



**TRANSCRIPTION OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW:**

# ***John & Verity Cripps***

**LOCAL STUDIES ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY, TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE**







## **PREFACE**

### **DISCLAIMER**

Readers of this Oral History Transcript should bear in mind, that as a transcript of the interview, it reflects the informal, conversational style of the spoken word. Users of the Transcript are encouraged also to listen to the sound recording, as it contains the subtleties of inflection, fluency and emphasis which enrich the communication of the spoken word over the written record. It should also be remembered that the oral History interview is not a formal, researched and prepared paper or speech. In some instances, corrections, alterations or additions have been made to the Transcript and thus do not appear in the sound recording, which is unedited.

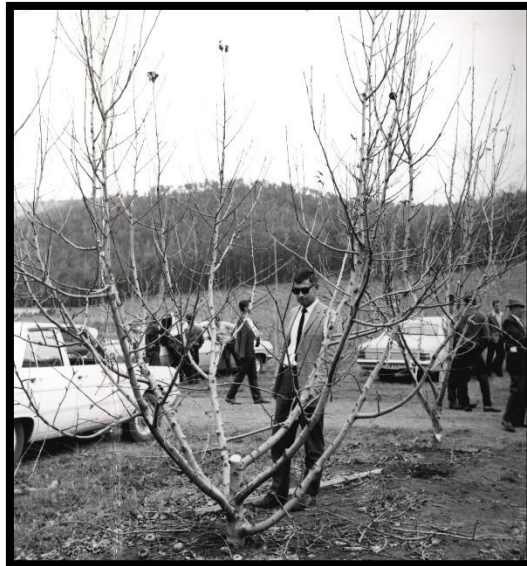
### **CONDITIONS OF USE**

The people who record the interviews for the Town of Cambridge Oral History Collection generously give their time and share their stories. When using the material from the recordings or transcripts, users agree to respect the privacy of the interviewee and ensure the interview and the Town of Cambridge are appropriately acknowledged in any publication, or in any other format. The requirements of Copyright legislation must also be fulfilled.



**TRANSCRIPTION OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH:**

# ***John Cripps***



*Above: John Cripps inspecting a pruned and shaped apple tree in the Southwest.*

**SYNOPSIS:** *John Cripps came out to Australia as a '£10 Pom' in 1955. Deciding to further his education in the hopes of promotion, John was on his way to Uni when he gave a lift to a young lady who had missed the bus. They happened to be in the same class at uni. John and Verity married in 1958. They built their home in the new fashion of flat roofs, seen at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1962. Working at the Agriculture Department, and inspired by a tree from his childhood, John spent 20 years developing the Pink Lady apple. As keen gardeners, John and Verity also developed a beautiful home garden. They enjoyed visits to other gardens. Another hobby, following in his grandfather's shoes, was railways. John supported the Severn Valley Heritage Railway. John also liked hiking and took the family on many hikes around the world. This interview was before his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday and reflects on his life work.*

**DATES:** *24/01/2022*

**DURATION:** *43 Minutes*

**INTERVIEWER:** *Jenelle Hockley*

**TRANSCRIBER:** *Julia Wallis*

**EDITOR:** *Jenelle Hockley*

## Transcript of Interview with John Cripps

**Jenelle** My name is Jenelle. Can you hear me?

John My name is John Cripps.

**Jenelle** This interview is part of the oral history programme at the Town of Cambridge Library, and you agreed to be interviewed and that you agree for a transcript to be made and you agreed for a recording to be published.

John Yes.

**Jenelle** Yes. Thank you. You will never guess where I was born - Manjimup? And my Dad worked in an apple orchard. So, I have great respect for what you have done because he had to leave the orchard because there was money in it. There was no work. You know, there was no export at that stage. So that would have been in about 1965, '66 he actually left and went into the Ag. Department. So, what you did, more than just – it revitalised, from what I can understand, the apple industry in Australia.

John Yes.

**Jenelle** Yes.

John There was a thirty per cent increase in exports. Yes.

**Jenelle** And also the local industry?

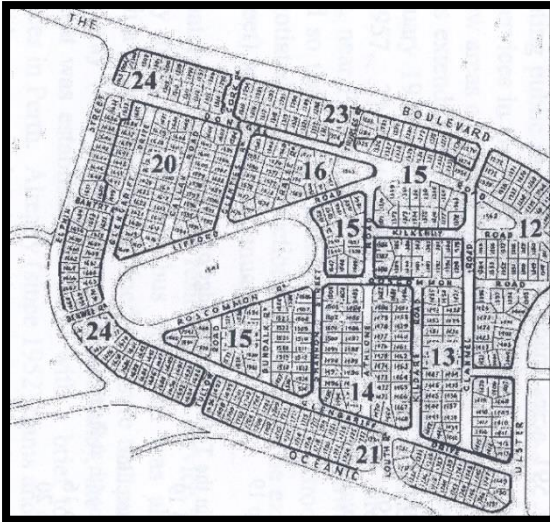
John Yes.

**Jenelle** Yes. It made a huge impact on a lot of people not just on the apple industry itself but a lot of people's lives and livelihoods.

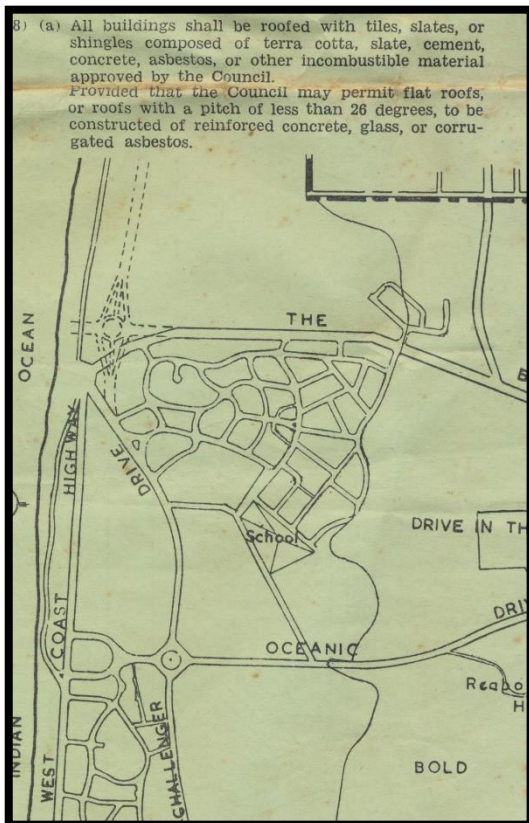
John Yes.

**Jenelle** So, what I particularly want to ask you about today, I know that you've been interviewed about all that, but I want to talk to you about actually building and living in Floreat because you haven't been interviewed about that and that's of course, interesting to us, because I am from the Floreat Library.

John Yes. Well, I've bought a block on an auction. It was towards the end of the auction, and I was getting worried whether I wouldn't have a chance to get a block at a reasonable price. This was the second last block in the auction and there were about fifty blocks in the auction.



Ph0318-01 Second revised  
subdivisional plan for Floreat, 1949,  
edited.



8) (a) All buildings shall be roofed with tiles, slates, or shingles composed of terra cotta, slate, cement, concrete, asbestos, or other incombustible material approved by the Council.  
Provided that the Council may permit flat roofs, or roofs with a pitch of less than 26 degrees, to be constructed of reinforced concrete, glass, or corrugated asbestos.

CITY OF PERTH

PUBLIC AUCTION  
OF LAND

★

*Floreat  
Park*

20  
ESTATE

comprising

Fifty Seven  
FINE RESIDENTIAL LOTS

on

Saturday, 29th March, 1958  
at 2.30 p.m.  
On the Site

★

Public Auction of Land Floreat, Estate 20, comprising of 57 Fine Residential Lots,  
March 29, 1958. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.

This block had twenty-seven trees, native trees on it. I was engaged to be married at that stage and was with my wife to be. We cleared the block. It took a whole year, weekends and evenings.



*John Cripps back of block looking toward Glengariff Drive Floreat, digging around trees to remove them, 1958. It took one year to clear block. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle**      **So what made you choose Floreat to live?**

John            Well it was just the time, I think. Somebody suggested that I should live in Floreat. I didn't know a great deal about it. It sounded reasonable. Not too far from the shopping centre and not too far from the ocean. There was Tuart sand which is good for growing things.

**Jenelle**      **Okay. And you're a very keen gardener?**

John            Yes. I was a keen gardener, and my wife was as well.



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps, at Glengariff Drive, Floreat, 1967. Image showing gardening tools, including an axe, and pruning shears, courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle** So what did you – in designing your garden, what did you consider? In designing your home garden, what things did you consider?

John Well, at that stage I planted a lot of rose bushes and some native plants. Looking into the future, my mother came out to Australia with us for a few months. [00:05:00]

I built her a granny flat, and the roses went.



*Bertha & Ernest Cripps, John Cripps' parents, Sussex, England, 1955.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle** That was the end of the roses?

John Yes. It was the end of the roses.

**Jenelle** What are your favourite kind of plants and why? Why would you plant them in your garden? What would you choose for your garden and why would you choose that?

John I like roses and camelias and some native plants, but some plants can't stand the climate.



*Helen Cripps, under shaded garden, 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat 1980.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Helen        So as a kid, I remember we used to put old beach umbrellas over the camelias that were on that side of the house back then to stop them from getting burnt. So, that's how we preserved them.

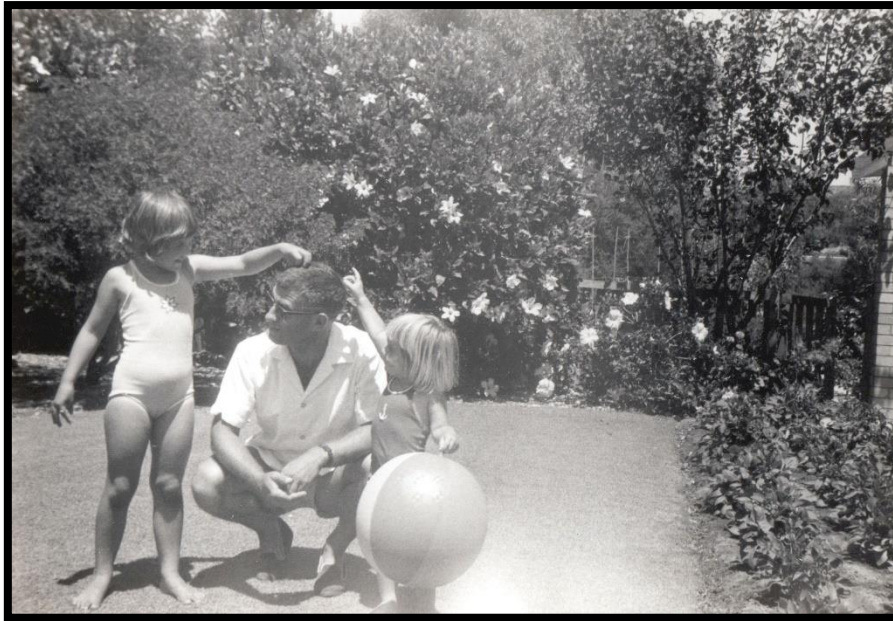
**Jenelle    Right. So, we've also got with us, apart from John Cripps and Jenelle Hockley doing the interview. I even forgot the date. It's the 24<sup>th</sup> of the first 2022. Helen is John's second daughter. Thank you for joining us, Helen. Yes. That's amazing. So, you would nurture an English garden from the hot Australian sun?**

John        Yes.



*Inspired by gardens they visited in the UK, John Cripps designed his garden in Glengariff Drive, Floreat, based on gardens he loved. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*





*Alwyne, John and Helen Cripps in their garden, 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1968.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*97 Glengariff Drive, Floreat, front garden, showing extension to house, 1975.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Helen. Yes. The garden was also a place of adventure. So, there was ... I don't know what it was called but what was that bush next to the car port? There was this big – not a Lantana – it was something that was growing next to the car port. But it was hollow underneath, so we used to make cubby holes with it. It was such a big bush and we used to ... Dad used to plant lots of annuals, so we used to ... I used to press them and make bookmarks for people. So, we would pick the flowers, and press them, out of the garden.



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps in the garden 97 Glengariff Drive, 1969.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Helen Cripps under wisteria back garden Glengariff Drive,  
showing pit for food scraps, 1985. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

One of my other memories about the garden was Dad turned it into a working garden. So, my mother would keep all the food scraps when she cooked and then Dad would dig a ditch through a garden bed which is – what is that word. Western, northwest corner of the property and she would fill that ditch up with scraps and then turn it over. My father would proceed to grow strawberries, which the bobtail goannas really liked. He would grow fruit and he would grow vegetables.



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps with cat Dinah, in front of vegetable garden, Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1973. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

But oftentimes that would mean we would have a surplus of Brussel sprouts, a surplus of broad beans which I still don't like to this day. But he was very ahead of his time because he would actually grow a lot of our vegetables in the garden by using the garden scraps to improve the soil quality, which I remember.

This is something that he brought from his childhood in England, so he told me that during the Second World War he grew fruit and vegetables in his back garden to feed, both himself and also other people, and make a bit of money, I believe, with other people in the area in Steyning.

**Jenelle I did hear that in the previous interview. So how old were you in the Second World War**

John I was eighteen when it finished so I would have been twelve.

**Jenelle Yes. When you were growing vegetables.**

John I was in the cadet force. As soon as I finished school I was called up into the army.

**Jenelle That's when you went to Jamaica?**

John I was sent overseas. I wasn't told where I was going. I didn't realise until I got there, and I stayed there for two and a half years without any home leave. [00:10:04]



*John Cripps with Glyrlie, April, 1955. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps*

**Jenelle**      **So how old were you when you arrived in Australia?**

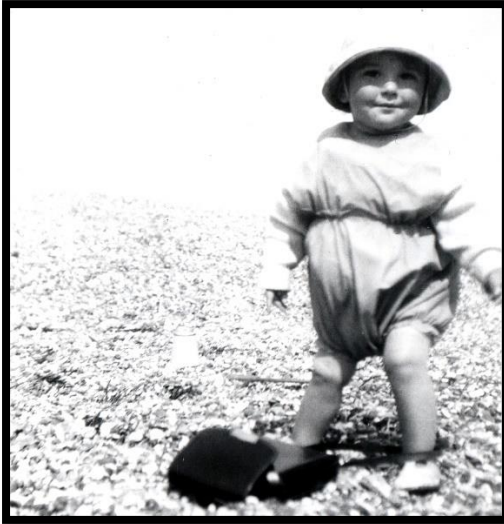
Helen          I think about twenty-eight was it, Dad? Or twenty-seven? You came in 1955.

John          1955. That's right.

Helen          So he was born in 1927. So that would make him about twenty-eight.



*John Cripps with his parents, Ernest & Bertha Cripps, 1927, Sussex, UK.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*John Cripps at the beach, 1928; and held by his mother, Bertha Cripps 1929, Sussex UK.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle** And you went back to Uni here in Australia which is where you met your future wife?

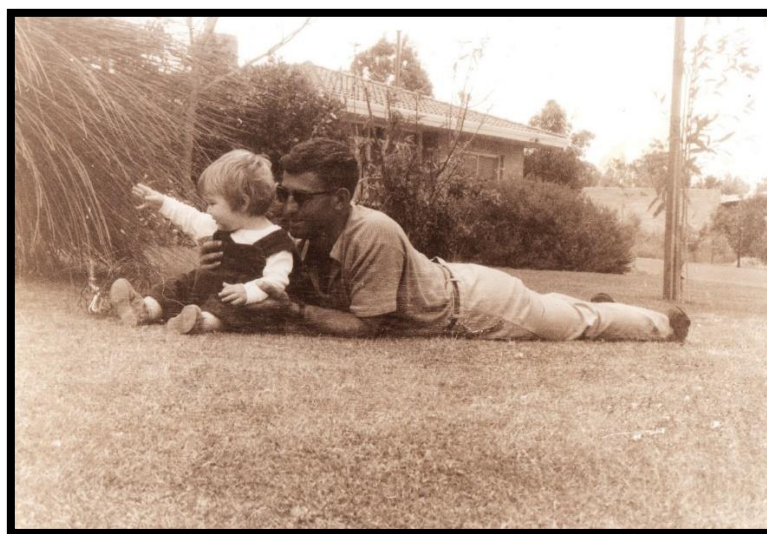
John No.

Helen Where did you meet Mum? Let's hear your side of it.

John I came here. Migrated and got a job in the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and I met her because she was living very close to me. I was in boarding in a house in Dalkeith.

Helen And she grew up in Claremont.

**Jenelle** Yes. Not far.



*Helen and John Cripps front lawn Claremont, 1967.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Helen        And the story is, you gave her a lift to work, because she'd missed her bus. That was the story.

John        She missed the bus. Yes. One day and I gave her a lift and I found she was doing the same course at university. A lot of graduate professionals in the department went back to university to do another degree, hoping it would aid their promotion, which was very slow.

**Jenelle     Yes. Yes. And that was your desire in going back?**

John        Yes. That was my aim. I never got any promotion.

Helen        But you .... You got to a certain level where you decided it wasn't worth going any further, I think. But you did something astounding, compared to most people in the Department, in creating the Pink Lady apple.



*John Cripps inspecting apple orchard in the southwest. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Do you want to ask him about this house – it is an architect designed house?

**Jenelle     Yes. I did read that in your mum's transcript. Yes. Yes. I would love to hear your version of what you were looking for in a house and why you chose the design you chose.**

John        Well, it's based on a Government house. It has been slightly altered. I was looking for a house that faced east and west.

**Jenelle     Okay. And why facing east and west?**

John        Where the sun was up.

**Jenelle     And the sun went down?**

John           And north and alongside the north and south.

Helen           So the eaves are actually longer on the north side of the house to stop the summer sun and let the winter sun in. And the ceiling follows the pitch of the roof. So, it has got a very high central hallway which creates a cooling affect and the garage was on the east side and on the west side was a pergola and a long eave to stop the summer sun coming into the house. So, it was passively solar designed. And they kept the trees which also kept the house cool. So, there is quite a few trees in the back garden still that are enormous. [00:15:00]

**Jenelle     I would love to actually take some photos. You've got this magnificent tree in the driveway there. It's spectacular.**

Helen           He has got spectacular roses. Sometimes Dad had some fallen. But yes.

**Jenelle     So back to the house, you chose it for its ... the orientation.**

John           Yes.

**Jenelle     To give it a cooling affect and why else?**

John           We got an architect and the front door and the kitchen door were both on the long side of the house so it's not a typical house. We had to have two sets of recording for the electricity.

**Jenelle     So when did you name the house?**

Helen           Where does the name Tora Garda come from?

John           Oh, that was a guest house we used to stay in Jamaica, halfway up to Blue Mountain. It was carried up there by hand. There was no road, no railway. It was just path.

**Jenelle     And you had happy memories from there?**

John           Hmm?

**Jenelle     You had happy memories from staying there or you like the situation of that house?**

John           There was only one track up to top. I used to stop there and get up at 2 o'clock in the morning and walk the last seventeen miles to the top of Blue Mountain which is actually the same height as Mount Kosciuszko<sup>1</sup> in Australia seven thousand three hundred feet. It was all hand walking.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mount Kosciuszko is 2,228 metres above sea level.

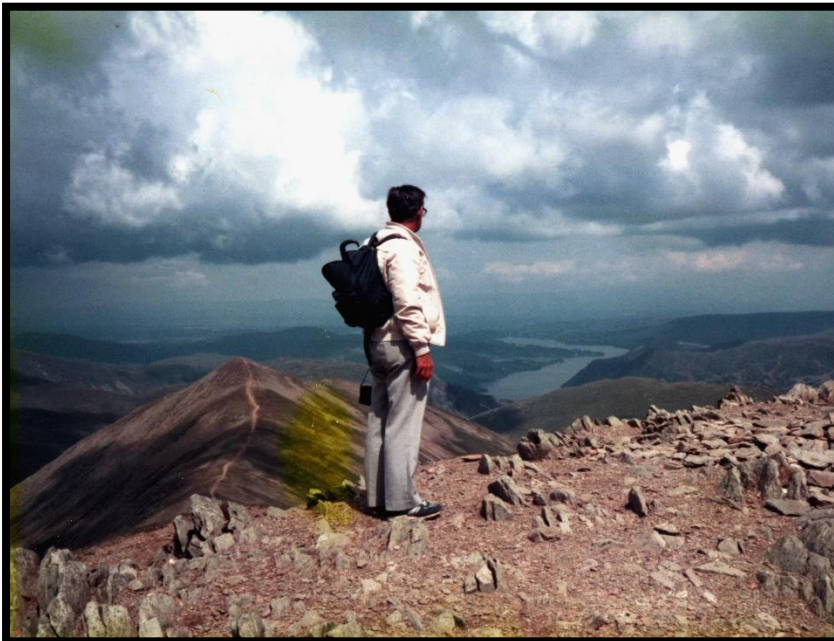
Helen        It was a steep climb.

John        And there was a snowy river at the base of the mountain. You had to cross that on foot. There was no bridge. You just had to wade across.

**Jenelle     Freezing cold water, or no?**

John        No. It wasn't cold.

Helen        So, your love of walking Dad, where did that come from? Because that was part of my childhood.



*John Cripps holidaying hike to top of Helvellyn, in the Lake District. Helvellyn is the 2nd highest Mount in England, overlooking Ullswater 1987. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*





*Helen Cripps Switzerland, 1987. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

That's why I went to the Porongurup's. Where did your love of walking come from?

John        Being born in Sussex, near the South Downs, which is ideal walking country. There are lots of tracks. Yes. One of the driest parts of England.



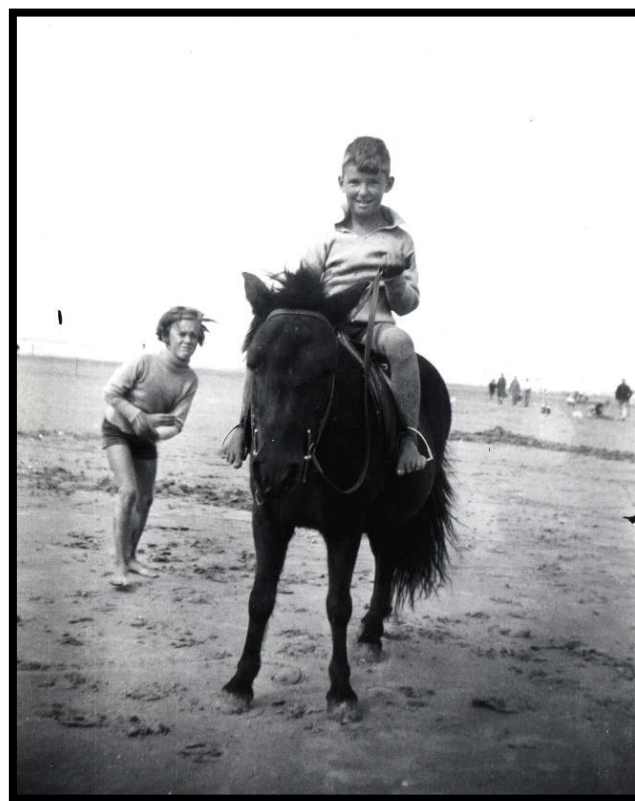
*John Cripps England standing on house gate, and sitting on the stone fence, 1931, Sussex UK. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle**     **So is that – what part of England?**

Helen        Sussex. It's near Brighton. So, he was born between London and Brighton. I think that's where Steyning was. It was towards the sea.



*Bertha Cripps, John Cripps, Ernest Cripps, Jessie Barnett, Mrs Howe at Shoreham Beach UK, 1933. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*John Cripps riding a pony on the beach, 1937, UK. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle** Okay. So that was why you liked being close to the ocean here?

Helen We used to go to the beach every Sunday. So, I remember going to City Beach when it was really hot, we would go. Dad would come home from work and we'd get in the car and go down to the ocean. So, the ocean was really important, about how we survived the climate here.



*Helen and John Cripps City Beach, 1969. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle** So it was definitely a part of your childhood? [00:20:04]

Helen Oh, yes. Going to the beach was every Sunday and then we would come home and have lunch and then we would all have an afternoon sleep. Well, I don't know about Mum, but Dad and I did. I used to like to have that.

But this whole walking thing we would go to the Porongurup's and walk. Before that we went to Rottneest, and I had to learn to cycle when I was four. So, we would cycle around Rottneest. Then when I was about seven or eight, we started going to the Porongurup's and we would walk the Porongurup's and then the Stirling Ranges.

Then when I was eleven, Dad took us on Long Service Leave, so we went to New Zealand for two months and he walked the Routeburn. Then the whole family walked the Milford Track. He carried my pack because at that stage I had become ill with rheumatoid and he said if I couldn't make it, he would carry me there.



*Verity, Helen and Alwyne Cripps view from the Porongurups, 1977.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

So, I think that was on Mum's transcript. But yes. So, we did lots of walking and he would come home from work and go for a run, often. Then in the evenings he would go for a walk to the post office box, or he would walk around Floreat. Is that right Dad? You used to go for a walk in the evening?

**Jenelle** Look at everybody else's gardens.

Helen It was often dark. But why – did you think about work when you went for a walk, or you just liked to go for a walk or?

John I used to like to go for a walk. If it'd been sitting down or standing up all day. I found it amusement walking.

**Jenelle** So describe for me the suburb when you moved into your house so that was ... you moved in, in 1961?

Helen It was before Alwyne was born, wasn't it?

**Jenelle** I think I read that it was about sixty-one, somewhere there?

Helen I think so. Yes.

**Jenelle** Or late fifties, was it? Somewhere in there.

Helen No. No. It was sixty-one because they were married in fifty-eight, I think it was.

Helen Yes. Fifty-eight. Then, and they were married for three years before my sister was born in sixty-one. But the photos of her, all of them are in the house. So, Mum was in the back of the house. So, they'd moved into the house. We had no carpet in the lounge room when I moved in. We had a piece of carpet and a cement floor. I remember that vividly. We had mainly second-hand furniture. What else? I think there was ... oh, there was floorboards in the bedrooms but now they've ... Yes. I do remember not actually having any carpet in the lounge room as a really little kid, because they couldn't afford it at that stage. I don't know if Mum said in hers, but her mother's reaction to my mother moving from Claremont, from Riley Road in Claremont, her mother's reaction, my grandmother's reaction was that they were moving to the slums of Floreat Park. Because, when Mum and Dad moved here there was nothing outside of what we typically see as the western suburbs. You know, Floreat was ...

**Jenelle It wasn't a part of the western suburbs?**

Helen No. It wasn't that kind of ... Dad was in a boarding house in Dalkeith. Everyone that was professional lived over that side. You know whereas this was an unestablished suburb, so.

John It was a post-war suburb.

**Jenelle So you actually moved in before the Games Village?**

John Yes.

**Jenelle Do you remember the Empire Games? The Commonwealth Games in 1962?**

John Yes.

**Jenelle Because I think your wife says -**

John The Queen came out and the Duke of Edinburgh and they drove around in Perth and we all lined up and waved. Yes.

**Jenelle Did you go to any of the Games?**

John No.

**Jenelle No. You just waved to the royalty going passed. Back to describing ... so you moved in, you were here in early sixties and you used to walk around a lot. Describe the Floreat, the suburb. What was it like back then? For people who've come to it now,**

**what was it like back then? How has it changed since you first moved in?** [00:25:05]

John Well, there were lots of vacant blocks of course and at the other side of Birkdale Street was inhabited. West of the Forum there were very few houses.

**Jenelle Yes. So how many houses in your street when you moved in?**

John About fifteen I suppose.

Helen Had the Lovells moved in when you came? Was the house on this side occupied?

John Yes.

Helen And what about that one.

John There was one other houses in this street that was occupied.

**Jenelle One other house? Yes. So fifty in the suburb, one in the street? Yes. Okay. So, did you actually have a bitumen road? Can you remember?**

Helen Was it gravel or bitumen? The road. Glengarriff Drive.

John It was bitumen.

Helen I think so by then. They did put them all in earlier.

**Jenelle They put them in to start with.**

John We didn't get a path until one of the owners of the blocks wanted the street to be all grass verges and when they came to put down the path, he parked all his cars out -

Helen Because he had Scarborough Toyota, you know?

**Jenelle So he didn't want the footpath?**

Helen Yes.

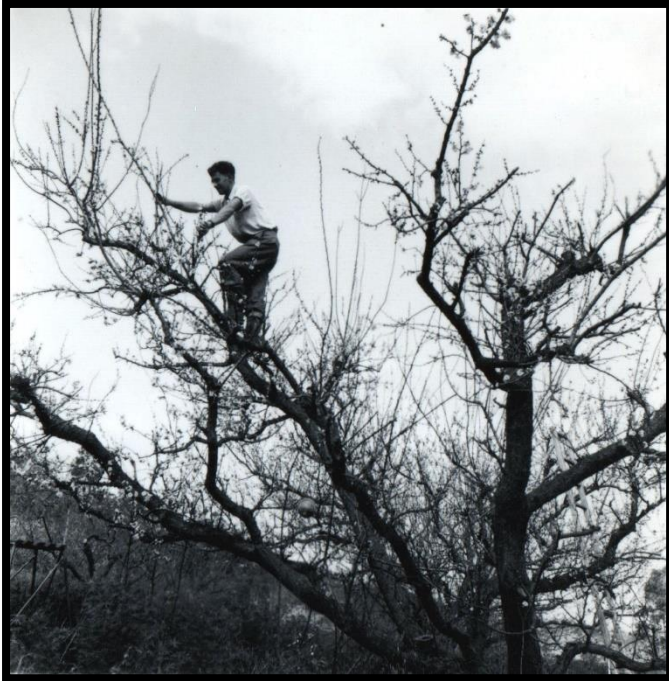
John - down the street and they couldn't put down the path so they went away and never came back.

Helen So that's why there's no footpath in Glengarriff Drive.

**Jenelle Right. You also said something very interesting about migrating and how you never really feel as though you belong anywhere. Like you feel like you don't belong where you were born, but you don't really feel like you belong here, either. I was wondering if you feel like working with the soil, with the land, if**

**you feel any connection to the land anywhere or if you just feel like you are sort of at sea and don't belong.**

John        Well, of course I did a lot of work around the Southwest, Manjimup.



*John Cripps pruning apple trees, Manjimup;  
John & friend next to Volkswagen Beetle-coupe in the southwest.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Helen        Do you feel that you belong in Australia now or do you still feel like you belong in England?



*John, Helen, Alwyne and Verity Cripps, 1971, Government House Gardens, Perth.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

John            Oh, I've got a certificate. [*Laughter*]

Helen           Once he got that, then that made all the difference. The garden you planted were things that you wanted to see from home like the camelias –



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps, in garden outside back door, 97 Glangariff Drive Floreat, 1972.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle**     **And roses.**

Helen         And roses. They were things that you remember from home.



**Jenelle**     **So there is a strong connection to two places?**

Helen         And you miss the birds in the morning from England? You said that was ... You'd go back to ... They went back to England, like twenty times in twenty-five years and he said he always missed the bird song because we know what the bird song in Australia's like. It's very noisy. Is that correct?

John           Yes.

**Jenelle**     **Yes. Kookaburras and -**



*John Cripps home in Sussex, England, 1955. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Helen         There is a lot of crowing around here.

John        It was all bush here about as far as Elphin Street. There was always a lot of kookaburras chatting there in the morning and I never really expected to go back to England. [00:30:00]

I came out under the scheme in the 1950s, the Ten Pound Pom scheme. You paid ten pounds and got a passage and as long as you stayed for more than two years you were right. If you went back within two years, you had to pay the whole cost of the passage which was a very good scheme really. It brought a lot of migrants, post-war migrants to Australia.

Helen        A good con.



*John Cripps onboard. '£10 Pom' trip out to Australia, 1950s.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle    I have a friend who came out as a ten pound Pom or her family came out. But you came out alone?**

John        What?

**Jenelle    You came out alone?**

John        Yes.

**Jenelle    That's very brave.**

John        Well, I was used to travelling. I'd been to Jamaica and lived there in the army for two and a half years and then I went back to England.

Helen           What was it like in England when you went home from the army?

John           Well ...

Helen           It was pretty dire, wasn't it?

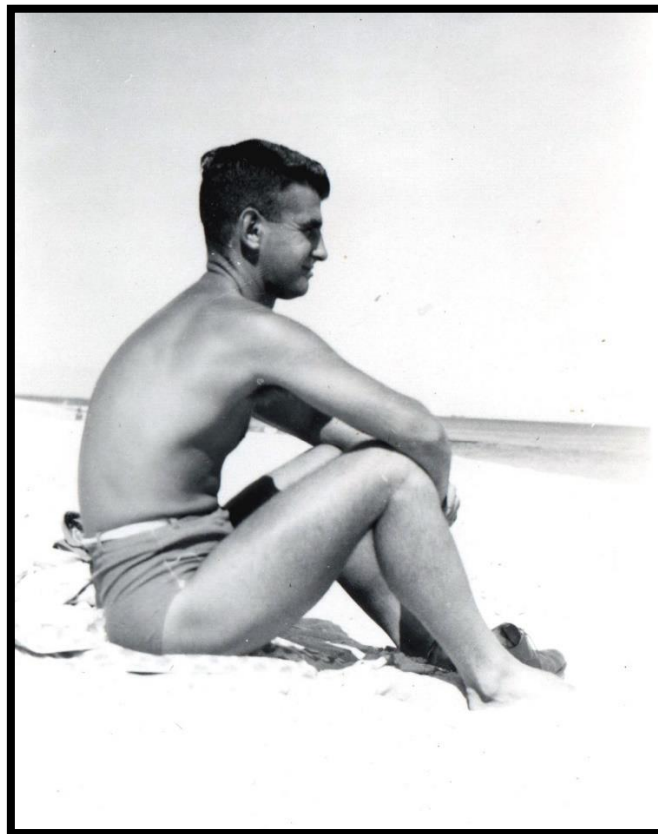
John           It was pretty dire. Pretty poor.

**Jenelle       And not many prospects. Yes.**

John           The war really -

**Jenelle       Devastated.**

Helen           It was suggested to you that you should come to Australia because of all the sunshine. An opportunity. So, I think you said -



*John Cripps at the beach. Possibly City Beach late 1950s or early 1960s.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

John           Well, I investigated other countries like New Zealand.

Helen           I could have been a Kiwi.

John           I had a year at university when I did a post graduate.

Helen           Was that a postgraduate here or a postgraduate in England.

John            In England.



*John Cripps, back row 3rd from left. Reading University mid-1950s.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle      Oh right. And then you went to Uni here as well.**

Helen        Yes. Did you want to do a PhD, Dad?

John         I had to do a course to get into university.

Helen        This was in England.

John         It was very hard to get into university because of all the men coming back from the war, wanting to get into university.

**Jenelle      And that was still kind of the era where university was for the wealthy really wasn't it.**

Helen        So he had to put himself – work his way through university. You did get some money from ... as a returned serviceman but he worked at a ... You worked at a nursery to make money, didn't you Dad? You went and worked at a nursery.

John         Oh yes. In the vacation. Yes. [00:35:00]

**Jenelle      So what gave you your love of trains before we finish.**

John Well, it was a family thing. My great grandfather was ... He was a railway rating surveyor. He surveyed land and bought land for the railway. Where Victoria Station is now, it was a hotel and a road and he bought the land and to build the hotel he used it to fill the rubbish.

**Jenelle Right. Oh wow!**

Helen 1899.

**Jenelle Yes. So, it has been a family thing for many years. Yes. And have you ridden many ... Have you been on railway journeys yourself?**

John Well, I was carried around, care of the army, a lot. I was moved around.

Helen But you used to sponsor a couple of railways. A preservation society. So, the Seven Valley Railway and the Bluebell Railway. So, when he would go back each time in the eighties and nineties to visit, he would go up to the places where those railways were and would go for a ride. I went in the early two thousands with him. We went on some railway journeys on the Seven Valley Railway. So, I remember that.



*Severn Valley Railway, River Severn Bridge. Cripps trip to UK, 1997.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

John        To preserve railways. They live on donations, membership fees and people buying tickets for rides.

Helen        So, why didn't you become a railway ... a train driver?

John        They weren't well enough paid in those days.

**Jenelle     Right.**

Helen        More of a hobby.



*Severn Valley Steam Railway, 1997. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

John        We had quite a large garden at home so I sort of...

**Jenelle     We've also been joined by someone. Do you just want to just introduce yourself?**

Kylie        Oh, I'm Kylie. I'm one of John's carers.

**Jenelle     Kylie has joined us as well. Thank you for joining us.**

Helen        Dad, why did you never leave Floreat Park? Why did you never leave this house?

John        Well, I had everything here I wanted. In combination, I've got this granny flat. I added on to the car port and a shelter at the back. I suppose I managed to get what I wanted by adding to the existing house.

**Jenelle     Yes. Now I remember ... I know I'm backtracking here but I remember in your wife's transcript she talks about there**

**being no shops around here and so you actually did the shopping in your lunch break. Where would you shop?**

John At the Forum.

**Jenelle Before the Forum. So, before the Forum -**

Helen When you were working at the Ag Department you used to do the shopping at lunchtimes, she said.

John Oh, sometimes. I mainly did shopping in the Forum.

**Jenelle Okay. So, the Forum was here.**

Helen It was pretty much at the same time. But she didn't have a car. But then she bought a car I think it was ... I was in probably second ... grade two or three. She bought an EK Holden that she called Irmatrude because it really struggled to get up hills and she used coke cans, because they were then tin and not aluminium. [00:40:02]

And she would open them out and she would patch the rust holes in Irmatrude and she bought it for a hundred, I think it was \$100 back then and she sold it for two hundred. But my vivid memory is her driving the car down to Floreat Primary School and it had bench seats and no seat belts in those days. The record was getting eleven kids on the two bench seats, and she would wind her home through Floreat dropping the children off, that were my sister's and my friends, and then we would come home. So, occasionally she would come and pick us up from school.



*Helen and Alwyne Cripps on Alwyne's first day of school, front of 97 Glengariff Drive, Alwyne with hard case, Floreat Park uniform and sandals, 1969. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle**     **So, what year would this have been?**

Helen        Oh, hang on. I went to school in ... So, about seventy-two, seventy-three. So, she had the car then.



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps ready for school, Floreat Park Primary School uniforms, carrying satchels, 1970. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

I remember going up to John Forrest National Park and Mum being worried because of the hills in there. That she had to run down one hill to get the car up the other hill. But yes. So, she bought it because then we became a two-car family and basically we had two cars since then. But yes. Dad used to take the car to work so that was the other reason why Mum got one. But I remember catching the bus. So, this was a great place for buses and Mum putting my pram on the back of the bus with the hooks. So that was one of my early memories. We would catch the bus into town.

**Jenelle**     **Yes. And go shopping in town. Yes.**

John        When my mother came out here, a friend of mine sold me his car for a hundred dollars. He was going to trade it in, but I bought his car.

Helen        Was that the old Holden?

John        Yes.

Helen        Oh, I didn't know that.

**Jenelle**     **Oh, so that was when your mum – when your grandma came out?**

Helen Yes. When grandma came out. Grandma in England, we used to call her. I was very fond of her. She painted these pictures in the house. She was -

**Jenelle An artist.**

Helen Well, not ...but she liked to paint and so, yes. She got me into painting. So, I learned to paint after that.



*Bertha Cripps, John, Verity, Alwyne Cripps with Helen (front) in garden, 1971.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Jenelle Is that right? Yes. Well, congratulations John. I think that you've impacted many lives by the life you've led here in Australia. I think you've impacted financially people's livelihoods by your persistence in developing the Pink Lady. You are a long time Floreat resident and so that's a fabulous thing to find for us. Because you have memories that go way back to when Floreat first started. So, it's been a pleasure to talk to you today.**

Helen Do you have any more questions you want to ask him?

END OF INTERVIEW                      00:42:57

TRANSCRIPTION OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH:

## *Verity Cripps*



**Synopsis:** Verity always remembered her name meant ‘truth’. Born in Kalgoorlie, one of 4 sisters, Verity worked as a shorthand typist in the public service Health Commissioner’s office. She then decided to go to university and met John Cripps, a newly arrived £10 Pom. They married on ANZAC Day in 1958, having already purchased a block of land in the bushland of Floreat for £1025. John and Verity spend a year of weekends and evenings clearing the land before building began. Together they created a beautiful garden in the suburb of Floreat. As a mother, Verity helped her daughter who had rheumatoid arthritis and was dyslexic, right throughout her schooling, to eventually achieve a PhD. Verity balanced her life as a mother with volunteering. She joined the Consumer’s Association of Western Australia and sat on the board for administering the Credit Act, was a deputy on the Motor Vehicles Dealers’ Board, on the Home Buildings Tribunal and on the Shopping Hours Advisory Committee. Verity received The Rona Okely Award for Individual Achievement, which was presented by Consumer Protection in 2006.

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**DURATION:** 57:46

**INTERVIEWER:** Fiona Brown

**TRANSCRIBER:** Amy Price

**EDITOR:** Fiona Brown

**TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**Fiona:** This is an interview with Verity Cripps on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at Floreat in her home, by Fiona Brown. This interview is part of the Oral History Program conducted from the Town of Cambridge. This interview will form part of an Oral History archive which will be lodged in the Cambridge Library. A copy will be donated to the Battye Library of W.A. History at the State Library of W.A. Before we begin, I need to make sure you understand your rights and those of researchers in relation to this interview. Do you understand that the Cambridge Library owns copyright in the interview material, but disclosure will be subject to any restrictions you impose when completing the form of consent?

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona:** Great, thanks Verity. Do you understand that you have the right to stop the interview at any time?

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona:** This being so, do you consent to being interviewed?

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona:** Thank you. Do you give permission for a transcript to be made?

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona:** Great. We hope you will feel ... you will speak at freely as possible knowing that neither the recording, nor the transcript produced from them will be released without your authority.

INTERVIEW PAUSED

**Fiona:** Hi Verity, thanks for having me. It's been a pleasure meeting you so far, we met at the Town of Cambridge Library one day and I thought that you seemed like a really lovely woman and a great person to interview. So, I'll just start off with a couple of, initial questions. You've lived in Floreat for a long time, I know that about you. But can you tell me about where you were born, when you were born, a little bit about your mother and father and your siblings? 2:00

Verity: I was born in Kalgoorlie in June, 1929. My father worked as advertising manager for the Kalgoorlie Miner newspaper and my mother was, as at that time, home duties. I had three sisters, a lot older than I. One was ten years older, Allison. Next, Judith was thirteen years older and the eldest Mabs, was sixteen years older. So, they were really grown up by the time I began to register a great deal of what went on in the world. I went to North Kalgoorlie Primary School. which was out, almost in a paddock then, because we lived in north Kalgoorlie, which was the edge, outer edge of Kalgoorlie. There were

no buildings behind us, we went right out into the bush. By 1938 my sisters were in Perth. One was at the... teaching. One was working in the offices of Woolworths and the other one was at studying to be a teacher.

**Fiona:** **Oh cool.**

Verity: My father who'd been wounded in World War One, was crippled, we decided, and decided to move to Perth. So, they sold the house in Kalgoorlie, I think for the magnificent sum of about 90 pounds. And they bought in Riley Road, Claremont which had a double block and a tennis court. It was a big house, they spent quite a lot of money doing it up. It cost them 800 pounds.

**Fiona:** **It's quite the move, from Kalgoorlie to Perth?**

Verity: They were fairly cautious people financially. We did have an old car, it was old for now, it was an old Chevy and my father, mother and I (because I was the only one left home for some years in Kalgoorlie), we used to drive down to Perth. And then we used to drive down to the Southwest for my father's holidays.

**Fiona:** **That's a long way.** **04:00**

Verity: The top speed of the car was 25 miles an hour and on the corrugated roads if you went over 20, the floorboards used to rise up.

**Fiona:** **[Laughs] Gosh! Do you remember it well? I mean it must have been so warm?**

Verity: Well, it was warm up there. We also went down to Esperance, my parent's and I, and I always remember going down this two-lane road, two tyre tracks. And if there was a big, tree stump in the middle, we hit it and went over it. [Laughs] And one of my sisters one time was with us and she bounced, and there was a bar across the top of the roof of the car and she hit it and she forever after had a lump in the middle of her nose.

**Fiona:** **[Laughs] Is that her story was it? [Laughs]**

Verity: Yes. Ah, well we moved to Perth and my three sisters were at home for a while. While one was a student doing her, preparations, starting on her degrees. And the other one teaching. And gradually they moved out. My younger sister went to several small schools in the country, very small schools, you know, twelve people, twelve children, and I always remember one story she said, when the children have finished with their chewing gum, to tell them to stick it in the cracks in the wall of the school. To stop the breeze coming in.

**Fiona:** **[Laughs] I like it, lateral thinking.**

Verity: Yes well, she was very bright. My eldest sister moved through several as a teacher. She was a very good teacher, and she was very good at involving the children and she ended up in York school. The war came and of course my Father, having been crippled in WW1, wasn't involved. My middle sister Judith who worked in office, married a schoolteacher who wasn't allowed to join up, because he was in reserved occupation. At the end of the war my eldest sister married a farmer. As a farmer he also couldn't join up. **06:00**

Ah, that left me, with my youngest sister home. Oh, but she was always away at schools at any rate, so it ended up just being my parents and I. We lived in Riley Road. I played tennis and I played badminton. I decided when I was in my mid-twenties to go to university part-time. I was working with the government, started in the medical department and health department. Then I moved into the public service commissioner's office which was quite a promotion for a shorthand typist. Because I was very fast.

**Fiona: What kind of child were you? Were you interested in sort of ... it sounds like you surrounded by a lot of activity and a lot of older people and, you know you were probably quite heavily influenced by what they were doing. Did you sort of get in their slipstream kind of thing? Or did sort of, have your own ideas about what you wanted to do, when you made those sort of decisions to go into different fields of study or ... I guess, vocations? Do you remember kind of being ... I guess what were your thoughts around them?**

Verity: Oh, I was a very passive child and I always felt that I was told that it's good to be seen, but not heard. And the older sisters in a way dominated me to a degree. But I did decide that I didn't want to be a schoolteacher because I saw all the hard work that my youngest sister did as a school teacher [Laughs] and I gave that up!

**Fiona: Well deduced! [Laughs] **08:00****

Verity: Yep, that was me. And I didn't have many great ambitions. I read a lot. We were quite close to the river in Claremont, and I used to go down and swim in the river and my father used to sit on the beach and wait for me. We did the usual things as children. I can't remember anything very spectacular.

**Fiona: Often it's always about the funny little things. But you, you ... did you get time to yourself, or were you kind of, I guess what I mean to say is did you get to have your own experiences? Or did you kind of get shuffled along with the gang? I'm the youngest of four, so I ...**

Verity: No, I was always very well watched by my parents. And I always had the feeling that they thought because I was the last ... that as they got older, I would stay home and look after them in their old age.

**Fiona: Aha!**

Verity: So, I felt that I had to behave. And also, I had the problem of my first name, which is Verity which means truth. And it was very much impressed on me that that name was very important.

**Fiona: That's such an interesting thing! That's sort of less common these days as far as meaning goes, but I think it's quite romantic in a way.**

Verity: [Laughs]

**Fiona: But maybe a little bit of a burden? [Laughs] So we've established a little bit about your um, your family ...**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: Do you have sort of a memory of your mother that you would like to get recorded? A lot of people tend to sort of have a little bit of vision of ... an image when they were small of their mother and what they were like.**

Verity: She was a strong woman, very upright and things had to be proper, and there was her extended family, she was a Bromham, and there were quite a lot of them. Some she liked and some she didn't. And the ones she liked we used to see a lot of and the ones she didn't like we didn't see very often [Laughs].

**Fiona: She was quite a forthright lady?**

Verity: Yes, she was. My father was more passive but of course he retired at 55, and when we came to Perth and he was home, and he used to potter in the garden. Because he couldn't walk very far, eventually I had a bike and I used to go out and get his library books from the local library. And I ... as I said, I was a passive child. **10:00**

**Fiona: It's a generational thing too, just as an aside, I work at the Museum and there's a popular program that shows childhood, you know, around the time that you were growing up and just the expectations ... So, they put the kids in a room and give them the experience of a classroom at that time and it's so different to now.**

Verity: Oh yes.

**Fiona: So, it's an interesting thing, you know, um ... but what I might ...**

Verity: Could we break that for the moment?

**Fiona: Yep.**

INTERVIEW PAUSED

**Fiona:** **So, Verity, would you be able to tell me a little bit about your sort of, early working life as a young woman?**

Verity: Well, I started in the public health department, it was public health, medical in Murray Street, Perth. There was a typing pool, but I was a fairly fast ... could do short-hand very quickly, and also I type very quickly. So, I was one of the more requested members of the typing pool and eventually I became typist with Dr. Eleanor Stang who ran the infant health centres and she was also medical officer of schools. Sometimes I 'd go out to the country with her, when she was doing a couple of her trips just as company as much as anything. I'll never forget the time we went to Father Keaney's place in Bindoon, and all these boys running around. She was quite keen on Father Keaney but I was horrified at these children, bare-footed and ragged, running around and ... we had to measure them and weigh them. I did that, but that was a day trip. But that really stuck in my mind about those children.

**Fiona:** **Were they orphans or was it a country school? 12:00**

Verity: It was at Bindoon. Well, they were orphans and they were children, a lot of them being brought out from England I think.

**Fiona:** **Child migrants perhaps?**

Verity: No, orphans.

**Fiona:** **Orphans, okay.**

Verity: I decided after an engagement, which I dumped the poor chap!

**Fiona:** **Heartbreaker!**

Verity: [Laughs] I went ... went away with a girlfriend for a trip east for six months long service leave. On one of the ... jobs I had there was on the wharf in Sydney as a court reporter. And that was quite interesting.

**Fiona:** **What is that?**

Verity: With the Waterside Worker's, if there was an accident, the waterside workers used to come and have to explain why there was an accident. It was set as a court and on one side I had the head of the court, and the other side I had the Union representative. And then there would be the waterside worker who said, "Oh no, I didn't see that box of ..."

**Fiona:** **Conveniently.**

Verity: "...things fall. Oh no! I don't know what happened to that!" [Laughs] I was just a court reporter recording.

**Fiona:** **You learn a lot of things when you're recorded, what other people**

**are doing.**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: I think it's kind of funny. Oh wow! So, you went to Sydney and how old were you then?**

Verity: 26.

**Fiona: 26?**

Verity: 26, yes.

**Fiona: What did you think of the place, when you went?**

Verity: Well, the girlfriend and I had a flat in Darling Point, which was quite nice. We were there for about two months and while I was there, I got a call from my mother, to say my father who'd gone to South Australia to see his brother, had a heart attack in South Australia. So, I got on a plane and flew to South Australia to be with him, while he was in hospital. And then I flew back to Sydney, because I was paying for this flat, for a couple of days and then I came home. **14:00**

When I came home, I decided well, I've got to reorganise my life. My father came home, but we knew he didn't have terribly long to live, possible eighteen months. I got promoted to this job in the Public Service Commissioner's office, because I thought, I've got to look at a career. Then I thought, well, I could go to university and work on a degree as a part-time interest. I'd quite often miss the bus in the morning to go to work and while I'm running towards another bus this car pulled up and a neighbour ... a chap I knew, a neighbour said, "Oh, do you want a lift?" So, I said, "Yes, oh yes." So, I hopped in and the driver said, "Oh, I know you. You're in the same history class as me at university." I thought, oh, am I? I didn't know him. [Laughs]

**Fiona: [Laughs]**

Verity: But he knew me! [Laughs]

**Fiona: And who was that fellow?**

Verity: John Cripps.

**Fiona: Oh! Well, look at that. That's like, quite romantic.**

Verity: Well, he picked me up each morning because it saved me having to run for the bus every morning. He was with the Department of Agriculture. Which was then down Adelaide Terrace. And I worked in the Terrace. After a few weeks, he rang up and asked me would I like to go out? And I said, "Oh, yes." So, we went out. Then we started to meet at university and we'd have tea together in the Refectory.

**Fiona:** **So, you had classes together? What were you studying?**

Verity: I was doing first year History, and I was doing English as well. And he was doing first year History and I think he was doing Economics then. He has a degree in Horticulture from Reading University in England. But he was working on an Arts degree with a major in Economics.

**Fiona:** **So, did you enjoy history?**

Verity: Yes. Well, he knew a little bit more than me, because he'd been brought up in England. It was mainly English history. But we enjoyed that, and we both got through, and at the end of the year he proposed, and I accepted. Ah, we got engaged at Christmas, 1957. **16:00**

Then we decided to buy a block of land. We came to the auction here in February 1958 and bought the block of land in Floreat for 1025 pounds. Which my husband borrowed 1000 pounds as a, it was not a mortgage then ... overdraft.

**Fiona:** **Aha! just as a comment, I have a beautiful brochure from that period which outlines the Estate and it's very, very gorgeous, and you guys ... let's have a look, bought ... I'll let you read it out, any detail you see relevant.**

Verity: We bought Lot 1645. In Glengariff Drive. It's now number 97 Glengariff Drive. And as I said it before, it cost us \$1025. Our limit was 1000 pounds, but we hung on and got it for the extra twenty-five. Very tense!

**Fiona:** **We're sitting in the house right now, which the Cripps have owned for 57 years, it's very impressive. Do you remember the area when you moved in? And the day you moved in?**

Verity: Well, it took us a year to pay off the overdraft, a thousand pounds. I went ... I had to resign from the government when I, married of course. But then I straight away got a job with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation as a secretary.

**Fiona:** **Oh wow!**

Verity: And I worked there, and my husband continued of course with the Department of Agriculture. A year to pay off the um, overdraft of a thousand pounds. **18:00**

Then we had to find enough money to build a house, which we had an architect to draw up plans. Cost was £5000 and the bank would only lend us half of that in those days. Even though we owned the land, but fortunately I had a bit of savings and we managed in a couple of years to rustle up £2500, which the bank accepted. They would let us have £5000. But then they did ask us, because the quote on the house was

£5000, what about a fence? And we hadn't thought of putting a fence round the house, because it was just bushland here.



*Building 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1960. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:**        **Yeah, wow, what did it look like?**

**Verity:**        Well we did spend our engagement digging out some very large trees. My husband used to chop and I used to dig. Or did he ...? I must have dug. I used to go home, my family would say, "What an engagement! Out there digging out sand and soil!"



*John Cripps back of block looking toward Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1958, digging around trees to remove them, 1 year to clear block. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:** [Laughs] It's very, ah, very Australian dream isn't it? I like it!

**Verity:** And my parents were very upset. My mother was upset because I was, out in that terrible suburb! Out there! It's terrible out there, you have to go past the markets if you're going to go from Perth to the suburb! That was not done ...

**Fiona:** I see, they thought you were living in the 'burbs.

**Verity:** ... because she lived on the edge of Dalkeith.

**Fiona:** [Laughs]

**Verity:** We arranged our wedding for Anzac Day, in 1958 and six weeks before, my father died.

**Fiona:** Oh, how did you ... remember that day, in light of that? That's a bit tough.

**Verity:** Well, they decided as I'd had one previous attempt at getting married, and I pulled out ... that it was going ahead or else!

**Fiona:** I think that's fair enough! What did you wear? **20:00**

**Verity:** I wore a white satin dress, and I've still got it. It wasn't long, it was ankle length then. It's been used since interestingly, one of my sisters lived in the country. The CWA had parades of wedding dresses to raise funds. She used my dress a couple of times.

**Fiona:** Oh beautiful!

Verity: So, it ... I feel it had a reasonable life.

**Fiona:** It's nice, isn't it? You buy it for one day and you think it needs to have a little bit more of a showing.

Verity: Well, it wasn't quite what they have nowadays. It was much simpler then. Because this was the 1950's and people hadn't got very ... these elaborate rows and rows of frills and flowers and trains.

**Fiona:** I think it was possibly for the ... you were probably doing better, with less choice? You probably looked more elegant.

Verity: Well, I had it made for me. [Laughs] Probably!

**Fiona:** [Laughs] So, you had it on Anzac Day did you say?

Verity: Yes. Because some of my husband's friends worked in the country and they thought they could come up for the day.

**Fiona:** Oh, what was the day of the wedding like?

Verity: I think ... the weather was quite normal. And we had a friend of my father's, to give me away. I know my younger sister cried all the way up the church.

**Fiona:** [Laughs]

Verity: I remember going up and thinking, "Have I made a mistake?"

**Fiona:** [Laughs]

Verity: Can I turn around, run out the church? [Laughs]

**Fiona:** Is it too late?

Verity: I think a lot of people have that thought, don't they?

**Fiona:** I think that means you're a human being, I think. At least you're taking it on the chin.

Verity: Well, that'll turn up ...

**Fiona:** Yes, well ... do what we like. So, Verity ...

Verity: So ...

**Fiona:** What do you remember about John as a young man? 22:00

Verity: Very quiet. Somewhat of an introvert, but very persistent and single -

mindful. He liked walking. I still played tennis, but he didn't play tennis. and he ... he worked quite hard, sometimes he'd have to work at the weekend. The Department expected you to do a certain number of things for a set salary. There was no overtime, we were fairly diverse characters. Ah, we moved in in um, about um, April 1961. And I had my first child in August of that year.

**Fiona:** **A girl?**

Verity: Yeah, a girl, yes. Alwyne. there was nothing around here, we didn't have a fence by then. There was bush behind us, there was a house going up to the south and there was one on the corner of Bantry Road and two blocks up there was another house.

**Fiona:** **Wow.**

Verity: And ...

**Fiona:** **What was it like being a young mum in a new area with ...?**

Verity: Well, for six months I don't think I went further out than pushing the pram around the district.

**Fiona:** **That's pretty common, isn't it?**

Verity: There was no Floreat Forum. And my husband used to do the shopping in his lunch time and bring it home.

**Fiona:** **Well done Verity!**

Verity: And ... [Laughs]

**Fiona:** **[Laughs]** **24:00**

Verity: I spent my time with the baby and, in the house and in the garden.

**Fiona:** **That would have been quite a special ... I would love to just go back and see what the area looked like from that point of view. Maybe we'll see if we can get some photos from you later? Can you tell me about your children? How many did you have?**

Verity: We have Alwyne, the first one and the second one's Helen. Alwyne is now married to Steven Parker, and she has one son, Jack Parker. Alwyne unfortunately has acromegaly, which they didn't diagnose until she was seven months pregnant because pressure from a tumour on her pituitary gland was likely to send her blind. The decision was whether to operating then, when she was seven months pregnant or let her go to full term by when she might be blind. She decided she'd have the operation then. They had to remove a tumour off her pituitary gland.

**Fiona:** I see.

Verity: A very big one. Any rate, it turned out alright and Jack was born ...

**Fiona:** Oh good.

Verity: And he's now 21, he's just finished his degree in Marine Biology and he's working on his Masters.

**Fiona:** Oh, wow!

Verity: So ...

**Fiona:** What in?

Verity: Marine Biology, well ... similar thing. I'm not quite sure.

**Fiona:** That's alright.

Verity: Alwyne and her husband moved to Busselton ... when Jack was six. He's a plumber and he worked for one of the plumbing firms here but decided to go to Busselton and move out by himself. He's done quite well. Ah, they now have a house in Busselton, which is let, and they've got a small farm and he has a few cows occasionally, and he's always adding on to something there. But it's quite a nice house and, it's now six bedrooms, three bathrooms, two, three living rooms and he hasn't finished the pool yet. He's been working on that for years, her husband. But there's only the two of them in it.

**Fiona:** So, can you tell me Verity, a little bit about like, do you have a memory about raising your daughters, or an anecdote that they may not be aware of like, one day if ... in school when they were six or seven, do you remember any idiosyncrasies about perhaps what kind of children they were?

Verity: Well, the elder one was not... Alwyne was not terribly happy at school. She was reasonably bright, but she wasn't terribly keen on study, actually, she's developed very much ... she's a very good person. She is involved in many activities in Busselton. **26:00**

But at school she became interested in horses. So, eventually she decided she was going to have a horse at the lakes where they had several horse yards. She used to go there and eventually she came home, said she was wanted to buy Marcus. So, my husband eventually stumped up for Marcus. After school she'd go over there and feed him, and I'd used to have to go and collect her afterwards. She went to Methodist Ladies College. After a few years at Floreat Primary, because she wasn't very happy there, so we thought, well, some of her friends were going to Methodist Ladies and we sent her there. She spent most of her time with the horses. And she met her husband through somebody with the horse too.



*Alwyne and Helen Cripps in the garden of 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1975.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

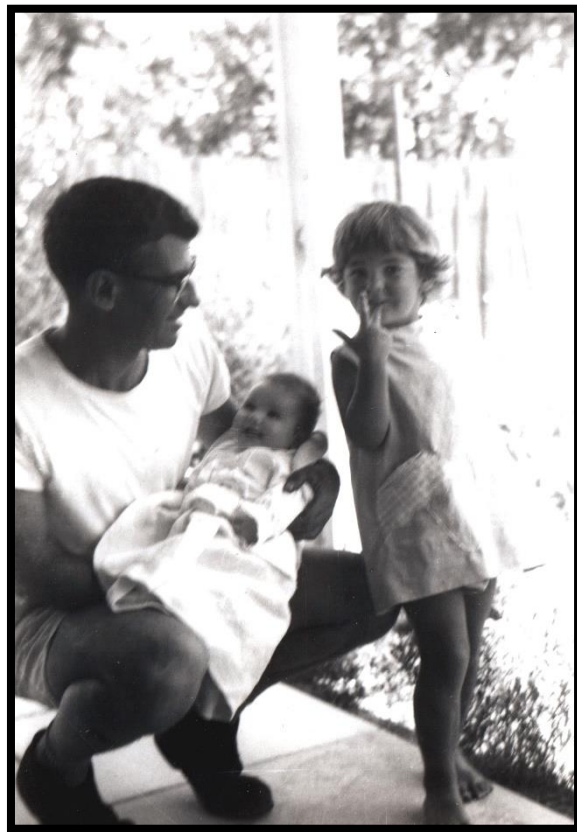
**Fiona:** I admire people with affinity with animals, I think it's a lovely life-long relationship.

**Verity:** Oh yes, she had ... definitely had a life-long relationship with the horses.

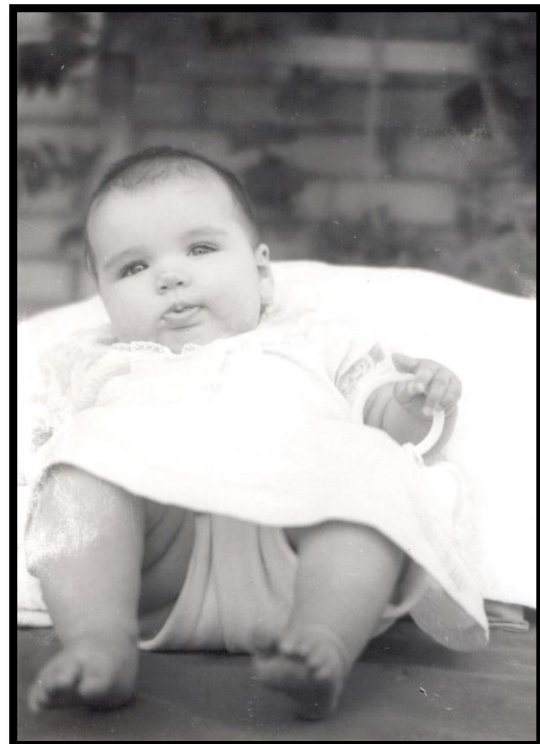


*Alwyne, Verity and Helen Cripps, 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1975. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Fiona:        And your other daughter?



*Helen and Verity Cripps, Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1965; John Cripps, Helen and Alwyne, 1965.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



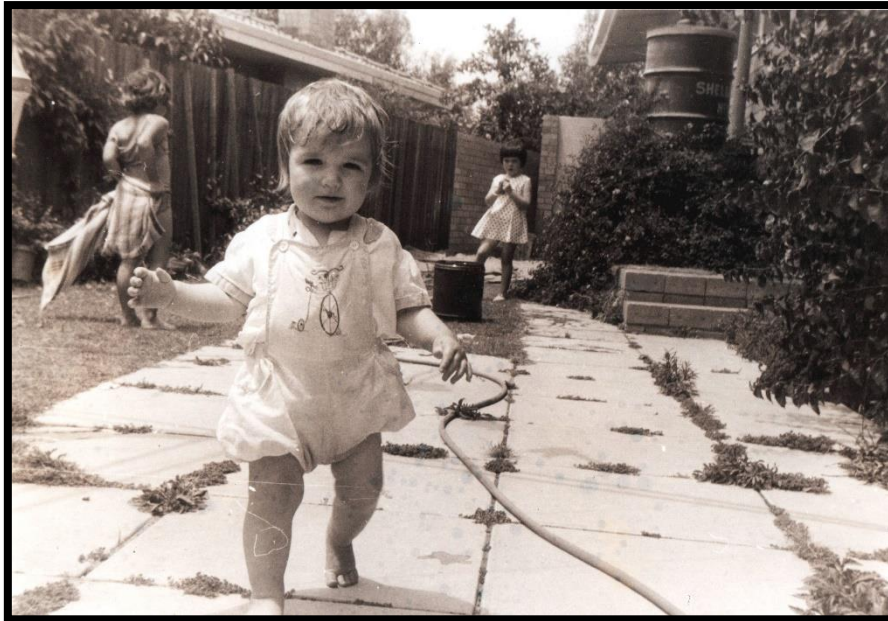
*Helen Cripps, Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1965. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Helen Cripps on the front lawn, Glengariff Drive, Floreat, 1967. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Helen Cripps in the garden, Glengariff Drive Floreat, 1967. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Helen Cripps in the garden Glengariff Drive Floreat; Helen Cripps in home-made rompers, 1967.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Verity:** Well Helen um, she was a bright little soul, and when she was seven, she was complaining about her feet, and we found she had rheumatoid arthritis.

**Fiona:** **Oh muffin!**

**Verity:** Treatments were very primitive then, to put it mildly. The doctor was a cousin. [Laughs] There were only two Rheumatologists and one of them there and one of them happened to be my cousin, Evan Owen, so that became a family hassle and she turned from a bright, cheerful little soul to somebody who was ...

**Fiona:** **A bit sick?**

**Verity:** A bit sick. And that went on ... she sort-of battled away as best she could but they really put her under some terrible things at times. I'll never forget she had to have splints on her arms, and I had to take her to, the children's hospital one day and they were ... going to take the splints off she said, "The physio came at me with a circular saw!"

**Fiona:** **[Laughs]** **28:00**

**Verity:** She's never forgotten that. And I haven't either.

**Fiona:** **I don't blame her!**

**Verity:** No.

**Fiona:** **I do feel for you know ... the things they would have had to go through!**

Verity: She was then about ... eight. Eight, and she had splints on her legs and splints on her hands, and high drug intake. ... we kept her near home, until she got to high school and moved her to Methodist Ladies to be with her sister.



*Helen Cripps 1971. Photo by Peter Ameron, Mt Lawley. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

When she was about 15, we couldn't understand still, where this girl who was very vocal and very bright wasn't achieving much at school. We thought it was her hands ...they were slightly deformed. Then they diagnosed her as dyslexic.

**Fiona:** **Oh, that's quite common.**

Verity: Ah, well, that was alright. We were able to help her more when she was dyslexic. I might say that she managed to get through her TEE. She went to UWA and finished her degree in Commerce.

**Fiona:** **Cool!**

Verity: She got high marks for a Bachelor of Commerce. And then later on she went to Curtin University, and she's got an MBA and then she ... later on she got another scholarship to Edith Cowan and she's now a Doctor.

**Fiona:** Wow. You guys have ah, bred some quite interesting, intelligent daughters.



*Helen Cripps, with the bougainvillea  
and at 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat,  
1980.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps*

**Verity:** Well, she had a little help, because she had difficulty with reading ... She learnt to read slowly, she couldn't always put things down, so she used to dictate her assignments to me, and I was a very fast typist. So, at eight o'clock in the morning, "I've got an assignment in today mum," mum would say Oh! And she would dictate it to me between about nine and ten, ten to half past ten. Verbally! She could come out with ideas like that! Just, it flowed out.

**Fiona:** Wow.

Verity: And she could analyse ideas. And she put things together fabulously. And I'd type it out, give her a draft and then she'd correct the draft and I'd re-type it. And at half past four she'd get in the car and put in her assignment. **30:00**

**Fiona: You're a bit handy to have around!**

Verity: We did the same for her Masters!

**Fiona: Oh my God! Really?**

Verity: Well, she was married for a short time, and I used to have to go where she was living. And the marriage broke up, and she dictated a lot of her master's to me. What got me was, I was bit fussy about my grammar, and they were awfully lazy about the grammar some of those academics. She did her MBA in the late '90's.

**Fiona: Aha!**

Verity: When she eventually found somebody that liked grammar the same as me, which was very good! [Laughs]

**Fiona: Oh, you were like, "Ah! I've done my bit"**

Verity: [Laughs] She did her Doctorate.

**Fiona: Oh gorgeous.**

Verity: I didn't do that much with that, but ...

**Fiona: You'd sort of done your bit?**

Verity: Yes, well she could type a bit by then and ah, often I'd have to go over to the University to help out, I never knew which bit I was doing. It was bits here and bits there. Anyway, she qualified, and she now lectures at Edith Cowan University.

**Fiona: Oh wow!**

Verity: For a dyslexic.

**Fiona: That's pretty amazing.**

Verity: Yes



*Stephen Parker and Helen Cripps, 1999. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:** I think sometimes when people have challenges, they tend to rise to them a little bit more. I might take us back a little bit to Cambridge. and Floreat generally, because you've had a such a commitment to this area, I'd love to hear about some of your favourite spots or places that you visited as a young family or just for yourself?

**Verity:** Well, I used to take the children down to Perry Lakes, and we would wander around there and collect gambezis, the little fish, in the lake nearest to the west. It was full of water then and we'd get a jar and bring the gambezis home and have them in the kitchen, floating around in a jar for a while and then I'd think, "I think it's time we went back to the lakes." So, we'd go back and pour them back into the lake. **32:00**

**Fiona:** [Laughs] Oh that's gorgeous, I love it! I mean this place is so rich in nature and I often think it would have been a lovely place as a child, to wander around and you know, see all the beautiful trees and established gardens even. As they sprouted up. What was it like seeing the neighbourhood kind of evolve?

**Verity:** Well gradually the neighbourhood filled in and filled up, it didn't take terribly long. And there were a lot of young children around too. about the same age as my children. They used to go to Methodist Ladies, well quite a few of the other children on the street went to Methodist Ladies. [Laughs] I'm not being pompous, but it was just that it's ...

**Fiona:** Your story darling, do what you like!

**Verity:** It just fitted in. And I used to collect them from university, from the, school bus stop. Bus used to stop at Perry Lakes, and I used to pick

my daughter up, because she used to have trouble walking. And I'd end up with three or four extras in the car.



*Helen and Alwyne Cripps at Monger's Lake feeding the black swans, 1968.  
Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:** A couple of hats and some hollering. Um ...

**Verity:** When they started school at Floreat Primary became secretary of the P and C down there and I was secretary of the P and C for a couple of years. Then I ended up in the canteen and later on I helped out in the library a bit. I got involved in other things and I always did a bit of voluntary work here and there.

**Fiona:** What was your favourite volunteer work?

**Verity:** Well, I suppose the thing I became most involved in was consumerism. In the 1975's I joined the Women's Electoral Lobby ...

**Fiona:** Okay.

**34:00**

**Verity:** Which was an off-shoot of the Women's Harvest Guild which was politically inclined and Feministic too. I thought it was women trying to make their way in the world. It wasn't quite me, I was still pretty-well a homebody. But at any rate, they were stimulating. For a year I edited and put together four to five hundred copies and posted, their Newsletter, about five or six pages. Then somebody said, "Oh, we'll take on the consumer angle," which I did. The Department of Consumer Protection in 1974, called a meeting of organisations who had some connection with consumers, and I was asked to go along and became Secretary of the Consumer's Association of Western Australia. It consisted of about twelve organisations at the time.

**Fiona:** **What were their kind of, objectives? When you say consumers?**

Verity: Well, there wasn't much help for consumers back then. I was thinking one of the things we did was, when you went to the doctor, the doctor would give you the script with "Take as directed." Well, how many people remember? Particularly old people, who have quite a few prescriptions, when to take their prescriptions. So, we nagged at the pharmacy council, and eventually brought in that now the pharmacist put directions on medication.

**Fiona:** **Really? Wow!** Probably saved some lives there for sure.

Verity: We did a lot of other things. Another thing I always remembered, the banks, if you went to the banks you used to stand there, there were several queues, and you'd get in the queue and sometimes you'd be in a queue for ever so long because somebody in the front of the queue had a lot of business. So, we nagged the banks, so that they now have one queue and when a girl's free you go in. I was there the other day, and somebody took about twenty minutes to do something but fortunately there was another girl behind another counter who could clear the queue a bit quicker. 36:00

**Fiona:** **Well, it all makes such a difference to the way things are run. I remember doing a unit in facilitating continuous improvement and sometimes it can be the smallest thing that can just change ... some things.**

Verity: Yes, well they were the small things. We put in lots of submissions for legislation. I sat on the Board administering the Credit Act.

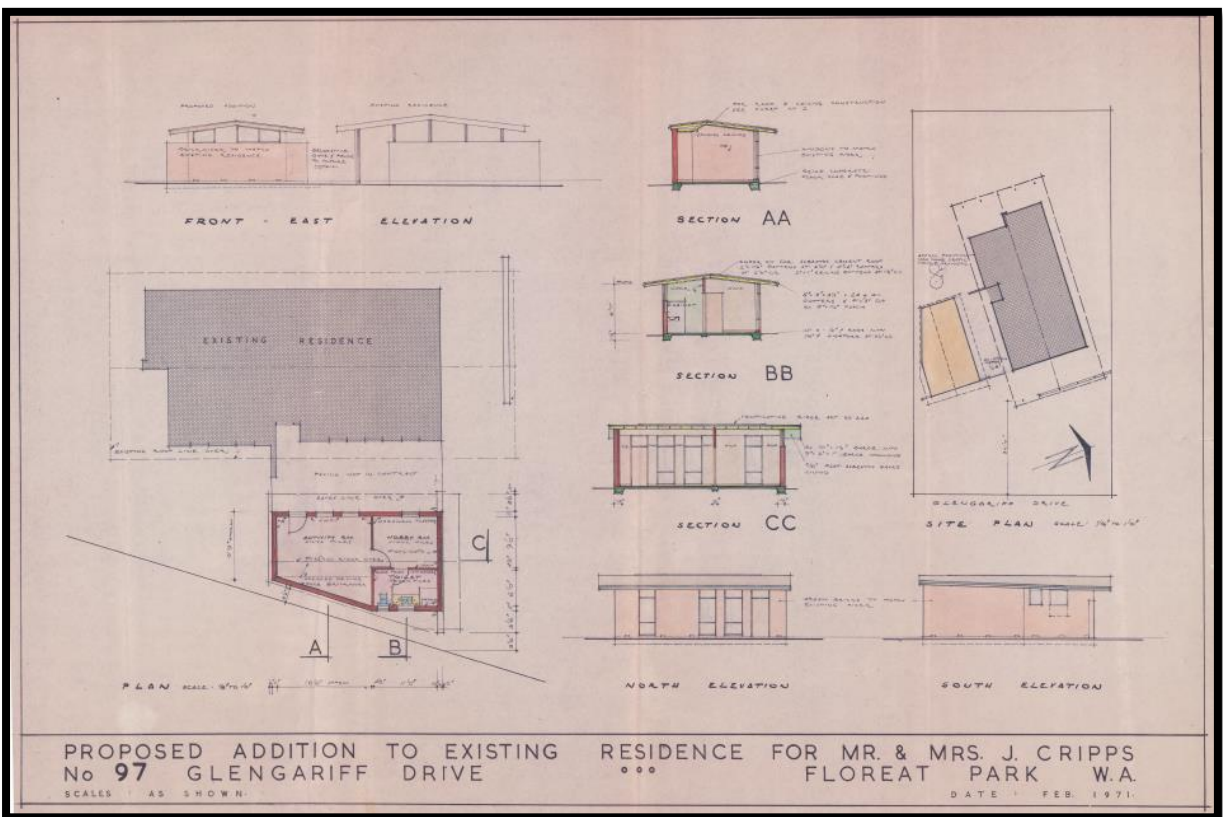
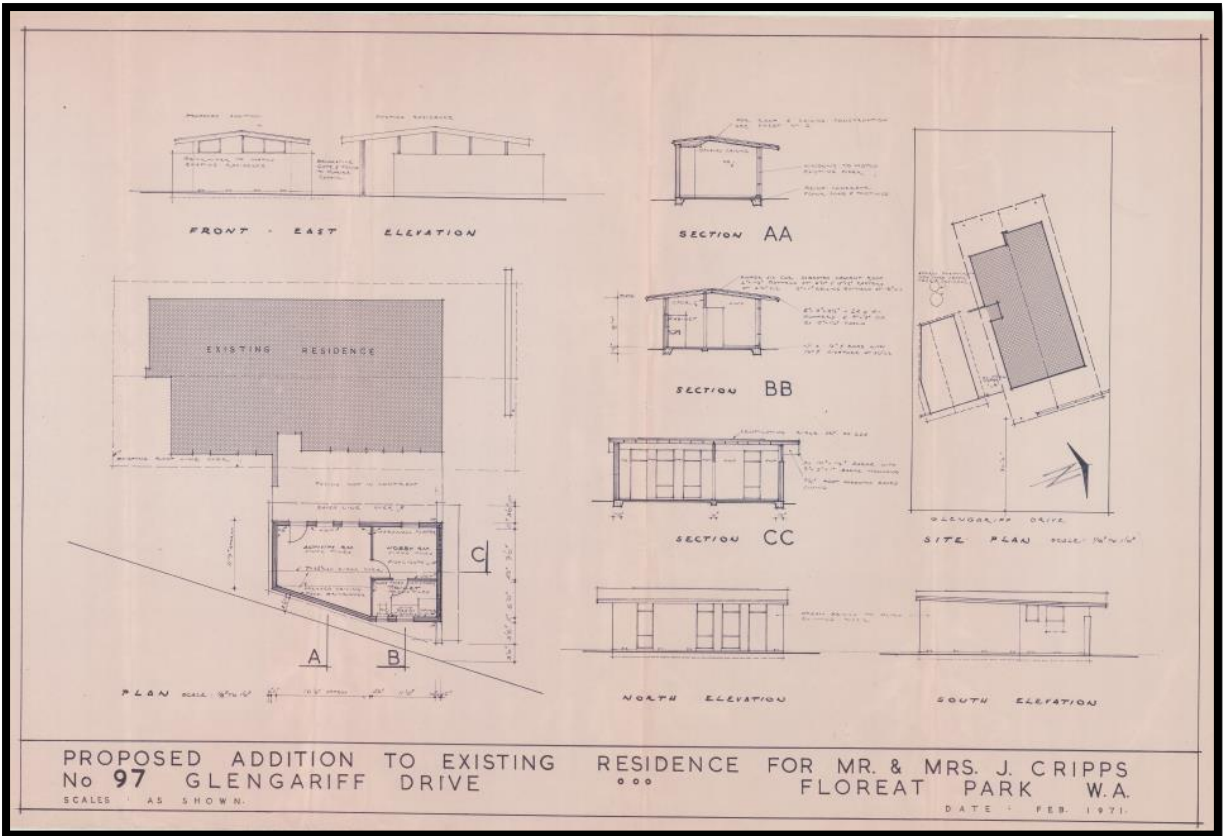
**Fiona:** **Okay.**

Verity: Sat on that for a while. I also was a deputy on the Motor Vehicles Dealers' Board, on the Home Buildings Tribunal and I also on the Shopping Hours Advisory Committee. Over about fifteen years, I was on one or two at a time as a consumer representative.

**Fiona:** **What interests you now in that sense? I mean, it's natural to wind things back a bit and focus on your own personal life, when you look at the kind of way things are run in the world today, what are things that come to mind and you think, "Oh, well I was sort of doing something about that, this is what I'd do?"**

Verity: Well, there's so much legislation now, and the people know where to go. They can get a lot of help really; Consumer Protection covers most of things that we used to get requests about. People ring up here sometimes, I say well, if I can't help them I say, "Go to Consumer Protection." If it's money I might say to Credit Legal Service, just for advice or something like that. Whereas a lot of those didn't exist back in 1974. 38:00





*Proposed addition to existing residence for Mr & Mrs J Cripps,  
 97 Glengariff Drive Floreat Park WA, 197, designed by Gordon Palmoja.  
 Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona: And was it comfortable?**

Verity: Well, we lived in the main house, and I'm used to it. John's mother, who stayed about three months. But then she said, "Everybody's so young out here." She was only 82, so she returned to England and her own home.

**Fiona: To the old country.**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: It's an interesting thing, isn't it? When people come ... they come for a long time, it's sort of almost an old-fashioned notion. But how long did she stay?**

Verity: About three months.

**Fiona: Yeah, that's a nice little taste of Australia.**

Verity: She met her grandchildren. John was an only son, and his father died about 1968. But we did go ... my husband and the two children went to England in 1969 for about six weeks.

**Fiona: Oh, that must have been a nice little break for you?**

Verity: Well, we went under this sort of Britain's people going home group. This group used to hire a plane and fill it up with people who wanted to go back to see their families in England. It was a lot cheaper than flying by the normal airlines. **42:00**

**Fiona: Wow, that would be nice!**

Verity: So, we did that.

**Fiona: And whereabouts in ...?**

Verity: Sussex.

**Fiona: Sussex?**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: And did you guys have a good trip?**



*Sheffield Park Gardens East Sussex, 1997. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Verity: Oh yes! We stayed with John's mother, oh except I managed to get one of my eternal chest colds and ended up in hospital!

**Fiona: [Laughs]**

Verity: Um ...

**Fiona: How inconvenient. [Laughs]**

Verity: I was shocked by the conditions, to put it mildly. They had a bathroom, but the baths were covered with boards and covered in flowers. And it wasn't for a few days that I found out they did have a shower out on the veranda. I think there were sixteen in the ward ... [Laughs] As you got better they moved you up the ward, and I said to my husband "Gee, that was a pretty horrible hospital." He said, "My grandfather established that for old people."

**Fiona: [Laughs] And you're like, well, I'd like a word with him!**

Verity: I said so much [Laughs].

**Fiona: That's funny!**

INTERVIEW PAUSED

RESUMES AT 43:12

**Fiona:** So, Verity, we touched on your ancestor, which side was it Ada Bromham was on? Your mother's side?

Verity: She was my mother's sister, there were thirteen in the family and Ada would have been about the sixth and my mother was about the ninth.

**Fiona:** Large family! So, Ada was a noted feminist and temperance worker, who arrived in W.A. in 1893.



*Ada Bromham - 1929 - 1930 State President of the Women's Service's Guild.  
Image courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

Verity: Yes. Ah, she started a shop in Claremont with the Smith family. She was able to be very successful, and then she stood for parliament in 1921. And there was a very good vote, Ada was keen on the temperance movement and a lot of her interests were along those lines. But though she came second in the voting, the family always said that the Old Men's Home in Nedlands, all voted against her because they didn't like her temperance tendencies. **44:00**

**Fiona:** [Laughs] And for those who don't know what temperance is, it's basically diligence around alcohol consumption, isn't it?

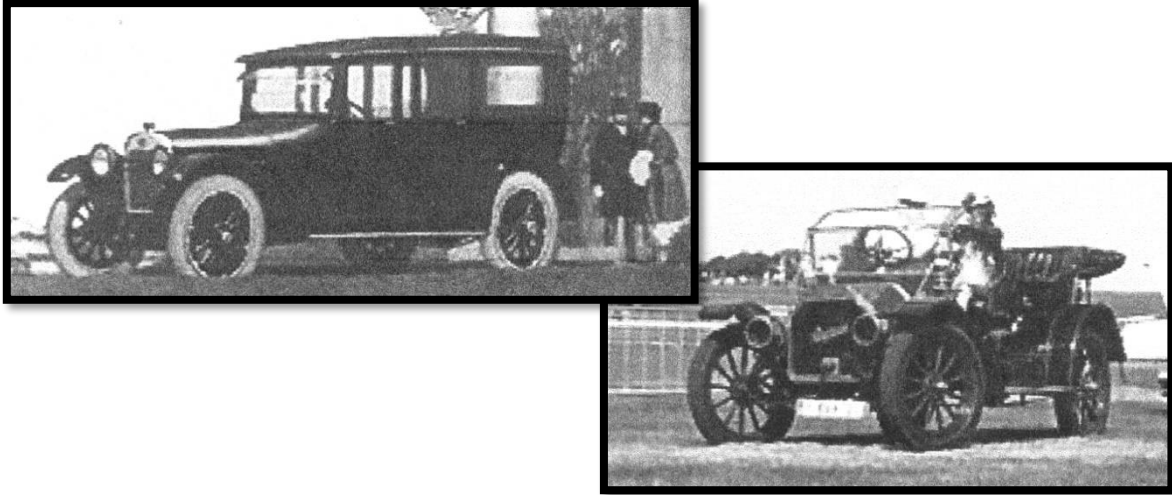
Verity: Yes. it started in the 1850s, the temperance movement in America and then it moved to Britain in about 1870s. And it was really concerned that so many men were spending their money on alcohol and coming home, no money for the wives and they were often bashing the wives up. This group tried to say that they shouldn't drink so much, and hopefully rescuing the women from being bashed up and abused and abandoned so much. That was the base of it.

**Fiona:** I like her style. I mean I think it's sort of ... ah, it seems a little bit dated for someone from my generation, but it really isn't. In a way you know. It's probably awkwardly said. So, Ada was a secretary of the Australian Women's Equal Citizenship Federation in 1925 ...

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona:** Has your family shed any light on these activities? Or what do you sort of know about these pursuits she was involved in?

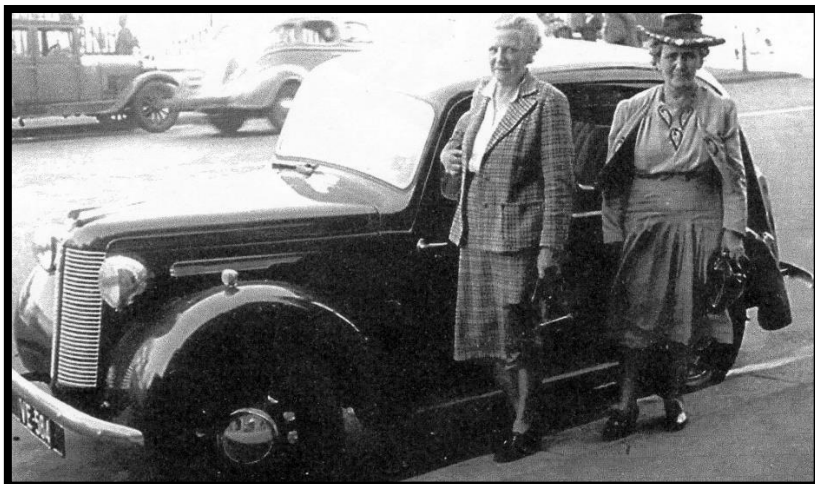
Verity: We lived in the Goldfields, well at least my family, my parents and I did until 1938 and it was only when she used to pass through on her trips from the Eastern States, she stayed when she drove overland. She was a great driver prior to the 1920's, she had an Oakland car, and she was known as a hill driver.



*Oakland Sensible Six Sedan, from 1917 magazine advertisement; Oakland 40, 1909. Images courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

There was always discussion in the family as to who was the first woman to get a driver's license. Dr. Jull, who was then the Medical Officer at Schools, got the first license, but Ada taught her how to drive. So, in the family, there was a lot of discussion as to who really was the better driver.

**46:00**



*Ada Bromham and Miss McCorkindale, Austin 14/6, Adelaide, 1938. Image courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

**Fiona:** I love it.

**I have a piece of information here that basically Ada left Perth in 1934 to become a national reporting secretary for the Union in Melbourne. She conducted a Tasmanian campaign for six o'clock closing and then sailed in 1935 for a Union Convention in Stockholm. And another British Commonwealth League Conference in London and Europe.**

Verity: Well one of the stories about her coming back from one of those conferences.

**Fiona: That's okay, we can edit any pauses, it's fine.**

Verity: In 1934 she went to the WCTU Conference in Stockholm with another woman, and they travelled for about a year. And during the trip she took advantage of a journey by train from London to Tokyo for twenty-nine pounds.



*Ada Bromham in press photo, taken on her arrival in Hong Kong, 21st May 1952.  
Image courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

**Fiona: Love it.**

Verity: This was called travelling hard. Probably economy in today's language. But she said the comforts were sufficient throughout the journey and she was quoted in the press as saying when she got back, "The itinerary was across Europe and right through Russia. Clean bed linen in sealed bags was provided three times a week. While once a day, at certain stops, an army of women cleaners mopped out each carriage with disinfectant."

**Fiona: Wow! What a trip. 48:00**

Verity: She did several trips to Europe, and again another one she did in the 1950's as she became interested in the Chinese Australian Friendship Society. And in May 1952, joined a peace delegation to Peking.



*Girls Middle School attached to Peking National University, 1952.  
Image courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

There were allegations of German warfare in Korea. So, the party was rather unpopular, and on return to Australia all the papers and literature collected by the party were seized by the customs in Sydney. So, she was quite a character. In the later years, in the '50s, she was lived a long time in Brisbane, where she was working on Aboriginal matters.

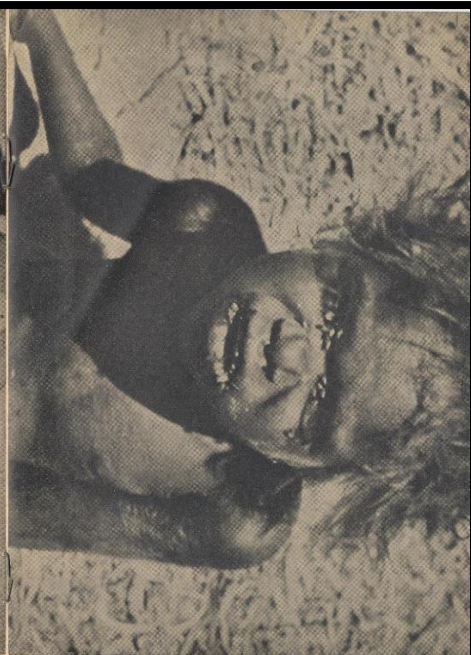
**Fiona:** Yes, I touched on that and it's a bit close to my heart, um ...

**Verity:** Yes. She produced two leaflets:  
1. The Plight of Aborigines in Western Australia





In 1937 a survey conducted by the Western Australian Public Health Department established that over 50% of aborigines in the Laverton-Warburton area are infected with the disease known as Yaws.



The Public Health Department survey also disclosed that some 77% of all aborigines in the Laverton-Warburton area suffered from the eye disease, Trachoma. The same incidence of Yaws and Trachoma exists today!



Children near the Rawlinson Ranges. . . . The natives cherish clothes in this region and wear until they become so tattered that they fall from their backs. Photographs in this pamphlet illustrate the conditions described by the Select Committee.

#### NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR DESERT NATIVES

Evidence from the Officers of the W.A. State Welfare Department disclose that the Department is not prepared to take responsibility for the desert natives in their Territory. They claim that the financial resources of the Department are insufficient.

For this reason, no action has been taken by the Government to establish the hundreds of natives and their families in A New Way of Life. Most of them are willing and able to work. Land and water can be made available and a Co-operative or Communal Settlement such as outlined by Mr. W. Grayden, M.L.A., leader of the Investigating Committee, would provide a home base and enable them to qualify for Federal Social Service Benefits.

#### IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THERE IS NO MONEY AVAILABLE

Charity begins at home, but in recent years Australia has contributed through the Colombo Plan THIRTY MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS AND AN INCREASE AMOUNT HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR 1958-59.

In addition between 6,000 and 7,000 Asian students have received training in our educational institutes.

SURELY AUSTRALIA CAN ALSO PROVIDE THE MONEY NEEDED TO ESTABLISH IN THE UNINHABITED SPACES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY AND CO-OPERATIVE SETTLEMENTS WHICH WILL ENABLE OUR STARVING NATIVES TO GROW THEIR OWN FOOD, BUILD THEIR OWN HOMES, AND SCHOOLS TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN IN THEIR OWN CENTRES.

So can the bad old system of "Hand-Outs" be abolished and "The First Australians" be no longer classed as a "Dependent and, a Dying Race" but an asset to the country which is theirs as well as ours.

#### FELLOW CITIZENS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Will you support a request to the Government of the State to provide opportunities for "A New Way of Life" for the nomadic natives and their families such as outlined by the Parliamentary Investigation Committee or other constructive plans?

If you agree, will you please write or see the Member for your electorate asking his support for this important Human Objective. Thanking you in anticipation.

Ada Bromham, Superintendent Native Races Department,  
Women's Christian Temperance Union,  
14 Aberdeen Street, Perth,  
Western Australia.

James D. Reeves & Son — Printers — 4 Onslow Road — Subiaco.

*The Plight of Inland Aborigines in Western Australia.  
Printed by James D Reeves & Sons, c.1959.  
Images courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

## 2. The First Australians and The New Australians.

*The*  
**FIRST AUSTRALIANS**  
*and the*  
**NEW AUSTRALIANS**

▼

---

PREPARED AUGUST, 1959  
by  
**Ada Bromham**  
14 Aberdeen Street, Perth, Western Australia

This is one of the vital questions that must be decided by Australian citizens if such projects are approved.

**CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS IS THE ONLY ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM.**

See the rights of Indigenous and Tribal People as set out in the "International Labour Office Convention, No. 107," for information as to how far Australia is behind international standards in the treatment of her aborigines.

**A NEW WAY OF LIFE**

**Co-operatives a Success.**  
Justice demands that the aboriginal people shall be allotted land to work in their own right or in the co-operative way which fits so well into their background and is proving a success wherever it has been developed. Outstanding examples are the A.B.M. Christian Community Co-operative at Lockhart River, North Queensland, of which the directors and members of the committee are natives. Rev. A. Clint, who is responsible for this splendid move, speaking to a meeting in Adelaide, South Australia, said: "You don't need any more to send your old clothes to Lockhart River for the aborigines. They buy their own clothes at their own co-operative."

There is also the Mining Co-operative of the Pindin tribe near Port Hedland, Western Australia, conducted by five or six hundred natives living in a well-planned village.

At Point Pearce, South Australia, the newly-formed Aboriginal Trading Co-operative is well established and a £12,000 turnover is expected this year.

**The Success of these Ventures.**  
Lead to the conclusion that co-operatives are suitable to the communal characteristics of original aboriginal culture, and that this development along modern lines can prove a key to the policy of integration and the ultimate goal of the abolition of racial discrimination.

**IMPORTANT!—Ask your Federal Member to SUPPORT CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR ALL FIRST AUSTRALIANS.**



School Teacher, MAY MILLER, says that she will not pay to become an Australian Citizen—because she is one already!

*"I will not become a citizen until citizenship is given me as a birthright."*

PORT PRINTING WORKS — FREMANTLE

**Why Discriminate Against The Old Australians?**  
Property or Persons.

Mary M. Bennett, who for many years has been in personal contact with the tragic results of our policy towards the first Australians, writes: "There is no sadder sight than those fine desert people with their better concepts of a co-operative civilisation lost in our competitive civilisation that cared for property but not for persons."

**A Comparison and A Challenge.**  
The Report of the Tenth Australian Citizenship Convention held at Canberra, 1959, gives important information and a challenge that Australians can no longer ignore.

The Convention was attended by 250 delegates consisting of Commonwealth and State Members of Parliament, representatives of Trade Unions, Commerce, Church, voluntary organisations, the Good Neighbour Movement and notable overseas visitors.

**NEW AUSTRALIANS APPRECIATED**

In opening the Convention the Governor General, Sir William Slim, said, "Without the contribution that immigrants have made, our country could not have achieved the prosperity and progress that it has." No reference was made to the fact that the two basic Australian industries, cattle and sheep-raising, could not have been established and carried on for more than a century and a half without the help of the aboriginal population, used by the white settlers until recent years as unpaid and casual workers.

**OLD AUSTRALIANS DISCREDITED**

**Extermination the Early Policy.**  
When the first settlers arrived in 1788, the estimated number of aborigines was 300,000. The present estimate is 75,000 for the whole of Australia, but many of these are only part Aborigines. They are the children of white men classified as Aborigines. It will be noted that in the Southern and Eastern States where the newcomers first landed the decrease in the native population is the greatest. The original number in Tasmania was given as 3,000, not one member of those tribes survives today.

The white man had arrived—the product of an advanced civilization which he was not prepared to share with the people whose country he had taken. The attitude to the Aborigines was that they were so incapable of learning anything that the final answer was their extermination.

In the larger States the same policy was followed. The native people, deprived of their hunting grounds, lost all opportunity to remain self-supporting. They were driven back to the less fertile areas, into native reserves, or were helped to exist by the church missions. No provision was made for them to own land, or be taught to grow crops for themselves, and so increase their food supply, nor were they taught anything about the way of life which the white race was introducing into their country. They could neither keep their standard of physical fitness nor their native dignity as human beings.

**A Challenge -**  
**Why Not Provide the Same Opportunities for our Native People?**

It is the right thing to help our Asian neighbours, but our first responsibility is to make amends for past wrongs towards our native people who are not recognised as human beings under the Federal Constitution and are excluded from receiving Social Service payments because they are not registered as citizens of the Commonwealth. Many are unable to find work or food and the reports of starving natives can be verified. At least three aboriginal children die of hunger in Australia every week. In the Northern Territory one of every five aboriginal children die before it is a year old and *malnutrition is the most frequent cause of death.*

The Federal Government has now suggested that food rations may be made available for starving natives, but not for nomads. Surely all descendants of the first Australians are entitled to a share of the food which their own country produces. At the same time the Government has offered to build shelters for the homes of pastoralists as a protection against the danger of atomic missiles. Unfortunately, the nomadic aborigine in Central Australia cannot stay in one place—he must continue to move about in search of the ever-decreasing food or starve. Must they take the chance of destruction through ignorance of modern warfare, or has the Defence Department a plan to safeguard them as human beings? *Other Australians and their families are also protected.*

**Charity Begins at Home, and the Opportunity is Here Now.**  
In 1958 the then West Australian Minister for Land and Agriculture, Mr. Kelly, reported that there is first class pastoral country between the Rawlinson and Blackstone Ranges. The survey party covered an area of 40,000 square miles suitable for development. There are a great many of the native people already equipped to carry out this work and become permanent settlers on cattle and sheep stations. Here the families can be educated and integrated into their Australian heritage. Such a scheme could be successfully established and would give the aborigines the opportunity to take their rightful place in constructive building for their own country.

**But Another Plan is Urged.**  
This places development for profit before the Human Rights of the native people. Australian Governments have now under consideration a request from United States investors to take over a large area of land in N.W. Australia to develop and it is suggested that the Commonwealth Development Bank may help with the finance. In that case the Australian Taxpayer would be primarily responsible.

**Democracy in Danger.**  
If such a scheme is agreed to, a point of utmost importance to our political, democratic and trade union standards is who will constitute the working forces for such investing companies? Will they be Australian citizens and immigrants from overseas who have the right of citizenship and must be paid the basic wage, social security payments and other benefits established by Australian workers, or would the workers consist of aboriginal station hands, fully qualified for landwork but not counted as citizens and thus available as a source of cheap labour for the development companies?

Eventually, as in Western Australia, the process of starvation began. Figures given show a decrease of 9,201 between 1957 and 1959.

**THE COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION — AN OBSTACLE Not Recognised as Human Beings.**

Certain sections of the Federal Constitution appear to prevent the Federal Government from enacting legislation for Aborigines. This deprives them of their right to citizenship, and their right to be recognised as human beings with a part to play in the new life developing in their own country.

Article XXVI, Section 51, refers to the Federal Laws and to whom they shall apply, it reads: "The people of any race, *other than the Aboriginal race* in any State for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws."

**Census.**

Under this heading Article VII, Section 121 reads: "In reckoning the number of people of the Commonwealth or of a State or part of the Commonwealth the Aboriginal natives shall not be counted." The direct result of this section has been the lack of a census and worthwhile accurate knowledge of our native population and it implies that for the purpose of statistics the Aborigines in Australia *do not exist*. At the same time the Commonwealth Year Book gives the number of cattle, sheep and other animals in the Federal Territory.

**NOT CITIZENS BUT ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

Over 150 years later there are still thousands of Original Australians fully equipped as workers on pastoral properties whose services have been and still are indispensable to the development of this country, but who are denied the right of Citizenship and the rights which go with it. It is imperative that these sections of the Commonwealth Constitution shall be amended and dark and white Australians placed on the same basis under the laws.

**Their Value Recorded in State Report.**

The Queensland State Native Affairs Department Report, 1955, gives the numbers engaged in pastoral work in that State as 4,500 in addition to 1,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders engaged on their home settlements and Missions, and states: "The services these people have given to the community are generally recognised as essential to the successful running of many pastoral properties." In the beginning food was supplied to regular station hands but the majority are only needed for certain periods and are then told by their employers "to go walk-about" but game is becoming increasingly scarce as the cattle clear up the natural plant life. When wages stop it means unemployment and starvation for the family. "Hence their influx to centres where they hope to find work or food, and the time comes when the undernourished children are taken from their parents and placed in institutions and the whole family is disrupted."—M.M.B.

**Insufficient Pay to Live Decently.**

The Special Committee appointed in 1958 found that wages paid to Aboriginal workers on the Goldfields areas of Western Australia vary

from one to two pounds a week to about half the basic wage and that five pounds a week would be required to keep a family. It is not surprising that the children of the Australian Aborigines have the highest *Child Death Rate of any country and malnutrition is the most frequent cause of death.*

**West Australian Government has No Solution.**

The publicity given to the starving conditions of the natives on the Northern and Goldfields areas with pictures proving these reports brought demands from the people that the Government take action to prevent the continuance of such cruelty. Work on stations in these districts is seasonal and limited. It is not the natives fault that they cannot find other work and do not receive the Social Service Benefits as all other Australian workers do. To meet the situation the W.A. Commissioner for Native Affairs issued a directive which says, "In an attempt to maintain subsidy within our Department's means I have decided not to subsidise adult natives under sixty years of age, according to the records of the Department, with the exception of those totally and permanently incapacitated."

**No Money to Help the First Australians.**

Funds are necessary to help the Aboriginal people to take their place as citizens and workers in their own country but under the Colombo Plan Australia is spending millions of pounds to educate and train people from 15 Asian countries in our neighbourhood. In January 1958, the Hon. R. G. Casey, Minister for External Affairs, said, "There are no racial barriers in Australia, where 6,000 Asian students are training in Universities, schools, hospitals, Government Departments and with private firms . . . I have never come across a case in which an Asian student has not been happy and contented and received on terms of complete equality."

**Australia's Record in Regard to the Aboriginal People.**

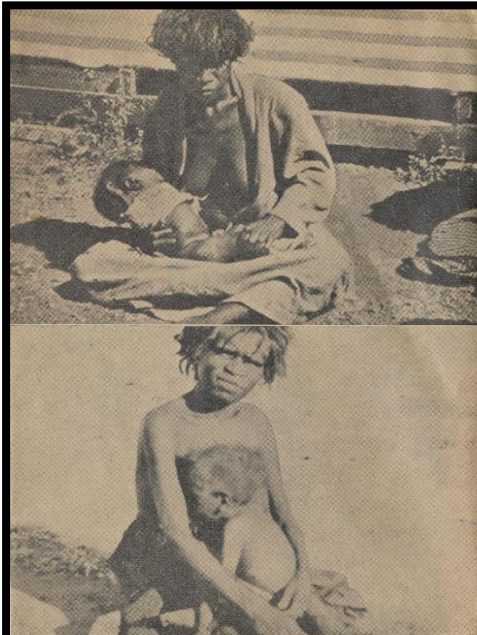
When the white men took possession of this country in 1788 the Aboriginal population was estimated at 300,000. Today it is 75,000. In all these years they have had *neither social, political, nor educational equality, such as Mr. Casey advocates and Australia is helping to secure for Asian people.*

**The Colombo Plan.**

During the year 1957-58 Australian expenditure on capital and technical assistance to assist Asian people and others amounted to 5 million pounds, bringing our total contribution since the beginning of the Colombo Plan to 27.3 million pounds. Education and Training at schools and universities was provided for 2,286 Asian students. The major fields in which the trainees have studied were engineering, nursing, education, science, medicine, health, arts. 626 awards have been granted under the correspondence scheme.

**Experts.**

284 Australian experts were in the field as well as another 30 advising. The cost of the experts' services last year was over £200,000. Another £200,000 was spent on technical equipment. *It is planned to increase this help during the current financial year.*



Above: A native mother and child outside the Warburton Mission hospital during the visit by members of the Select Committee. Note the burn scars on the thigh and abdomen of the child. Below: The same mother and child four months later at Mittiga rock hole. The baby was listless and emaciated and the mother was very weak. The child died a few days later.

**A CALL COMES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR STATE ON BEHALF OF THE NOMADIC NATIVES IN THE LAVERTON-WARBURTON RANGE AREA.**

In the year 1956 public concern was expressed at the report that the Commonwealth Government will begin a series of tests from the new atomic proving ground in Central Australia. Questions on the possible effects of the tests on the nomadic tribal aborigines in the centre of our continent were asked of the Minister of Native Welfare.

**FIVE YEARS AGO**

On 26th September in the Legislative Assembly there was a further development when Mr. W. Grayden (South Perth) moved: "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into all matters appertaining to the Health and General Welfare of, and future plans for, the aborigines in the Laverton-Warburton Range area. On 17th October, 1956, the resolution for a Parliamentary Investigating Committee was adopted unanimously and the following Members appointed: Mr. Grayden, Mr. Bower, Mr. Oldfield, Mr. Lapham, Mr. Bhatnagar. Thus the three political parties were represented on the Committee. After an exhaustive investigation they arrived at the following:—

**CONCLUSIONS**

The Committee has arrived at the conclusion that the plight of the aborigines in the Warburton-Laverton area is deplorable to the extreme. The natives lack even the most basic necessities of life. Malnutrition and blindness and disease, abortion and infantile and burns and other injuries are commonplace. Game is extremely scarce on the Reserve, water supplies for drinking precarious, and adequate medical attention far beyond the resources of the Warburton Mission. Employment opportunities for Mission educated children are hopelessly insufficient and in the circumstances education only serves to leave them more poorly fitted for fending for themselves when thrown back on their own resources at the completion of that education. Immediate food and medical aid are urgently necessary for these people and permanent provision for them a pressing obligation on the State.

**SHOCKING CONDITIONS OF ABORIGINES IN INLAND WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Notwithstanding the damning report of the Parliamentary Select Committee, and the subsequent medical survey, virtually nothing has been done to improve the conditions of the aborigines in the inland areas of Western Australia. **FIVE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED.**

But no action has been taken to reduce the 77% incidence of trachoma. Nothing has been done to reduce the 25% incidence of yaws. Starvation still takes place in bad seasons.

In the Goldfields regions some 2,000 aborigines lead a hand-to-hand existence. No employment is available, and because they have to be constantly on the move in order to survive they have no fixed place of abode, and are therefore ineligible for social services **PAYMENTS.**

*The First Australian's and the New Australian's by Ada Bromham, August 1959. Port Printing Works, Fremantle. Images courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

Well, she prepared those when she came back to Perth in 1959 and I do have copies of them, which I'm going to put in the Battye Library.

**Fiona: I would love that, these are amazing. Prepared August 1959. Aberdeen Street.**

Verity: She was staying in Willard House then, which was the WCTU head offices.

Fiona: **So the WCTU, what did that stand for?**

Verity: Women's Christian Temperance League.

Fiona: **Aha, oh these are amazing, thank you so much. What an amazing woman. I've got a little story that perhaps I might get you to read out? It's that bottom one there.**

Verity: Oh, according to family tradition, I mentioned about she had Oakland car. I even found a copy of the photograph of one of them. We did have a family photograph, but things got lost in the course of fifty, sixty years.

Fiona: **[Laughs]**

**50:00**



*Bromham Family Photo, possibly 1920s, possibly Southwest. Image courtesy of Verity Cripps.*

Verity: According to family traditions, she drove many miles along the lonely Belladonna track in 1931, on a punctured tyre that she had successfully plugged with a cork. Then she did another trip overland... she was late, and my father started to organise a search party for her and then she turned up. She had a habit of doing that when my father lived in Kalgoorlie. Of course, she would call in and stay with them. Ah, but she always got through.

**Fiona:** **She was missing in action.**

Verity: [Laughs] Well she wasn't, she turned up! [Laughs]

**Fiona:** **Oh, wow! I love her bravery.**

Verity: And she did stand for Parliament again for the seat of Unley in South Australia in 1941. Because I remember my eldest sister preparing maps so that her canvassers could go around to canvas people for votes. But she didn't get in. She was a Justice of the Peace.

**Fiona:** **She was? Wow.**

Verity: Ada died in 196 ... before they had this referendum.

**Fiona:** **Oh, before the referendum!**

Verity: March 1960. Yes, and a lot of her work in Queensland was to do with the referendum they had for the Aboriginals in 1966, when they got the vote. And she died just before it came out.

**Fiona:** **Oh bless her soul.**

Verity: Which she would have been delighted to know, had she known.

**Fiona:** **That's so special**

Verity: Yes. She has been mentioned several times ... of her work in connection with the activities for that. **52:00**

**Fiona:** **Well, you know, it sounds like Ada and yourself Verity, have really dug your teeth into important issues in our society. And not all people have had the opportunity to do that or have had the tenacity. So, I really thank you for sharing your contribution to W.A. and Australia with me today and with our listeners. Is there anything else you'd like to sort of sign off with? Or any little anecdotes that you would like to have recorded?**

Verity: Well ... Floreat's very developed since they got the shopping centre there. I remember before it was there. We had the Neighbourhood Watch, I belonged to that, which closed down about a year ago. My husband did a lot of um, door-knocking for the heart cancer and arthritis um, organisations, for about fifteen years. He used to organise a couple of hundred people knocking. We did Floreat, Wembley and Jolimont. And it was just one weekend, but we used to raise quite a lot of money. I can't say I enjoyed door-knocking, but after a while you just literally turn off.

**Fiona:** **I understand, I've done it myself. You sort of ... you become a little bit of a robot.**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: So that sort of has that connection with your ... what you went through with your daughter?**

Verity: Yes.

**Fiona: So that's ... that's a really cool contribution.**

Verity: Yes. And ah, my husband of course was away quite a lot in the country, working on his Pink Lady. We did travel quite a lot, um, I think we went to Europe about fifteen times. Sometimes it was unofficially in relation to the Pink Lady, but it was basically our holidays.

**Fiona: Oh, that's beautiful. For those of you who don't know, we ... we have touched on, and this is how we came to meet Verity, John Cripps basically he bred the Pink Lady apple that he's famous for. I didn't want to go into it too much, because I think you've probably lived enough of those stories ...**

Verity: No, no, no.

**Fiona: ... about the Pink Lady. However, um, it's a significant contribution nonetheless fifteen times to Europe! You must have covered a bit of ...** **54:00**

Verity: We walked a long way!

**Fiona: [Laughs]**

Verity: I think I've walked up [Laughs], not up, I have breathing problems. I can walk down, I can walk across mountains, but I reckon I have walked down just about every mountain in Switzerland.



John Cripps Switzerland hike, 1987. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.

And I've walked an awful lot in England.



*John Cripps hiking Lake District UK, 1997. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Verity Cripps hiking Dartmoor UK, 1997. Verity Cripps, view to Italy from Mont Blanc, 1987. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*



*Cottage and garden UK, 1997. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:** I almost fell off a mountain in Innsbruck in Austria last year, so ...

Verity: Innsbruck.

**Fiona:** Yeah, I have so much respect ...

Verity: You fell off?

**Fiona:** Well, I had the wrong shoes on. So, I had to get, kind of, rescued by these lovely Austrian mountain women.

Verity: Oh dear!

**Fiona:** So how did you go? You were having ... you would have had your girls with you there?



*Verity & John Cripps England holiday, 1987. Image courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

Verity: No. We didn't really start until they got to their twenties and were leaving home. I think the youngest one was 19 and the other one was 22 before we started the trips, both still home.



*RHS Wisley Rock Garden, Surrey; John Cripps admiring rhododendrons; Polesden Lacey Gardens, Surrey; Carfe Castle, Dorset; UK, 1997. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:** Good on you.

Verity: We did go to New Zealand, took them both to New Zealand. We did the Milford Track when Helen was 11, and my husband said if she couldn't walk it, he'd carry her.

**Fiona:** [Laughs]

Verity: And the other daughter was 13, she was quite capable of walking, the older one. But the young one with the arthritis. We used to go for holidays each year somewhere locally. Oh, to Rottneest.

**Fiona:** Beautiful there.

Verity: And as I said, partly my husband wanted to go back because of his association with England. And if the walk was more than ten miles, I used to have to ask how far are we going today? If it was more than ten miles I'd say, "Oh, I don't think much of that one."

**Fiona:** [Laughs]

Verity: I think the longest we did was sixteen miles one day [Laughs] walking.

**Fiona:** That's quite a feat!

Verity: Well, what would that be? Twenty, twenty-five kilometres.

**Fiona:** Which explains why you've got such good legs [Laughs]

Verity: [Laughs] Well the feet have survived at any rate! **56:00**



*Dry Stone Hut, Dordogne France, 1997.*

*Delft, Holland, 1997.  
Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*





*Monet's Garden and Monet's Lake, Giverny, France, 1997. Images courtesy of Helen Cripps.*

**Fiona:**        **They say move it or you lose it.**

Verity:        Yes, I know. Well, I still walk, that's why I appreciate the country. I would walk to City Beach up Oceanic Drive or the Boulevard and of course there's the bush on either side and the Golf Club on the Boulevard.

**Fiona:**        **That's a good stint.**

Cripps:        Um, about seven k's, I reckon, there and back.

**Fiona:**        **It's beautiful here, it's a really, really beautiful suburb and um, the nature here is impeccable. I might leave it at that.**

Verity:        Yes, I think so.

**Fiona:**        **[Laughs]**

END OF TRANSCRIPT

<https://vimeo.com/760000720/298f51c588>

