



BUSSELTON ORAL HISTORY GROUP (INC)

Kenneth WILLIAMS

THE LIFE OF A SUNNY WEST TRUCK DRIVER

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Interviewer:	Margaret Dawson
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UPPER CASE indicates emphasis.

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BUSSELTON ORAL HISTORY GROUP (INC)
TRACKING NOTESFile name: Kenneth Williams
Disc One

Track No.	Summary: The Life of a Sunny West Truck Driver		Track Time
1	Title	Introduction	1.41
	Introduction read by interviewer Margaret Dawson to interview recorded in January 2018		
2	Title	Family Background	7.29
	Ken and twin brother Gordon born in Bunbury hospital in 1925. Father William Williams. Mother Emily Greaves. Father's background. Family went to Group Settlement farm at Ruabon. Names brothers and sisters. Attended Ruabon school, left aged 14 to work at Capel Butter factory. Ken married twice, first to Margaret Ellen Loder and then Margaret Vickery. He had three children, Ken who died aged 22 in a traffic accident, Raymond who died of cancer about two years ago, daughter Christine lives in Busselton.		
3	Title	Truck Driver for Sunny West	9.14
	c1949 Mr Fred Saxey employed Ken as a driver carting cream from local farms to Busselton Sunny West Butter factory. Long hours but Ken enjoyed the work. When he ceased collecting cream in cans, then drove milk tankers collecting whole milk from as far away as Augusta. Stan Cooper organized the truck drivers. Each driver collected from designated areas. Colin Fye was a very good manager and had a good rapport with his customers. Many farmers changed over to Sunny West from other firms and a very busy time for collection of milk. No assistance if drivers had truck breakdown, had to work out how to overcome the problems.		
4	Title	Cream Collecting	8.23
	Cans of cream, 5 and 10 gallons, were very heavy to lift onto the trucks. Mentions the state of some of the cow yards. Ken describes the processing of the cream once it reached the factory from placing cans onto rollers, grading and testing by tasting. Butter churning had ceased at Busselton factory when Ken started working there. Norm Thomas was the foreman at the factory.		
5	Title	Cream to whole milk cartage. Manager and workers at	5.36
	The cream was taken to the Boyanup factory first by cans and then tankers. Milk in tankers was also taken to Boyanup. Describes the layout of the Busselton factory - manager's office, worker's office, storage shed for pollard, bran and powdered milk and spare parts for customer's needs. Names some of the workers - Daphne Holgate (nee Hernaman), Carlo Sayers, Teddy Tooke, Teddy Wenham, Tommy McTaggart, Phil Cross, Edgar Kemp, Tom Brittain. There were three or four 1 000 gallon tanks upstairs where milk was pumped and made into powdered milk. Powdered milk bagged upstairs. Can washing machine downstairs.		
6	Title	Truck breakdown. Men locked in cool room	5.18
	Other managers were Ian Peake and Bill Cruise. Ken's truck had a breakdown at Burekup while transporting milk to Brunswick factory. Incident where Ken accidentally locked two men in the cool room. When Ken was working at Capel factory a man was locked in the freezer but survived.		

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Track No.	Summary: The Life of a Sunny West Truck Driver		Track Time
7	Title	Truck accidents	6.01
	Stan Cooper hit a train at Boyanup crossing and truck with cans of cream tipped over. Stan wasn't injured. Another accident near the river in Busselton when Jack Cooper hit a train and the truck tipped over. Waiting in trucks for the train shunting over three railway crossings in Busselton		
8	Title	Ice made at factory. Sunny West store Queen St	2.40
	Ice made at Busselton butter factory, mainly purchased by fishermen. Sunny West opened a hardware shop in Queen St and Merv Watson ran that at one time. Store later taken over by Wesfarmers when they purchased the Butter Factory. Aged 65. Ken retired - compulsory. Sunny West store in Queen St.		
9	Title	Boiler incident at Busselton factory	6.55
	Ken mentions an incident when the engineers were sent to make changes to boiler to recycle hot water. Bert Morgan was the boiler attendant at the time. Another incident Ken had with a man in the Bunbury garage who maintained the Sunny West trucks.		
	Total		53.17

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT**DISC ONE TRACK ONE**

The following interview with Kenneth Williams, known as Ken, was recorded in Busselton on 13 January 2018 by Margaret Dawson for the Busselton Oral History Group.

Ken's parents were farming on a Group Settlement block at Ruabon at the time he and his twin brother, Gordon, were born in Bunbury hospital in 1925. Ken was educated at the Ruabon school and on leaving at the age of 14 went to work in the Capel Butter Factory.

Ken began work as a truck driver for the Sunny West Butter Factory in Busselton until it closed. He then worked for the Busselton Shire Council until he retired aged 65. At first cream was collected in cans and then Ken changed to driving a milk tanker collecting whole milk from as far away as Augusta. The milk was delivered to the Busselton factory and then later to the larger factory at Boyanup.

Powdered milk and ice were also made at the Busselton Butter Factory. Ken describes the milk round, the layout of the Busselton factory, and names some of the managers, truck drivers and other people who worked in the factory in his time as a driver.

He mentions the changeover from Sunny West to Wesfarmers and the hardware shop that was once in Queen St Busselton.

Ken, at 93 years of age, still has a very clear recollection of his time as a cream and milk truck driver and is one of the only surviving drivers of that era.

DISC ONE TRACK TWO

MD Ken can you tell me your full name and the year you were born?

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- WILLIAMS My full name is Kenneth Williams. I was born in Bunbury with my other brother Gordon, we were twins. My mother had to go to Bunbury for the birth because there wasn't a doctor here who was qualified to handle the birth of twins. So she had to go to Bunbury to have the children there and then come back to Busselton or Ruabon.
- MD What year was that?
- WILLIAMS That was the year 1925.
- MD Was it a natural birth or a caesarean?
- WILLIAMS As far as I know it was natural, there was nothing said.
- MD What was your father's name and a little bit about his background?
- WILLIAMS William Williams was his name.
- MD What was his occupation?
- WILLIAMS At the time of my birth he was running a farm at Ruabon just after Group Settlement started [Group 32].
- MD He was on the Group Settlement?
- WILLIAMS Yes.
- MD Where had he come from before that?
- WILLIAMS He had been in Kalgoorlie. Before he married my mother up in Kalgoorlie he was working on mines. There may have been other avenues, I'm not sure of, as youngsters you don't always get a full answer from your parents. But, after, he got sick with his lungs. He had problems with his lungs, it was said, because the mine he was working in had a lot of sulphur and the sulphur got his lungs. I can't be sure what date he married my mother in Kalgoorlie, but they had children and they had to be transported out to that place called Karownee [Kanowna], that's out from the Goldfields; apparently it's non-existent now. He was growing vegetables for the overland train, however I couldn't really say how long that was for. Then when the Group Settlement scheme started in 1920 that's when he came down. I guess they came down by train. It was a very poor existence for all the farmers.
- MD On the Group Settlement?
- WILLIAMS On the Group Settlement, yes.

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- MD What was your mother's name and her maiden name?
- WILLIAMS Emily Greaves.
- MD You had brothers and sister.
- WILLIAMS Yes.
- MD Can you tell me their names?
- WILLIAMS Yes there was Olwyn, she was the eldest and she was married to a fruit farmer in Capel, Henry Turner. John was their eldest son and he (I'm not quite sure what his birthdate was), but his name was John Henry David Williams. My Dad came from Wales and so did his brother and his brother was apparently well up in the orchestras, and all that thing, so his name apparently was that, John Henry David so he named him after him, his first son. Then there was Milton, he was a couple of years later, I couldn't really remember what year he was born. Then there was Bill and then, of course, along came my brother Gordon and myself.
- MD And Gordon was your twin?
- WILLIAMS That's right. And then the last one was Gloria, my sister.
- MD Where did you attend school?
- WILLIAMS At Ruabon, at the state school there at Ruabon. It was a nice little school but there were a lot of them around, the same.
- MD What age did you leave school?
- WILLIAMS Fourteen, that was compulsory.
- MD So what did you do when you left school?
- WILLIAMS I worked hard on the farm. Oh, no, no. Before that I went straight to work from school to work in the Capel Butter Factory, at 14.
- MD What were you doing there?
- WILLIAMS All stages of it; handling the cans, anything that was wanted, packing butter, carting butter, all sorts of things, cleaning up. All those sorts of things. One of my main jobs was to make the butter cases, they had to be made with little nails. I don't think you've ever seen them, no. They all folded together and then you had to nail them together.
- MD What wood were they made from?
- WILLIAMS I think it was three ply like they used to use in the old tea chests.

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- MD When were you married? Do you remember the year you were married?
- WILLIAMS Well I should do [pause], it must have been about 1989 [1949] I would say, I couldn't be really sure on that [married Margaret Ellen Loder].
- MD You were married a second time weren't you?
- WILLIAMS That's right.
- MD What was your second wife's name?
- WILLIAMS Margaret, she was Margaret Vickery, at the time but she had lost her husband about three or four years before I found out even.
- MD Did you have children Ken?
- WILLIAMS No, not with Margaret.
- MD No, but with your first wife?
- WILLIAMS Oh yes, I had three.
MD What are their names?
- WILLIAMS Well I had two boys and sadly enough I've lost the two of them. The first one got to 21 and he was killed in a car accident.
- MD What was his name?
- WILLIAMS His name was Ken.
- MD And what was your other son's name?
- WILLIAMS He was Raymond. Now he died about two years ago from cancer.
- MD You have a daughter.
- WILLIAMS Yes, my daughter is still with me. She's still here, and she's been a very big help looking after her mother.
- MD What's her name?
- WILLIAMS Christine.

DISC ONE TRACK THREE

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- MD Ken when did you start working as a cream truck carrier for Sunny West and for how many years did you do work on that job? What age would you have been when you started?
- WILLIAMS Well I'm just trying to picture. About 1945, just after the war, I was doing local jobs, not very much because there weren't jobs. But then I had the opportunity of going to Bunbury, bus driving, which I did but the poor old chap who bought it, he was no good at all, it collapsed in about 12 months so then I went to work in the Picton super works. And then a man in Busselton, Mr Fred Saxey, who was carting cream for the dairies then, he was losing one of his drivers, so he came over and saw me if I would come over and drive for him, which I gladly accepted. So I came back and that must have been somewhere about 1949, something like that I would think.
- MD How many other truck drivers did they have working there at the time you were working there for the Sunny West?
- WILLIAMS At the time there was Mr Saxey and his son ...
- MD Which son was that?
- WILLIAMS Fred, he had a business of his own at the time but he was doing these runs for his father you see. There was Ray Carter. I think there was a Freddie [Siddons] ... no I can't get the rest of his name.
- MD Was all the cream collected from the farms or did you have to collect any from the railway station?
- WILLIAMS A few, not a lot, just a few.
- MD What were your hours of work; how long did you work in a day?
- WILLIAMS It wasn't possible to sort of calculate, you know, you could start at six o'clock but when you finished was when the work was done and that was general. We used to leave from Busselton with the tankers to go down to Margaret River and collect all the milk down there, right down to Augusta, so we had to start here at five o'clock.
- MD Was that later or was that early?
- WILLIAMS Well that was when we had to go with the tankers. Earlier we only started at six on the cream, but when we were picking up the milk right down to Augusta we had to start at six, probably get away from here by seven [five] ... no I think we'd just about make Margaret River by seven come to think of it.
- MD So an early start?

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- WILLIAMS An early start every time, yes.
- MD Did you work every day?
- WILLIAMS Not every day, we did have times off, except, you see if somebody got sick or ... anything could happen, you had to be called on and you never doubted any of them, you knew. And in my position ... now Stan Cooper he was in charge of organising everything because the manager left it to him to organise the men and the drivers and the times they started, and all this sort of thing, and he was very good at it. So if one chaps rings up and said, 'Look I can't come today' he would have to suss out another one who may not be working, which wasn't very often. And so of course when you thought you were going to have a day off, you didn't have a day off. That was quite common.
- MD Did you collect on weekends as well?
- WILLIAMS Anytime, yes, every day. Because I was more or less close with Stan for what we were having done and he'd ask me questions about things about what we should have done or shouldn't do, and so he would call on me first to see what we could fit in. So I was ending up doing a lot of jobs [chuckles]. It was alright it had to be done.
- MD You didn't get paid any more?
- WILLIAMS Oh yes, we got paid for the hours although sometimes you just forgot about it. Yes.
- MD Going back to when you were doing cream, before the tankers, how did that change over the years, was it always in the cans?
- WILLIAMS Always in the cans in cream, yes, that is as far as collecting from the farms. After I came back to the Butter Factory here to start work we got a very good manager in, Colin Fyfe. He was an excellent manager and he set the wheels going. And I shouldn't boast about it, but he was a manager who went around to see all of the clients and made friends with them, therefore some of the other companies [customers] I was collecting from, came over to Sunny West and it made a big burden and some of the areas, like Ambergate and Jindong, they just built up and up and up so it meant it took you longer to go on these trips. But it was really marvellous the amount of cream we did bring in in those years.
- MD Did you have a designated area that you covered?
- WILLIAMS Yes they were all designated areas and you see, because Stan relied on me for a few things he insisted that I learnt them all [the routes] you see, they had to be learnt so that you could do it. So

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no matter what happened, the ones who were just used to going picking up the milk in cans and going down to Margaret River well that was the same thing. When you had to go out to all the different farms and how you had to go to get there and all that, it was different.

MD The conditions on some of the farms would have been ...?

WILLIAMS Oh yes shocking, shocking, yes.

MD And your trucks wouldn't have been four-wheel drive in those days, would they?

WILLIAMS Oh yes, but they weren't of a good standard and you had no assistance. It didn't matter if it was day or night when you got out on the road you were on your own, you had no means of communication, nothing at all.

MD No mobile phones then.

WILLIAMS No phones whatsoever and if anything went wrong well you had to devise your own method how you would overcome it or try and get to somewhere where you could phone up which happened quite often.

MD When you say you had a designated area and I know you used to collect ours [cream] at Vasse, did your area change over the years or did you mostly stay in the same area picking up?

WILLIAMS Well that area would be the same but, you see, you'd do three days in one area. You see my designated area was called Ambergate and Jindong, so I'd do Ambergate for three days Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday but the other on ...

MD The other days?

WILLIAMS Yes, and so that was all put out straight. But then some of the other runs I had to do, and learn, were right out of the areas altogether and probably in some of these places it benefited me because I lived out in the Tutunup area, near Ruabon, so I knew all of the places out there, so I could pick all of those up without much trouble.

DISC ONE TRACK FOUR

MD Cream cans were labelled, were they?

WILLIAMS That's right.

MD What did they have on them?

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- WILLIAMS They had the names (that's the Christian names as well as the surnames) printed on them with little brass [labels] and they were soldered onto the cans and that was quite good. Yes. They were on both the five gallon cans and the ten gallons.
- MD These cans, when they were full, must have been very heavy so did you end up with any back problems from lifting these cans?
- WILLIAMS No I didn't. I did not. I haven't, and I still haven't, had any back problems and it's wonderful.
- MD Did the farmers offer at all to help you?
- WILLIAMS Yes. As a matter of fact there was one farmer I used to go to he'd be milking but he'd come down to give me a hand, but he mightn't notice that I'd come and so I'd pick up a ten gallon can and go with that and he used to go crook at me, oh yes.
- MD The cans would they always be full or would they sometimes be half full?
- WILLIAMS Oh, mostly they would be full but a ten gallon weighed 130 lbs [59kg].
- MD And it would be a dead weight.
- WILLIAMS Oh a dead weight and to lift off the ground and up to a truck body that high [indicates].
- MD Were most of the farmers pleasant and cooperative?
- WILLIAMS Oh yes, all quite good.
- MD You didn't get any that caused you problems?
- WILLIAMS No, no. I think if you're good to people, be that way, that's how you'll go.
- MD Some dairies must have been a lot better than other dairies that you saw [laughs].
- WILLIAMS Mainly the effort you have to make to get from your truck through a cow yard which is about 18 inches [46 cms] full of mud or water mud, it's very excruciating, really. But the farmer would give you a certain amount of help but he had his milking to do and things like that. The only obstruction I had one morning was he'd left all the cans in the shed and had to be carted across this mucky paddock, lift it over the fence to the truck [chuckles]. I saw a ten gallon there and I said, 'No, I'm not going to go through there with a 10 gallon.' So I tipped half of it into one of the five gallons I'd

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brought back, I thought that would be better. But then, during the day the phone rang and the boss said, 'He wants to speak to you.' He said, 'You left me one can short.' I said, 'No I didn't.' So I had to haggle with him for a little while. I said, 'You didn't expect me, surely, to carry that ten gallon full of cream across your muddy road and over that fence.' 'Oh, oh, oh', he said, 'Oh, I see.' [Laughter] That's what you had, things like that, you see.

MD Now, once you got this cream, your truck loaded up, and you got to the factory what was the process, what happened then?

WILLIAMS Well there were rollers up on the ... see when we pulled into the ramp, like here [indicates], pulled down along the ramp it was a bit of a death trap, really, 'cause the ramp was only that wide [indicates], it was a big long sort of post and it was milled. And you had to just stand there, but a lot of cream got spilt on it, you see, and it was very dangerous, made it very slippery and you had to be very careful while you were unloading.

MD Where was that situated as the Butter Factory is today, at the front or at the side?

WILLIAMS On the west side, it would be on this side here [indicates]. You lifted your cans out up onto the rollers; there were rollers around there ...

MD So not on the same height, you had to lift them up did you?

WILLIAMS You had to lift them up, yes. They went around and went past the grader and tester and then along to the chap who weighed them and then to the one who tipped the cream into the vat and sent the empty one on down to the can washer.

MD How were they graded, did they take a sample?

WILLIAMS By taste; all by taste.

MD Do you know who some of those people were that were doing that?

WILLIAMS Yes I did know. I was talking to one of the chaps quite a long time ago, I don't know if he is still alive but the other chap ...

MD It wasn't Mr Thomas was it?

WILLIAMS No, but he could, he was the foreman, he could do it which he did sometimes if they were unavailable.

MD Did you ever have an occasion where you spilt a can of cream?

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- WILLIAMS No, I didn't have an occasion.
- MD What happened if someone did? The farmer would lose that cream?
- WILLIAMS No, the farmer never lost anything, you see, because Colin Fyfe he was a real genuine man and when the milk came in in the cans they always picked a can they knew was good and he would put that through, weighed and graded, and put that aside for us and we would pay a shilling or something for it to take home a billy can of milk. Yes.
- MD So they allowed you to have ...did you ever get free milk or you had to pay for it did you?
- WILLIAMS Oh you had to pay for it but of course if you wanted to be dishonest you could always get it, you were running around with a tanker full, you could do almost anything.
- MD That's when you got to having whole milk was it?
- WILLIAMS Yes.
- MD So it was weighed, tested and then tipped in and that's when the churning started was it?
- WILLIAMS Now the churning, it was finished by the time I'd started there. They had been churning butter there for years and I'm not really sure what the problem was, but seems like the machine they had was a bit obsolete and they found it better (now that they had a better service) to transport the cream by truck through to Boyanup where they had big facilities than to go and put in another churn.
- MD Did you drive to Boyanup?
- WILLIAMS All the time, yes.
- MD So they weren't actually making the butter there when you were there?
- WILLIAMS No, didn't make the butter there.
- MD You can describe to me the layout of the Butter Factory as you can first remember it?
- WILLIAMS You mean on the inside?
- MD Yes. Is the front door still in the same place?
- WILLIAMS Yes, that's been re-modified which is far better. Out on the first lay from the factory, facing east, is where we used to stack all the

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cans. You see there would be about four or five whole lots of cans along there, they all had to be separate so when you'd come to pick them up in the morning they were all correct for you. Our trucks used to back right up to that ramp to be loaded up from the back and that seemed to be quite reasonable. But it wasn't very reasonable to the people who lived just across the road because the cans did make quite a noise!

DISC ONE TRACK FIVE

- MD Ken can you remember the names of any of the people who worked in the Butter Factory?
- WILLIAMS There was Mr Sayers. There was Teddy Tooke, Teddy Wenham, Tommy McTaggart. There was Phil Cross, ooh, and there was Edgar Kemp, he used to work there at one stage and ... [pause]
- MD I think you mentioned Tom Brittain too.
- WILLIAMS Yes Tommy Brittain, he was there. There were a few more but I can't just draw them out at the moment.
- MD That's alright maybe later and we can add them in. Now we'll go back to the building. What other rooms or other areas were there, not necessarily rooms what other areas were there in there?
- WILLIAMS Well you see down below where the cream came in to be tipped into this 300-gallon vat (then the can went down to the cleaner), well upstairs there were about three or four big vats, I don't know what they held, about a thousand gallons, I think, each. The cream was pumped up there but then the milk had more or less the same process, it was pumped from that vat up to its own vat upstairs and the milk was siphoned, it wasn't siphoned, it was pumped into the vat and then the big tap on the vat went down to where the milk was coming onto the rollers to become powdered milk.
- MD Because they were making powdered milk there?
- WILLIAMS Oh yes, yes. Quite a lot.
- MD Full cream powdered milk was it?
- WILLIAMS You could have full cream (it was beautiful, I tried it), you could have skim milk, whole milk or butter milk, anything like that they wanted for feeding calves. Oh yes, it was used wholly and it was very good.
- MD They must have had an area where they washed the cans and things like that, did they?

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- WILLIAMS As I say it went down from this bin where it was tipped, down to there and the can washer was right alongside the big ramp that went right along and so the can washer would just keep on pushing them along and somebody would take them and stack them in their proper order.
- MD All washed by hand?
- WILLIAMS No, by the machine; it was all boiling. You had to have gloves on your hands to handle it. It was a fairly big job.
- MD Were there a lot of machines with belts and things? Was there danger at all, did you have to be careful?
- WILLIAMS No, not at that time because, you see, when they chopped out the butter [making] well that was what was fed, the butter churn was fed from the big steam engine out the back. So that was cancelled and they put in just little electric motors so all that part was overcome. There were a few belts, maybe, just to have something to run.
- MD Was there anything else, any other areas that I haven't [mentioned]?
- WILLIAMS Well upstairs they ... You see when the milk was done down below, it was in a big long bin and there was a crusher going around made sure it was all crushed up fine, dusty. Then that went down into where there was a little pump.
- MD Is this the powdered milk?
- WILLIAMS Powdered, yes, and that was pumped upstairs and they had a room, a fairly big room done in with some netting. I don't know whether it was fly netting or something or another, and inside is where this came up to and it had to be bagged. It was all bagged then, you see, and then put aside as it was bagged so there was work down below as well as work above.
- MD Once it was put in these bags was it all stored there or was some taken other places?
- WILLIAMS No, if it needed to be stored it would be taken by truck, you see. So sometimes you might have to take a truck load through to Boyanup but, of course, that finished a while afterwards when the whole show went through to Boyanup. They had a great big room there and all the milk used to be put in there. It would be pumped in and, as it was pumped in, this room was that hot as soon as it sprayed in it just went into powder. It's still there as far as I know.

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DISC ONE TRACK SIX

- MD Did you have any other managers there apart from Colin Fyfe in your time?
- WILLIAMS Oh yes.
- MD Who else would some of those managers have been?
- WILLIAMS Well there was one called Ian Peake but he was only a temporary chap. [Pause] There was one other chap, I think when one of the other factories closed down this other chap came, I couldn't really recall his name. He was quite alright. Then the one before that was Bill Cruse so he was manager there for a while, but there were none to compare with Colin Fyfe. He got everything moving
- MD He was there for quite a while was he?
- WILLIAMS He was yes, until it closed down
- MD Can you remember any accidents, either on your round or in the factory?
- WILLIAMS No accidents, as such. I know I lost two wheels off trucks at different times [laughs].
- MD That was like a breakdown wasn't it? Did you have many breakdowns?
- WILLIAMS No. Well, no, we were very fortunate, only once when I was at Burekup taking a tanker of milk up and blew two back tyres. It was a Sunday, nothing to phone with, had to walk two miles to get to a phone and ask them to phone up. Had a big trouble getting somebody and, after about two hours, they landed down with two spare tyres or they'd be wheels, we had to change them. It was really poorly regulated, very poorly regulated.
- MD Were the vehicles ... well they weren't your vehicles, they were Saxey's vehicles, the contractor were they?
- WILLIAMS No the first one was Mr Saxey's.
- MD So the later ones were owned by Sunny West, was it?
- WILLIAMS Yes. Had they taken Mr Saxey's vehicles, like he wanted them to, they would have had good vehicles but theirs weren't. Even the couple of news ones they bought were a dead loss.
- MD Not well maintained?

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- WILLIAMS Yes maintained, that was the trouble they were in there getting maintained all the time, it was too costly.
- MD Did you have any funny incidents that you can remember?
- WILLIAMS Oh I can.
- MD Well let me hear it [laughs].
- WILLIAMS I don't know whether I told you the other day, I was telling you we had a can of milk put aside for us and that was put in the cool room, just inside the cool room door. A billy of milk was put out, if you left your billy there, they'd put it out and all you had to do was go in and open the door and get you billy of milk and close the door. Well, this day, I went in there and I could hear two people talking in the cheese and butter room and I picked who it was and I thought now the law is, 'When you come out just close the door, don't pull the handle down.' But somehow or another I forgot, and pulled the bolt down. Well what done, I'd well I say accidently done, was to lock the foreman and the sergeant of police in the butter room. Well, I just grabbed my billy of milk, shut the door and went home [chuckles]. Through a lot of yelling and screaming apparently someone heard them and go them out. But poor old Phil Cross, he was on rolling the powder, and they blamed him for it you see [chuckles]. But there was nothing more said about it. I don't suppose it would look very good in the paper.
- MD Who was the foreman then?
- WILLIAMS Norm Thomas.
- MD And who was the sergeant of police?
- WILLIAMS I think his name was Smith, because I think he had a daughter there with him.
- MD Well it wasn't a freezer so you were lucky.
- WILLIAMS That's right [laughter]. When I was in Capel one chap was locked in the freezer; it was close. He'd been in the second room counting all the cases of butter that were stored in there and the first door, of course, he could get out, but whoever went out last locked the outside one. And there was no inside way to unlock it and we didn't know he was missing until we had to do the next lot of packing of the butter. We couldn't find him.
- MD How long after would that have been?

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WILLIAMS Well I suppose it would have been getting on to two hours. Anyhow there was a big problem about that. But he was alright but that was shocking.

DISC ONE TRACK SEVEN

MD Ken you said you had a story about a truck accident, one of the tankers, could you tell me about that?

WILLIAMS It wasn't actually the tanker, it was a truck. The truck was loaded with bottom and tops loads with cans of cream, what had happened was that Mr Cooper, Stanley, he took off in this truck from Busselton to go to Boyanup to unload and all went well until he got almost to the Boyanup turn off in Boyanup. And, out in front of him, from the bush, came a railway engine. There was no way of seeing that until it came out because there were trees either side right up to the road. He tried desperately to brake enough to stop but it wasn't sufficient, so he turned off the road to try and divert it but off the road was a downward trend and of course the truck went down and turned over and he was in it. He was very frightened, really, about what could happen with all the load on up top.

However, he was able to get out but when he went down off the bank the train did make an effort to stop, which they did, and he made every effort to stop but the front of his truck caught a part of the railway truck and apparently a little part got broken or something to that affect. But with poor Stan with his truck being upside down, and having the battery for the truck in a very precarious position for what he was in, the acid from the battery ran down on to his head. I was only about a mile behind Stan so I was with him very shortly and so I rushed over and saw what was on and seeing a water trough not far away, I grabbed Stan and I said, 'Right, let's run over there.' I go him to kneel down and put I the water from the trough onto his head and washed it all off well. And that was very successful, he had no trouble.

Of course with the cream a lot of the cans had lids that were tied on and some weren't and they suffered most but I made an effort to get in and gather as many cans as I could and stand them upright and bring them out and stack them and there was quite a good amount. But I was really covered in cream; oh, it was terrible [chuckles]. But I got this good lot out and the company was very thankful for it; they did send me a letter of thanks. It showed that we did not have good vehicles, which we should have had for that job, because as Stan said that the brake would work to him putting his foot down so far, but he could press as hard as he liked and he got no more, so he couldn't do anything about it. Stan might be able to enlarge you on that later. One of our trucks here got caught at the railway line there, the train had come through, you know at the crossing by the river?

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- MD Is this in Busselton?
- WILLIAMS Yes, in Busselton, and they were shunting but they went past the roadway and the guards gave an indication that, 'Yes it was right to come over.' But when he started up and went to come over the train started to shunt back and, of course, he hit the truck and tipped that over.
- MD Who was driving that truck?
- WILLIAMS I think that was Mr Cooper, Jack Cooper, or John Cooper), yes, he was driving that.
This morning Stan Cooper and myself, in separate trucks, came to go out on our rounds, we came down by the river but the train was there so we waited and waited and it had been shunting [chuckles]. After a while we said, 'Oh, blow this we'll go down to the other crossing.' Well by the time we got down to the other crossing the train had shunted up enough to stop us from that one. So we waited and waited and not really realising that they were shunting timber out to the jetty. So we said, 'We'll go down to the one by the jetty and lo and behold when we got there that was stopped too. It was a very annoying morning and, you know, you lose time and you can't make it up.

DISC ONE TRACK EIGHT

- MD They also made ice at the factory didn't they, at one stage?
- WILLIAMS Yes, we did.
- MD Anyone could just come and buy it?
- WILLIAMS Yes, it was mainly for fishermen in those days, they needed all the ice they could get. It would be nothing for us to go to Bunbury and get seven ton of ice because we'd sold out here.
- MD Were you still driving the trucks when the factory closed, or was that afterwards?
- WILLIAMS Yes, yes.
- MD So what did you do then or were you ready to retire?
- WILLIAMS See Sunny West opened the shop down town, you remember.
- MD Whereabouts was that?
- WILLIAMS Well it was down the main street, just a bit further past the Westpac bank.
- MD On the same side as Westpac?

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- WILLIAMS Yes on the same side, fairly big place it was.
MD What happened to the factory once they stopped making ...?
- WILLIAMS Well it was bought over by Wesfarmers, that's what happened there. I can't quite make out why it was taken over, I thought Wesfarmers were doing quite well as they were. Yes, then they bought the shop as well. The shop was doing very well. Merv Weston was running it and he did very well but as soon as Wesfarmers took over he said, 'I'm out.' They said, 'You can't work for Wesfarmers'.
- MD What were they selling in the shop? Butter, cream?
- WILLIAMS No we were only selling hardware, all different sorts and it was very good for people. Yes, it was very good.
- MD The factory itself, is that when it eventually went back to the Shire afterwards?
- WILLIAMS The factory? No it never went to the Shire.
- MD The museum.
- WILLIAMS Oh yes. Well Wesfarmers handed it over to them.
- MD The skim milk and that ... we'll go a little bit. When they made it into powdered milk, so farmers would often buy that back (the powdered stuff like Denkavit or whatever) as calf feed would they?
- WILLIAMS Yes they would, a lot of it was made for bread making, they still do as far as I know. It was very good in bread.

DISC ONE TRACK NINE

- WILLIAMS You know you learn, you learn very quickly by listening and watching and understanding and because the boiler had to run at the Butter Factory as well as the powered factory ... you see in that powdered milk the big drums this round and eight foot wide, there were four of them, and they had to keep boiling water running through them so when the milk hit the outside of them there, it could get skimmed off just like paper, and they took a lot of water. So they decided that they would return this water instead of letting it run down the drain, return that hot water back to the boiler instead of the cold water. That was quite a good idea, but we had an engineer as a boiler attendant then, I should've mentioned his name, poor old Bert Morgan, he knew and if you wanted to know anything just ask him, he'd let you know. And so the chaps came over from Bunbury to organise

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putting this water back into the boiler. He [Bert] said, 'What are you going to do?' (Barney he called him). 'Oh, suck the boiler from over there,' he said. Because as the water came out well they'd run it into a little tank and it'd be sucked in. And Bert said, 'Well that won't work you know Barney.' Barney said, 'Well look don't you worry Bert, we know what we are doing.' He said, 'You go look after your boiler.' 'Righto, righto,' he said. And he did and he watched them day after day as they were there organising all the stuff. And he would say, 'Silly fools, silly fool.' They didn't know but they kept on.

The time came when they had everything ready and all fixed up and they had the big pump going (big piston pump it was then). No, they couldn't get any water in that boiler so they changed this, changed that, everything else. So they came back to poor old Bert and they said, 'Bert, we've got to admit we're beat, why can't we get the water back into that boiler?' Bert, the old Englishman, he said, 'No I won't bloody well tell you.' I was there standing with him. But he said, 'If you do what I tell you now you'll get water back in the boiler.' He said, 'You've made a mess of it but you can correct it.' He [Barney] said, 'Well what do I have to do?' He said, 'Well first you've got to go back in front of the boiler and put a hole down there, four feet and brick it up and put that pump down there.' 'Oh, he said, 'We can't go to that trouble.' 'Alright,' he said, 'I'll go and look after me boiler.' And off he went. He said, 'Oh, come back Bert, come back.' So he came back and that's what they did and of course straight away they got the water in the boiler. He told me what the trick is, you cannot suck hot water through a pipe, you can let it run to it, okay but to suck it with a pump, no. What it does, it just expands and that's all the water does. He knew it, and he told them, but they knew better and they wouldn't listen. That got to me, no matter whether I know a thing I'll still listen because some little thing I'll learn, and it's great, oh yes.

But we did have a chap over in our garage at Bunbury, he was like that, he was a good chap, good enough chap but he was bad tempered. But you couldn't tell him anything and just before I left over there, and for years, really, I'd had a problem. They have in the pumps what they call a little rubber impeller and its thing is to throw the water out, but they had to keep on replacing them because lumps chopped out of them.

I knew what it was but because he would blow your head off if you tried to tell him anything, you just shut up. He reckoned it was all rubbish coming out of the farmer's van bits you know. So this day, it wasn't long before we folded up, the dairy folded up, I said to him, 'Ernie, have you got a minute?' He came over to me and I said, 'Can you tell me what that unit is at the back of the pump?' 'No,' he said, 'I wouldn't have a clue.' 'Well,' I said, 'I can tell you what it is, that's called a free wheel clutch. 'But,' I said, 'It's not working and that's causing all the trouble with your impeller [clutch].' Well he was telling them all that is was all the

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rubbish that was coming from the farmers. He said, 'What rot [loudly and bangs the table].' I said, 'It's nothing coming from the farmers Ernie, it's that impeller [clutch] that's doing it.'

And I tried to tell him, but he went to the other chaps there, 'Oh, the rot he is telling me.' I said, 'Listen Ernie, it's not costing me anything, just forget I said anything, just forget, keep on putting those impellers in, I'm not paying for them.' They said, 'You'd better take some tools down and see what he is talking about.' So they went down and had a look well they should have been servicing this thing years before but they didn't know what it was and they had the vehicle there, with the back of the pump. They called, 'Have you got a minute Ernie?' He came down, mumble, mumble, mumble, I could hear the mumbling you know. Then he came over to me and said, 'Well I suppose we'll have to put a new impeller in now will we?' I said, 'No, it's still pumping. Now put a spare one up at the back of the cab and if it breaks down they can have that but I said, 'Maybe in that time you'll have that thing fixed.'

MD So this impeller was on the truck, on the tanker was it?

WILLIAMS On the back of the pump, it's inside the compartment at the back, you see. And that was there! He didn't know what it was, yet he was in charge of it, but when I tried to tell him he wouldn't listen. But he didn't come to me and say, 'Look I've got to admit you were right.' Not a chance. You know you have these times when you've got to shut up.

END OF INTERVIEW