to be a sign didn't there?

Norm: Yes, but that indicated no particular place. That has been a bone of contention, they only found his grave recently.

Andrew: You would have seen a few changes around the Fisher's Ghost Creek area? Do you remember when it was an actual creek?

Norm: Down where we are, there used to be a farm, Tom Frost used to run cattle there and the creek was definitely a creek. There is a sort of bone of contention where Fisher's Creek actually was. Some say it was up Dumaresq St and all around the place.

Andrew: Yes, it is a bone of contention. I have heard both stories. That the bridge or the fence was on the corner of Queen and Dumaresq, some say it is where Fisher's Creek is now.

Norm: You've heard about the night when everybody got into a bit of bother with the police about disrupting the township. About Fisher's Ghost?

Andrew: I don't think so, no.

Norm: I not sure of the date, TUE and a liquor company that sold spirits decided that they would run ads saying that Fisher's Ghost would appear in Campbelltown on Friday night. They ran that ad, and the people got all excited, on Friday night several hundred people turned up. They congregated around the old bridge. Police Sargent Whitely came down and accused Jim Vernon and I for stirring up the community and bringing a crowd. TUE continued this broadcast and they got a big crowd around 10o'clock two, three hundred people. Midnight came and nothing happened and the crowd started to drift away. Anyway there were half a dozen still there and looking down from the bridge there was white figure in the paddock. I raced home to get a torch after looking about, it turned out to be a cow. In the searching I stumbled over somebody, it was Dr Thomas, he'd concealed himself in the long the grass, waiting for the ghost to appear. The police really got upset about the disturbance. It just reminded me about, Sargent Whitely, it was the Minto train crash, there was a freight train carrying fruit meat, goods train crashed at Minto, just at the railway station, anyway the whole of the fruits, goods ran everywhere on the road western side of the railway line, there were grapes crushed on the line it was a terrible mess. The railway to get rid of it, what wasn't stolen as people rushed out and grabbed what they could, and were taking sides of beef to the local butcher to get it cut up, the railway decided to get rid of it they would auction it. They auctioned all the proceeds from the wreck of the train. That is in one of those films we produced, the Minto train crash.

Andrew: Is it?

Norm: That happening went on for days. The fact that the people took the meat to the local butcher to get the meat cut up, was something. The other thing there were quinces and people took quinces home and quinces didn't agree with them and.....[laughter].

Andrew: What do you do with yourself these days, what sort of interests occupy you today?

Norm: My computer, which gets a terrible lot of use.

Andrew: You have always been interested in computers haven't you, right from the start, when they first came out I believe?

Norm: Ah, not really. When computers first came out and the paper started using them, one day I decided to have a bit of a play with it, and I wiped quite a bit of work from it so I was banned from using it. I was banned from using computers while I was at work. After I retired, I got interested in researching for a couple of things, stories for the fire brigade and Ghrist Mills, wrote the commentary for the 4 or 5 videos we did.

Andrew: Are you pleased with the way Campbelltown is heading? How it has progressed?

Norm: Yes and No. Campbelltown was fairly active town until they put the Hume Hwy through Camden Valley Way. That was the turning point, Campbelltown went back. It was during the Depression, and as I explained earlier there was no work, and it sort of died. It was quite a big talking point at the time it ruined the town. This sort of thing is happening right at a depressing time in other places where they're putting through bypass roads. Campbelltown sort of didn't die, but it went into sort of retirement. Then a fellow named Neil McCloud came along and he offered some deal to ex-service men where he gave, for a small deposit, he gave the people the right to their land ? deeds. Campbelltown picked up, now it sort of gained momentum then all of a sudden they decided to electrify the railway, and that was the turning point. The town started to grow from there. Now we've got all these developments all over the place. They made mistakes with the Housing Commission, which they are trying to straighten out and it growing and it turned out to be very good. We are fortunate here to have a council that's reasonably well respected. I was speaking with a couple of neighbours just recently, and they said how in other areas the council is on the nose, whereas Campbelltown is not and the facilities are often good and I can see in the future we are going to be even better.

Andrew: Ok, Thanks.