

EDWARD (Ted) STORRY WALTON MEMOIRS (early 1970's)

THE WALTON FAMILY

The James Pollitt Walton family arrived in W.A. from Derbyshire, England around 1890 whereupon James took up the position of Inspector of Schools, a position he held until his retirement in 1912. James and Margaret Walton's family was made up of sons - David Storry Walton, Arthur Hanesworth - daughters Ethel, Annie and Gertrude. David married Amy Beatrice Ottaway in 1903 and the couple had 5 children, Edward was the oldest born in 1904 and it is this son who has written the memoirs covering the years from early c1910 until 1932 – Lyn Myles

TED'S EARLIEST MEMORIES

My earliest memory is of quarrelling with my little brother Ken – we had a real set-to on the floor in the passage that bisected the front portion of our home at 11 Kings Road, Subiaco. In the course of the turmoil Ken managed to bite me which of course sent me bawling. So Mother, restoring order and administering punishment bit Ken so that he would know “what it feels like”. That must have been 60 years ago!!

Subiaco was the newest suburb of Perth, separated by Thomas St. from the very fashionable suburb of West Perth with all its big homes, albeit not all of them were gracious. Our home would not doubt today described as a ‘triple fronted’ villa. At the end of that passage was a door which led via a small porch-like verandah to the bathroom. Turning left, however, was a tiny bedroom on its left, and immediately at its end, the pantry, complete with its cellar in the floor for the storage of butter, eggs, and mild, and on one of the shelves a cask of ginger beer. How they kept it cool is beyond me. On the right was the kitchen with its gas stove and penny-in-the-slot meter beside it. Outside the kitchen door was a rainwater tank shaded by a trellised grape vine whose fruit looked to be the size of plums. The back was under lawn; fantail pigeons in a coop down near the fence, (they didn't last long); a lemon tree near the bathroom outlet. And on Sunday afternoons regularly, Dad, with the book spread out on the lawn under its shade, would relate to Ken and me the story of Pilgrims Progress. On Mondays Mrs Freedy came to do the washing.

Dad worked in “the bank”. Vaguely it worried me. Other boys' fathers went to “the office” every day which somehow or other sounded so much more important than going to “the bank”. We would “see him off” on his bicycle every morning and wait on the verandah to wave to him as he turned up Bagot Road and waved his handkerchief back to us. In the evenings we would watch for the lamplighter with his long pole over his shoulder as he deftly turned on the gas and pushed his pole up to ignite the street lamps. It is interesting to quote here from my Grandfather's diary of 1905 while he was yet in America on his way to London: -

“I must not forget that since I left home (fifteen years) the progress of electricity as an illuminator has been very rapid. I expect I shall not recognise London in its new garb.”

I was born at my Grandfather's home – "Allestree", 24 Colin St., West Perth. Ken first saw the light of day at Mt. Magnet where Dad was branch manager of the Western Australian Bank. Dr Theodore Ambrose, who later became Perth's leading surgeon, was practising there at the time and attended Mother and later moved to Perth where he became our family doctor. In due course he came to visit Kings Rd with Elsie in his little black bag. Unfortunately he was a bit untidy in pushing her in and nipped her, and so gave her a navel. We marvelled at his car. Ken and I would "wind it up" while he was visiting Mother. He always assured us that we had saved him a lot of trouble as he gave the starting handle a deft pull, started the engine and drove away.

Cars were just beginning to appear on the roads amongst the traffic of bicycles, sulkies, carts and lorries. On the cab ranks stood hansom cabs and four wheelers with a nearby water trough for the benefit of the horse and occasional dogs. As there is only one brand of water, fewer troughs were necessary than the petrol stations which replaced them.

Mother came of a most musically gifted family – the Ottaways. Effie was the pianist of the family, Bidy and Gertie (Mrs M.F. Uren) sopranos and Mother had a beautiful contralto voice which, I was told, could have brought her world acclaim had she not chosen marriage. At the age of 16 she sang the contralto part in the Messiah; she sang at the opening on Queens Hall in William St (where the Metro Theatre now stands) and was the leading soloist in Perth Wesley Church choir. I recall as a child lying in bed hearing her at the piano in the "drawing room" singing the old Indian Love Lyrics of Woodford-Finden – songs which were fashionable at the time but fortunately not now. Her teacher was Miss Amy Fuller who said (of herself), "I could have had a career in opera if I had not had a face like a squashed tomato." Visually, as I recall her, I think she was correct. Mother was also adept at playing the piano by ear and would play for us immediately any new songs we brought home from school. It is thus indeed that I got from her later a copy of "Cloud Pictures". Music indeed was ever in our home. Frequently I recall when friends came in, listening to them all singing in harmony round the piano. One of the Plantation Songs, "Shine, Shine Moon", lingers with affection in my memory. I still love it. Somehow or other as I lay in the dark listening to them, or rather to their music, I always wanted to cry.

On other nights "Uncle" Vic and "Aunty" May. (Mr and Mrs V.K. Jones) would come for a game of bridge. And I would be conscious of a period of silence as a hand was played, followed by a burst of conversation as it was completed and the play discussed. The Jones' lived in Bedford Ave., the next street to Kings Rd and had a croquet law where Mother and Dad would often play with them.

Regularly every Saturday we were given our pocket money – three pennies – one to spend, which was soon done, one to save, which was carefully supervised, and one to give away which went into the collection plate at Church on Sunday. And on Sunday there we all were at the Ord St Methodist church – Ken and I in kindergarten chairs at the end of the pew, Dad, Mother and Elsie. Immediately in front of us were my Grandfather, his top hat carefully bestowed under the pew and immaculate in his frock coat, vociferously, if

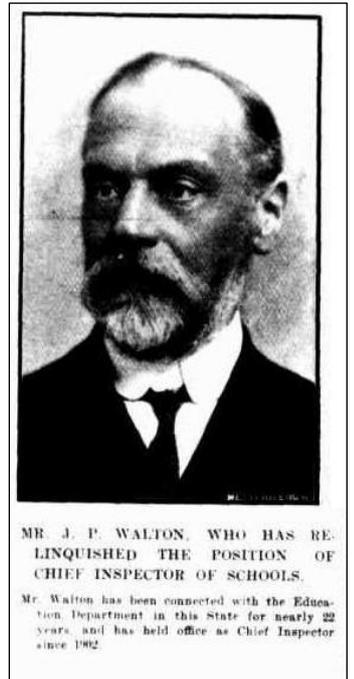
somewhat raucously praising his Maker while he'd breathe, and beside him "little Grandma" in her black beaded bonnet and my Aunts Ethel, Annie and Gertrude, their necks tightly encased in their lace boned collars. There too were John Tucker with his high stiff collar and raucous voice, his shortish wife and son Leith; Dr and Mrs A.J. Wright, dentist, with Aubrey and Thelma; Karl Allen, our neighbour across the road with Ruth and Clive and Clabon and Karl; Mr and Mrs G.P. Schooler who always sat stiffly and erect, ever joined in the singing of hymns and never shut their eyes or bowed their heads during prayer. I peeped and wondered why I had to. I recall the Rev. Joseph Green newly arrived from Africa when he commenced his ministry there; Rev. Harry Langdon, short, rotund and jovial, and the Alexander Hemingway mission when the preacher cracked a joke in the course of his sermon which I appreciated so much that I had to suffer his glares and Mother's hushes before he could proceed. Those were the days, too, when the minister's prayers were frequently and loudly punctuated by fervent "amens" from all quarters of the congregation as his petition met with their agreement.

After church Ken and I always went home with our aunts, whom we ever loved, to dinner at "Allestree", to us a ceremonious affair as Grandpa stood at the head of the table, vigorously sharpening his carving knife while Grandma uncorked a bottle of "ale" and filled his and her glasses, carefully re-corking the bottle. His carving finished, he would say grace and then sit down. After dinner we would be given a segment of chocolate and settled down (I on the sofa I have inherited) to sleep. Later in the afternoon we would walk home. And walking home, at the corner of Colin St and Kings Park Rd was (and is) the house tightly latticed with the dormer windows. It ever fascinated me. How I longed to go inside and climb upstairs and find those rooms, I would still like to do so. It was sold recently to a clinic of doctors for I believe \$47,000.

Grandfather came to Australia about 1889, his doctors having given him five years to live. (he died in 1935). He was a Yorkshire man as his speech ever richly proclaimed. He came to take up a position with the English Department and to prepare a home for his wife and family who arrived in the barque "Helena Mene" in 1891 – Grandma and her five children, the eldest, Dad, 15 years of age. The journey took them 100 days without sighting land until they saw Rottneest. For want of fresh vegetables, daily drinks of ship's lime juice were given to them to prevent scurvy. Their first home was in Mounts Bay Rd near the Emu Brewery, now demolished to make way for the Mitchell Freeway.

Grandpa was below medium height, bright eyed behind pince-nez glasses, wore a short-cropped beard, quick in his movements (as in his wit), and always immaculately dressed, topped off by a bowler hat except on Sundays, when out came the frock coat and top hat. His wide fronted home in Colin St, called "Allestree" (referring to a village near Derby in England) was open house at all times to visitors who constantly called in unannounced, particularly on Saturday nights when Methodist ministers who should have been busy with their Sunday sermons made it their gathering place. I recall his study and particularly the dining room with a table which seemed to me enormous. With sides turned up it became a billiard table – probably three quarter size.

Stories of him are almost legendary. As Chief Inspector of schools, as a mason, as a Methodist layman, he left his mark in time. He loved children. I recall him joining in with the family, singing in such songs as the Derby Ram and The Hen convention. His tour de force, though, was the Laughing Chorus (of which I have a copy). It ends with laughter, (ha ha's in the tune), and Grandpa would always finish up deep in his armchair with his feet high in the air, rocking with laughter. There was an occasion about this time when Mother had taught me and Ken each a hymn "to sing with Grandpa" on his return from England. Elsie was a baby at that time and had picked up "Ken's hymn". I having performed, followed by Ken, Mother said, "Elsie can sing it too, Grandpa". And so she started – "Jesu lover (deep breath) of my sowl." "My sowl" said Grandpa, "what's my sowl?" "No – not my sowl - Ken's" came back Elsie.



Every night, just before bedtime, we had family prayers - we called it "reading". Dad had a booklet or guided readings from the Bible to which he referred. Having announced the passage, one of us would lift down from the top of the piano the appropriate volume of Kitto's family Bible (in two parts) and place it before him at the head of the table, After he had finished the "reading" we would turn and kneel at our chairs while he prayed for all of us. If Grandpa were with us he always led us in prayer. This always impressed us. Even at that early age I sensed without realising it the continuance of the father-son relationship and the deep love of a devout man.

Christmas Eve always found us on tiptoe of excitement. Father Christmas came down the chimney to fill our stockings, each carefully labelled and hung at the foot of our beds. He invariably started filling them by placing an orange in the toe, then proceeded with such gifts as he could fit in to the top. Anything too bulky, such as a Boys Own Annual, he would leave lying at the foot of the bed. One night he left a beautiful book of nursery rhymes lying in the fireplace – addressed to "The Little Waltons, 1st chimney, 11 Kings Rd Subiaco," You all know it. With it too he left a letter which I wish I still had. In a handwriting, remarkably like Mother's, it ensured that we knew the source of each gift.

Other delights, not as exciting of course as Christmas but nevertheless delights included following the water cart spraying unsealed gravel roads to settle the dust, watching and listening to the man with the barrel organ (alas no monkey) grinding out his tunes, listening entranced to the German street band – violin, cello and big harp, running out to the baker's cart to be given – given mark you – a bread roll; birthday parties – two, I remember on one day – Ellie Barker's where the birthday cake, thoughtfully I suppose, was a sponge cake, and Ross Ambrose's (son of the doctor) where the birthday cake, equally thoughtfully possibly, was a rich fruit cake.

School days started at the Thomas St infants' school where Aunt Mable was the headmistress. In due course I was "put up" into the "big school" where John tucker was the

headmaster. John Tucker will long be remembered both as a prominent Methodist layman and as an outstanding teacher. Above medium height, rugged bespectacled feature, stiff high collar, loud harsh voice, he loved children and knew how to teach them and administer a school. We stood in awe of him but were fortunate to be under his charge.

It was at this time – 1910 or 1911 – that Dad took Mother, who had been ill, away for a holiday for ten weeks to Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves. (I did not see the Blue Mountains until 1965 when my mind went back to that time and gave me increased joy.) Elsie was sent to stay at “Allestree” while Ken and I went to live with Mr and Mrs Heales and their delightful teenage daughter Polly at Douro Place, West Perth. Mr Heales was short, round-faced very stooped and slow moving. He was the cleaner-messenger of the Bank of New South Wales and gave out the hymn books and took up the collection regularly twice every Sunday at the Ord St Church. Mrs Heales was short and slight of build, with very bright eyes and a chin just like Punch’s Judy. She too, wore a beaded bonnet. We were very happy with them except when a thunderstorm sent Mrs Heales darting round the house, covering all the mirrors with black clothes so that nothing “would attract the lightning”. Had our heads not been buried under the bedclothes, the place would have looked to us like a mausoleum. That Easter they took us up into Kings Park to roll our eggs – hen eggs hard boiled, the shells coloured, some pink, some blue. We were shown how to roll them down the slopes of the lawn taking care not to crack them.

In 1912 Brian announced his arrival with a lusty cry which continued for many months. He was subject to “nerve storms”, would start crying loudly in his sleep and would continue until, as Mother said, “by smacks at one end and kisses at the other” he was wakened and soothed. It was about this time too that I had to have my tonsils out to enlarge my throat to stop me from choking over my food. I recall being taken to Dr Ambrose’s surgery in Hay St, West Perth for the occasion and walking from there to Grandma Ottaway’s place in Clive St where I stayed for some days – why, I do not know.

Grandma Walton and Grandma Ottaway were both short, but for obvious reasons, one was “little Grandma” and the other “big Grandma”. At that time big Grandma was living in a two-storied weatherboard house in Clive St. My chief recollection of it is trying to race my cousin Mary down the stairs, tripping, and bumping my head on every one of them to the bottom.

MOVING TO DARLINGTON

In 1913 my father sold the house in Kings Rd and we moved to Darlington – 15 miles by rail and one hour in time by train from Perth. In those days it consisted of two largish houses. Leithdale owned by the Leach’s and Holmesdale owned by the Saws, together with about half a dozen or so weekend cottages in the process of becoming homes, and a store. South of the line was the line of the Darlington vineyard (so named), its wine cellar of thick stone walls with high slit windows containing vast barrels of redolent maturing wine. Alongside of it was a low roofed tumbled down shed, one end of which was enclosed for living quarters. It was owned by a Mr Gaze. At the turn-off into Darlington

from the York Rd were the “ruins” – the remains of mud walled huts said to have been built and occupied by convicts engaged in building the road. Dad had built a weekend cottage of wood and asbestos and this now became our home. It consisted of two rooms and a back verandah, one end of which, enclosed, ultimately became the wash house, but at that time served as a bedroom. A bed was slung as a bunk above the other and somehow or other we all fitted in.

A different way of life followed in all of which we as children were happy. Kerosene lamps replaced electric light; there was plenty of wood near at hand for the wood stove that replaced the gas; for water we relied on the rain water tanks and two ‘soaks’ down in the steep valley near the railway line: a Coolgardie safe with its distinctive pleasant smell of wet hessian replaced the ice chest. Ken and I would take the billy cans late every afternoon to Ranger’s for the milk, often having to wait while he finished the milking so that we brought it home warm from the cow. The bread was baked at Mundaring and arrived on the morning train in chaff bags which Mr Taplin carried over his shoulder to his “store”. Dad bought the meat in Perth every day, and once a week a bag of vegetables would arrive by train from the markets.

Bonfire night the 5th of November became a great event in our lives. With so much bush around us we would build a huge pile of leaves and branches of trees and debris on top of which was placed the guy, made by Mother. Then when the blaze was at its height and crackers and Catherine wheels and sky rockets going off around us she would produce two plates of sticky home-made toffee – one plain and one with almonds in it – and with clenched jaws and sticky fingers we would continue with the fun.

As I have said there were only five or six families living there at the time and naturally we soon knew them all. I cannot now recall all their names, but remember “Uncle Vic” – Mr V.K. Jones – my father’s oldest friend, the Johnson boys and the girls. Before long our parents got together and between them arranged Sunday School in each other’s homes every Sunday afternoon. Later, about once a month, there was a church service held at Leithdale where V.K. Jones was living. It was at Leithdale too that Miss Hogan started a day school.

Our own schooling was unsettled for a while. *(a school photo taken at Leithdale, Darlington in 1913 shows the three Walton children initially attended here after they came to Darlington. In the photo below, Ted Walton is in the third row, extreme left; Ken Walton in the second row, extreme left and Elsie Walton is in the same row, extreme right).*



At first we went to the school at Smith's Mill, (now Glen Forrest), where Grandma Ottaway was living and Aunt Winnie was the Post Mistress. We usually went by train, spending the time waiting for the return journey with "big Grandma", though there were occasions when we walked the two miles home. Unfortunately we learnt so many swear words (are there so many?) that we were hastily removed and sent to the state

1913 class photo Darlington Primary School with three Waltons: Ted, Ken & Elsie

school at Midland Junction where we were most unhappy. Finally we were sent to Perth Boy's school where the headmaster was yet another outstanding man in the field of education – "Tommy" T.C. Chandler. The morning train at 8 o'clock got us to school in time, but the evening train did not leave Perth until 5.27, and to fill in the time after we left school at 3.45 we went to the Y.M.C.A. in Murray St for gymnasium classes, swimming lessons in the pool for any other relaxation we could find available to us. Much "homework" we did in the train.

The train service deserves mention – it was almost a way of life. Due to leave at 8.03 am the engine's whistle was a signal to, as someone said, for the inhabitants to appear like "rock crabs" racing at full speed downhill or uphill according to which side of the line they lived, converging on the station. The station platform was made of railway sleepers which at times were covered with white frost affording us great fun if we were there in time for "slides". The guard was a man named Clarke – a comical chap with a face you could strike matches on. Having enquired and looked round to make sure he had all his passengers he would hold out his green flag and disdain his whistle give vent to a high pitched "poop" signifying "O.K. let's go but you may have to stop at the crossing to pick up Jones". At Bellevue there was a rush for the morning paper and from Midland Junction where we shunted back to pick up the Kalamunda train we had two stops only into Perth – one at East Guildford for the Guildford Grammar School boys and one at Mt Lawley for the Perth College girls. If all went well we would arrive in Perth at 8.45 having accomplished the 15 mile journey in 52 minutes.

For the return journey the train (later named by Kirwan Ward as the Mundaring Meteor) left No 3 platform in Perth at 5.27 pm – express to Midland. Whilst we started up homework the Darlingtonians would set up their cases and play bridge to pass the time away. Providing it was fine weather and we didn't have to stop at Boya all would be well but if it were raining and we did stop there - then the fun would be on. The engine wheels would start to skid on the lines – there would be sharp jerks, stops, sand strewn on the line, the guard with a stave to put behind the wheels to stop us from going into reverse until gradually and laboriously we got going again. We were due to make the journey by 6.23 but wives and mothers would know when to expect us. They would be able to hear the performance.

Meantime the weekend cottage was being extended into the house that you remember. The builder was a man named Bellion who was constantly at war with his workmen and a perpetual source of worry and irritation to my father. By September 1914 it was finished and we moved in to our more commodious home. Kings Rd furniture must have been in storage somewhere. The carriers arrived with it late at night. I recall waking and frightened, thinking that Dad was having a fight with someone, as grunting and puffing he helped the men move the piano past my door. (Recently, in 1969, I was told that the house is still known as “The Waltons” and it is still bordered on the east by Allestree Rd).

Motor cars were still a rarity and it became a sensation when J.O. Neilson the optician, bought his T-model Ford. It cost £185 and he was very proud of it. The controls – spark and throttle – were at first manual, but later he added the refinement of a foot accelerator which he found “very useful in case of an emergency.”

A new era was opening for us. We had our home; the property generally had to be improved. Land was cleared of trees and shrub, ploughed up and an orchard established. Then Dad started the job of terracing the ground to form a pleasant garden. Ken and I had the job on Saturday mornings of collecting as many stones as we could and with the use of a wheelbarrow, heaping them conveniently to the work in hand. Then in the afternoon Dad would claim our help as with pick and shovel earth was moved from a higher to a lower level and stones carefully set into position to form walls and steps. The work went on for some years. Gardens were established and trees planted, all of which had to be watered from a watering can, drawing on



Walton house called Allestree c 1952

tank, bath and washing water. One plane tree grew so well that we decided it must have struck water, so Ken and I, gently (and wisely) encouraged by Mother, decided to sink a well. We got a 5x3 shaft down 15 feet when Dad decided to test it by the use of a jumper bar and at 30 feet he struck water. Labour was employed for the remainder of the work but unfortunately in striking water, rock was also encountered. Blasting was ineffectual and only a small supply of water was obtained. Nevertheless it was an addition to the water supply and helped the garden, the watering of which became a team effort – one on the windlass hauling up the water, one carrying buckets, and one using the watering can.

Not without reason we were ever conscious of the danger of bush fires and frequently everybody had to turn firefighter to protect property. I recall one night going to bed on the eastern verandah when a heavy east wind was blowing. A red glare was brightening in the eastern sky and before long and for the rest of the night we and all our neighbours were out burning back against the oncoming fire, and Mother, with a big enamel jug, going up and down the line of helpers dispensing hot coffee.

In the summer school holidays we usually went to the beach either renting accommodation or being “taken in” as boarders. One year we occupied the Chalet, deep in the sandhills owned by and behind Claude Bernales’ magnificent home, now the Cottesloe Civic Centre. The Mr Pullein, a banking friend of Dad’s, let us have half his home. Mrs Brown at the corner of Marmion and Grant Sts, a delightful old lady, took us in on another occasion. But best of all were our trips to Rottnest by the Zephyr or (I think) the Westralia – a ferry which could not tie up at the jetty and from which we were taken ashore by long boats. A horse drawn train took our luggage to the settlement. On our first visit we had a tent with a wooden floor on which we slept. I remember one night, the children having been put to sleep and Mother and Dad having gone out for a stroll, waking scared stiff to find a ‘boodyrat’ in the tent. (Query – when did quokkas get their name?) There at Rottnest in the Basin I learnt to swim and earned threepence from Dad when I swam out to the reef. And there too we got terribly sunburnt, blistered legs the pain of which Mother eased by bathing them in hot water – effective but unpleasant in the process. We went there often – a wonderful place for a holiday then and now.

Darlington was growing. A one teacher state school was established. The Congregationalists built a church in which on alternate Sundays they and the Methodists held their services. The Johnsons and the Maslins who had furthest to walk, brought their lunches with them which they ate in a back room adjoining and remained there to take their respective parts – teachers and pupils – at Sunday school in the afternoon. Due preparation for Sunday was made every Saturday – wood chopped, shoes cleaned while Mother did all the weekend cooking to minimise her work the following day. Sunday dinner invariably consisted of cold meat, salad and potatoes followed by cold apple pie and scalded cream. At church one of us would be sent home just as the sermon started to light the primus and put the potatoes on the boil. There was always a packed Church the morning after a party – tiredness following a late night was not accepted as a valid excuse for staying at home and no family was to be outdone by another in this respect. The

various families always sat in the same pews – Vincents, Huelins, Waltons, Jones on the right, Johnsons, Maslins, Drysdales on the left. Mr Stirzaker always liked to have an aisle seat. He would lean over it into the aisle and as the preacher made a good point in his sermon, nod his head vigorously – a point well taken – encouraging him to further efforts.

We always had music in the home. My piano lessons started under Miss Hodge, a sister of Mrs V.K. Jones, and my mornings started at 5.30 with piano practice. We were taught first to sing rounds then part songs – duets, trios and quartets with Mother helping with the alto and Dad the tenor parts. It was upsetting to me when my voice broke and I could no longer take part. Ken had a fine soprano voice and took the part of Captain Soot in the cantata “Soot and the Fairies” staged in the Congregational Church. Dad bought a gramophone – a table model H.M.V., which of course had to be wound up and a new needle inserted for every record. Amongst those early records were Peter Dawson singing “the Admiral’s Yarn”, Sidney Coltham “She is Far from the Land”, Melba – Minnetonka, Lauder, “Stop your tickling Jock”, Heifetz, Gallicuici and others.

By this time England was at war with Germany and anxiety was in the air. Travelling to Perth every morning there was a wild rush at Bellevue to get the West Australian with the latest cables blazoned across the front page and soon, long casualty lists. In St George’s Terrace the West Australian pasted up the latest news in bold lettering for all to read, and in the evenings about 9 o’clock, the Darlington men, each carrying his hurricane lantern, would gather at the public telephone while one of them rang a Perth friend to see if anything fresh had come through. At school wooden racks were set up in the playgrounds and at morning recess and lunchtime we were set to work “sewing sandbags for the soldiers”. At assembly, a master “leaving for the front” was ceremoniously presented with a safety razor – a novelty just come on the market – by Tony Chandler as a parting gift.

Uncle Arthur, Dad’s only brother, enlisted (1916). Strangely enough I find it difficult to recall him in the family home at Allestree. I recall his marriage in the Ord St Church to Auntie Edie (Edith Barret), and the wedding reception on the lawns at the house of her sister, Mrs G.P. Schooler (Auntie Harriet). He was a photographic block maker by trade with rooms in Hay St upstairs, opposite Wesley Church, and frequently after school, instead of going to the Y.M.C.A., we would go to watch him taking photographs of shoes or shirts or what-have-you, and follow him into his dark room while he developed his plates. He was short and dark and I apparently resembled him closely in features. Having enlisted, he went into training camp at Blackboy Hill – Greenmount. Occasionally on a leave pass, he would come and have dinner with us and spend the evening before walking back to camp.

So too did another enlisted soldier, Mr Alexander, the boyfriend of Mother’s current lady help, whose occupation in life was “the night man”. I remember him briefly as a bright, cheery soul who was never afraid of losing his job. Hugo Fischer and Karl Leschen for a time, because of their German backgrounds, suffered from the spy fever that became rife. Karl Leschen was removed from his position as manager of the State Saving Bank as a

sop to public outcries, and turned his hand to labouring jobs for any who would employ him. After the war he was publicly exonerated of all suspicion but by that time he was a physical wreck and he died soon afterwards. Hugo Fischer did not fare so badly though there were people who suggested without reason that he was profiteering by the sale of leggings and belts to the army. Both he and his wife were delightful people and their son, Leon, and his daughter Edna, became firm friends of ours.

Mention of a lady help prompts me to explain that a “servant” was addressed by her Christian name, ate in the kitchen and only appeared at the table in response to Mother’s bell to receive her meal or clear way the plates. A “lady help”, however, always dined with the family and was addressed formally as Miss So-and-So. Whether there was any difference in their wages I do not know. Dad always carved at table with Mother at the other end serving the vegetables. At teatime the cups and saucers were assembled in front of Mother who put in the milk and sugar, poured the tea and passed it to us.

Our circle of friends had increased with the arrival of other families – the A.H. Vincents with sons Harry and Wallace, The H.E. Mofflins with a large family of girls, F.J. Huelins with sons Frank, Stan, John and later Geoffrey, Beth Wilson with daughter Jean. Tennis courts were set up and Saturday afternoon tennis parties at each other’s homes were popular. Dad had bought a further half acre of land behind the house making his holding two acres in all. There for a while we kept our horse Bobby on which I had a deal of fun riding round the hills. He was constantly getting away. On one occasion I walked up the Helena Valley as far as Mundaring Weir in search of him. For three weeks he was posted as missing until we eventually found him peacefully grazing near the Darlington school. But Bobby having finally gone, we set to work to level and make a tennis court, and once again pick, shovel, barrow and stones (to shore up the lower side) came into operation. Eventually we were ready for the sapling posts on which to hang the wire netting surround and Ranger was asked to supply them. His comment when he brought them amused my mother. “I don’t know which took longer Mrs Walton; cuttin’em and loading’em or cartin’em and barkin’em.” The court’s surface was never really good but we had a lot of fun on it.

First thing in the morning on Christmas Day, Ken and I would be sent off in to the bush with an axe to cut down a sapling for a Christmas tree. We would help Dad “plant” it in the front room from which we were banished for the rest of the day. Behind the closed door Dad would spend most of the day decorating it with candles (carefully arranged to avoid fire) and the usual glitter including however, decorations from Christmas trees of his boyhood in England. In the evening the Vincents and the Huelins would join us and gifts from the tree were exchanged. Amongst the games that followed there was always one of Snapdragon (raisins to be snapped from a plate of burning brandy), duck apple (biting a piece out of an apple floating in a tub of water) and best of all bob apple (apple dangling on a string, boy on one side, girl on the other, each trying ostensibly for the bite). They were considered “slow” if they couldn’t both miss at the identical moment.

It was at this time that Darlington got a water service and electric supply and we became almost suburban, although the train service never improved either as to speed or the number of trains per day.

It is difficult to place all things and people in chronological order after so long but here I would mention bearded Mr Haining, once employed in a bank but now available and reliable for any gardening jobs: Mr Hodder the Seventh Day Adventist forever trying to convert others to his faith: Sam Hort who ploughed the orchard and pruned the fruit trees, father of about ten daughter so marvellous as servants that he had a waiting list of prospective employers of the next one. Then there was the village cricket match between the Hasbeens and the Neverwassers. It was played down by the brook, the pitch being the only flat portion of the playing field which rose from it at an angle of about 30° on all sides. As fieldsmen (Dad amongst them) sprained or twisted their ankle they were driven off to their respective homes in Mr Maslin's phaeton. It went down in history as the "Cripples Match".

Mardie Victor, the youngest of the Victor girls, smitten with the measles thought it a huge joke when so many boys she had danced with the night before also went down with them – as for me – I'd had 'em. The Darlington Progress Association, of which for a time Dad was Chairman, decided to seek representation on the Mundaring Road Board and nominated V.K. Jones for election. Canvassing for votes became important and Mr Walters – a sign writer – produced a placard which was hung from the door handle of the train "Vote Vee Kay and chance the consequences". Vee Kay got in though he admitted he felt like a Chinaman.

In 1916 I won a scholarship enabling me the following year to go to Perth Modern School and entitling me to £3 a year for books and £30 a year living away from home allowance. So in 1917 I became a "weekly boarder" at Allestree in Ord St, going home on Friday nights for the weekend. Perth Modern School was a co-educational school and deservedly the pride of the Education Department. Its headmaster, Joseph Parsons (Old Joe), was a remarkable man and an eminent figure in the educational world. I believe he knew both the Christian and the surnames of every one of the 400 boys and girls in the school and in many instances their parents too. He had a biting incisive way of speaking and we all stood in awe of him, but he certainly knew how to teach and earn our respect. He "took" us for Latin and Australian history. Other masters and mistresses I recall were "Charlie" Sharpe for English with a strong Scotch flavour ("Come away laddie, let's see what like it is"), Miss McKay (Muck Eye), five foot nothing for English history with a strong scotch bias, Miss Crowther of first year French and constantly blushing (we encouraged it), Miss Clarke who droned through Geography yet managed to teach it, Henry Pearson who was the science master and always embarrassed me and made the girls giggle by calling me Teddy, and George Pfister – a Swiss who spoke about twenty languages and who held us enthralled as he gave us from first hand knowledge, the story of Zola's letter "J'accuse" and the Dreyfus case. It was he who made up for the part of Old Gobbo in "The Merchant of Venice" and stood over me with a penknife in his hand and said, "Walton, I think I'll take

two of your teeth out”, and he proceeded to black them out. The girls, as their lectures permitted, were all busy knitting “socks for the soldiers” and I used to be amazed both at their speed and deftness and their ability to do so without looking at their needles and at the same time paying attention to the master or mistress.

Vic’s Picture in Queens Hall – silents of course – flourished at this time and once a week by special permission from Dad I went to follow the serial “Mystery of the Double Cross” – how I loved it. I understand that one Ethleen Moore also followed it but I don’t remember seeing her there. Two more picture theatres sprang up – the Pavilion and the Palladium. They ran a continuous show and for 3d one could see the programme over and over again for as long as you liked. I can’t remember in what year talkies came to Perth but I did in fact see the first of them – a mixture of silent and experimental talkie. It of course aroused much public interest and discussion as to whether it could succeed and ultimately supplant the silent films.

In 1918 Grandpa sold the house in Ord St and moved down to Claremont, taking the Allestree name with him, and in the same year we removed temporarily to the home of G.F. Yeates in Shenton Rd, Swanbourne where Arthur was born on 10 August. In April of that year Uncle Arthur was killed in action in France and your uncle bears both his names reversed, Hanesworth Arthur. Hanesworth was Grandma Walton’s maiden name. I think she was of Spanish descent. For that period I lived with the family at home and attended ‘Mod’ by train.

Naturally we linked up with the Claremont Methodist Church and Sunday school of which Les Newman was the Superintendent. Sunday school anniversaries there were quite a feature. Ainsworth Newman was a genius as a conductor of a children’s choir and with considerable forces available to him including choir members for bass and tenor parts plus Mofflin girls on violins, Mr Peart with his cornet, Miss Hill at the piano plus, I believe, Mr Palmer at the organ, he took us through Judes settings of well-known hymns. Ken, still a soprano, sang the solo verses of “the roseate hues of early dawn”.

When the family returned to Darlington I became a weekly boarder with Mrs Harrison in Hooper St West Perth – close to Mod. She was a kindly, jolly, grey-haired widow who “took in” boarders. She had a daughter Laura (now Mrs Cairns) who was a typist in the Western Australian Bank. One of the boarders was Miss Dunmall who had at one time been a missionary. Tall, erect, stout, elderly and slightly be-whiskered, she always sprayed her room liberally with citronella, looked under her bed and firmly locked her windows on retiring at night. Fred Cammilleri was the other boarder – a lad about my own age, I spent one Easter with him and his people at Busselton where I had the best day’s fishing I have ever had. We completed a big haul of bream and salmon by hooking and landing a shark amidst great excitement at the end of the mile long jetty.

In early November it became apparent that the war with Germany was nearing its end and public excitement, fanned by the Press, was mounting. The observatory gun, used daily

as the 1 o'clock time signal, would be fired as soon as a cable was received announcing the cessation of hostilities and I recall how tensely we waited for it. Laura, Fred and I immediately took off and hurried into town when about midnight on the 11th, standing on the verandah at Mrs Harrison's, we heard it. The streets were packed with a mad jostling crowd. All vehicular traffic was at a standstill as they shouted and laughed and blew whistles and generally unloosed themselves in their relief from tension.

Ken's earliest and steadfast ambition had ever been to go to sea and in this year he was accepted as a Cadet at Jarvis Bay Naval College, and early in 1919 at the age of 13 he left home. Henceforth, every Sunday night we all sat round the dining table to "write to" Ken even though we younger ones could find little to write about, and in the family prayers he was ever remembered. Sunday evenings, before "reading" we always gathered round the piano to sing favourite hymns. One very hot night when it was too hot to stay indoors, we sat out on the high verandah and sang without the aid of piano accompaniment. Apparently all Darlington heard us for there were many comments "Did you hear the Waltons last night?" The following Sunday our very good neighbours, the Huelins, followed our example.

In 1919, my third year at Mod, I found myself in the Upper School, and, on payment of a modest fee, permitted to take dancing lessons every Friday afternoon after school. But I still had to get permission from Dad – a Methodist – and all Methodists disapproved of dancing. But when I finally screwed up my courage to ask him about it I was delighted when, after some hesitation, he agreed. So on Friday afternoons at 4 o'clock, the girls on one side of the big hall, the boys, changed into dancing pumps and wearing white gloves, on the other, Mrs Rolls at the piano and her daughter Joy on the floor, we were all set to go. We were to learn the latest dance step, very modern and slightly daring in the eyes of many people – the jazz. First the girls were taken through their paces, then the boys, and after that it was a free for all. True, we were a bit shy of each other at first. Aunt Annie pretended to be horrified. "if your grandmother could see you she would turn in her grave."

The war being ended entrepreneurs started bringing shows to Perth, playing to full houses necessitating hours of standing in long queues to get seats. I will never forget the first musical comedy I saw – Alfred Firth in "Yes Uncle" – I only wish I could remember all of the numbers that came from "Widows are Wonderful". I remember too taking Mother to Edgley and Dawes' "Midnight Frolics" in the Theatre Royal when I guffawed too loudly for her comfort at the line in a patter song about dogs. "There's the dog that's got a bushy tail to cover his retreat."

Concert artists also came and I took what chances I could to hear them. I remember hearing Amy and Eileen Castles, buxom and bosomy, who left us stone cold, Madame Lipkovaka, a svelte coloratura soprano, who thrilled me, Clara Butt in her wheel chair with her deep cavernous almost masculine voice, Toshka Seidel, wonderful with his violin, Moiseivitch at the piano. After hearing these concerts I would test my reactions to the music against the critique in the paper the following day by Fidelio, Albert Kornweibel, in

my opinion the great music critic in Australia. This helped me greatly in my early appreciation and understanding of great music and I used it as such. When he found great that which I found dull and uninteresting I tried to find out what I had missed.

Parties at Darlington took on a new character and became dances in our homes and soon Mother and Dad and other Mothers and Dads were trying out the new dances. Ken, of course, coming home on leave in his naval uniform, always caused a flutter amongst the girls, and whilst he was at home, the parties sprang up everywhere to which we were both invited. I recall Mrs Neilsen, tall and angular with a swivel eye, an accomplished pianist sitting at the piano with her husband short, completely bald headed with bright eyes twinkling from behind his glasses and violin tucked under his chin, fiddling away into the small hours for our dancing. I don't know what happened in other homes but at our place on the morning after a night before we always found odd chairs to be brought in from secluded spots in the terraced garden. We were a very happy and fortunate group of young people. We made our precarious canoes out of iron and carried them on our backs down to the Helena River where it became a case of "sink or swim"; afternoons of tennis followed perhaps by high teas; a debating society; amateur theatricals; - even a fancy dress ball. The wine cellars, formerly part of the Darlington Vineyard, had become vacant, and a group of us cleaned out, scrubbed and polished the upper floor, decorated the low ceiling and got together in masks and outlandish costumes. Later the cellars were renovated to some extent and became the Darlington Hall.

DECIDING ON A CAREER

In 1920 I completed my course at Modern School and gained my matriculation certificate to the University. I wanted to be a doctor but here there were difficulties. It required a first year pass in science at the University of W.A. – (Tin Pan Alley in Irwin St as it was in those days), thence to proceed to the University of Adelaide. The estimated cost was £1,000 which was beyond my father's resources. I decided then to work towards my objective on a part time basis, get a job and attend lectures at night. I became a clerk in the Western Australian Bank (at a salary of £75 per annum) and enrolled at the University, but my lectures in mathematics and physics were at the technical school in St George's Terrace, the lecturer being Ray Davis who later became its Principal. His lectures were on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. On Wednesdays I caught the "midnight" train arriving at Darlington at 11.45 pm, but on Mondays and Fridays the trains went only as far as Bellevue. This gave me a 3 ½ mile walk home along the railway line and a regular competition with myself to see how quickly I could accomplish it. I was ever cautious as I rounded the devil's elbow approaching Boya, lest in the cutting there I should meet the 10.30 goods train from Mundaring swaying at speed (downhill of course) round the bend. When I found that Adelaide University would only recognise first year science at the University of Western Australia if it were completed in one year, I had to abandon my project and turned to an Accountancy course at Stott's Business College which entailed the same three nights of lectures.

It must have been about this time that Westralian Farmers opened the first broadcasting station in Perth and wireless became the wonder of the age. Brian decided to make a crystal set and install it in the front room which till then had not been furnished. An earth wire was let down through a hole in the floor to the ground fifteen feet below and carefully buried, and ultimately the great moment arrived to test his workmanship. Despite however much tickling of cats whisker on crystal, nothing happened although one of us thought we heard something.

The Church continued to be central to our lives. In addition to having become the organist it had also become my duty to find and engage the preachers for the two Methodist services every month, men who would be entertained to dinner afterwards either by the Mofflins, Huelins or Waltons. Sometimes he would miss the train or something would go wrong and the service – to our unconcealed delight – would be brief. I recall, however, one such occasion when Dad announced from the pulpit “I had an idea something like this would happen so I put sermon notes in my pocket.” It was one of his longest ones and one which I had heard before.

Brian and Arthur were attending the State School where Mrs Lander was the teacher. She was a most remarkable woman, widowed and having lost two of her three children, she was one of the bravest women I have ever known, possessed of an inner serenity and philosophy of life that overcame all her misfortunes and gave joy to others. She was a capable teacher, loved children, and old and young alike loved her. Elsie as I recall was at this time attending the Maylands State School where the headmaster was M.F. Uren – Uncle Frank – Aunt Gertie’s husband and father of “Billie”, Joy and Lois. As a conductor of children’s choirs and for big occasions large numbers from all the State Schools came under his charge. When General Pau visited Perth he was greeted outside the Perth Railway Station by one such choir singing La Marseillaise – in French. Aunt Gertrude who surely knew the language, heard his comment and translated, “I’ve never heard it sung like that before”, - but not so to the Press. “He’d never heard it sung so well before” they proclaimed.

I only stayed with the Western Australian Bank about a year. Dad had become assistant manager and found the presence of a son on the staff embarrassing and at his suggestion and possibly by his contrivance obtained a position with the Commonwealth Bank where I remained for the next two years. I continued my accountancy studies, won a gold medal from the College for being the only student in the State to pass the intermediate examination in all subjects and was struggling to pass my final bookkeeping and complete the course when my thoughts turned to the land.

THE CALL OF THE LAND

Farmers were doing well at that time; the outdoor life appealed to me and I seized on all the literature I could obtain from the Department of Agriculture in the latest scientific methods of farming. Dad promised to help me but first I must get some practical experience. I had my 21st birthday party at home where Uncle Steve – Mary’s father –

giving my toast, presented me ceremoniously with a pair of hairbrushes (guests were not expected to nor did they arrive laden with birthday gifts). And then late in December 1942 I went off jackerooing at Papanyinning.

I lasted about a fortnight. My boss, who shall be nameless, was the son of a business associate of Dad, not much older than myself and lived like a pig. A newspaper spread on the table on Sunday served as a table cloth for the rest of the week. His language was foul and after a day's stooking it was all I could do to walk back to the house and pull off my heavy boots. I decided I had made a hideous mistake and if this was farm life it wasn't for me. I made polite excuses and returned home.

My second venture was very different. Will Lowe, son of Theophilus (Theo) Lowe, a former president of the Royal Agricultural Society, was farming halfway between Northam and Goomalling. He had spent some years on stations up North and was at once a good stockman and good wheat farmer. He and his wife were a delightful couple and I thoroughly enjoyed the year I was with them. I went through all the work of a well-run farm from butchering and butter making to driving a team of six horses, hay pitching, seeding and harvesting. While there, too, I was given the day off to go into Northam to take my final book-keeping examination. I rode a horse the 15 miles into Northam in the morning back again in the afternoon and early evening. My brain did not appear to me to function properly but somehow or other I managed to pass and became a fully qualified accountant.

TAKING UP LAND AT KOONLANOOKA

Meantime Dad had purchased 1527 acres 2 roods of virginal land at Koonlanooka at 15/- per acre and the partnership of D.S Walton & Son came into being. 1100 acres were classified as first class which meant that they were timbered with York Gum and heavy salmon gum. 300 acres I think were second class and the balance third. After a preliminary visit to examine it and get my bearings I made my preparations. A horse had to be bought and a cart (second hand), a hundred gallon tank for water carting, a tent, camp oven, axes, slashers and other tools, and stores of all kinds. All these I arranged to have on the train with me so that I could load my cart on arrival at Koolanooka at 11 am and drive the 7 ½ miles to the block and pitch my tent. To my dismay the horse was not on the train and I spent the afternoon doing nothing and that night I slept on the wooden seat at the railway siding.

At six o'clock the next morning the train arrived bearing the horse. I hadn't driven him half a mile before I discovered he was completely broken winded! However, panting and groaning he accomplished the distance; I located the north east peg of the property and with constant reference to my compass finally arrived at my camp site. My tent pitched, the next and immediate necessity was water for man and beast. Vic Hill, camped just over a mile from me, had a supply of water which he said contained magnesia but which to me was just salty. However, it was all I could get and in a very short time I could drink it with relish unconscious of the salt, albeit the water bag was heavily encrusted with it. In a neighbourly way he invited me to draw on his supply as much as I needed.

My horse hobbled and fed, I set about arranging my camp furnishings. I rigged up a very comfortable bed – as described presently – set up kerosene cases as cupboards and table, dug a hole in the ground for my camp oven, slung a hook from a ridge pole for my hurricane lamp and went to bed. For reading matter I had brought with me Boswell's "Life of Johnson" which I devoured. When neighbours found that I wore pyjamas and had sheets on my bed it caused a sensation! This was January 1925. We had arranged to have some light scrub country rolled so that I could burn and get a small crop in for the first season. Unfortunately the contractor let us down and for the next twelve months I was busy with axe and slasher clearing the land for the following year.

That Easter Dad, with Elsie, Brian and Arthur drove up in his overland car to visit me. Elsie stayed with Mr and Mrs Sides and to accommodate the others I borrowed another tent. For beds, posts driven into the ground like an inverted V provided bed ends and light saplings pushed through chaff bags and allowed to rest over them at their natural level, supplemented by other bags partly filled with chaff provided a comfortable mattress. They brought with them all manner of delicacies including a case of pears from the orchard which they were continuously urging me to eat – "You know Ted, we brought them for you – they are from the orchard." I had a first class bilious attack ... which reminds me. Aunt Annie used to send me periodically a parcel of delicacies including materials to which a little water could be added, baked and out would come the most delectable pastry – but no bilious attack.

Later that year I built "the shack". Bush timber supplied the uprights, corrugated iron roof, hessian, heavily whitewashed, the walls, and single partition and an earth floor. A rain water tank was installed for eagerly awaited fresh water.

We had been trying to find a good supply of underground water. Angus Robertson with his divining rod selected a site and we engaged him to sink a well. He was a tall, lean, angular Scot with a long white moustache and with the longest flowing and most picturesque and amusing gift of profanity I have ever heard. I would listen spellbound waiting for it to finish and never once did he repeat himself. It was so amusing that it never became offensive. He had an enormous appetite. I saw him one morning over his fire frying eight eggs for breakfast. He struck water but to my disappointment it too was brackish as was Vic Hill's. However we got so used to it that when eventually we had fresh rainwater to our hand we didn't like it. I was never able to make porridge with rainwater however much I tried to judge the exact quantity of salt to put in and find it as palatable as I had done with well water.

I had become quite proficient in cooking in the camp oven. True, my attempts at bread making were not successful and too time consuming. My first loaf refused to rise with the second (and last) lifted the lid off the oven. But my so called dampers, cooked in the oven, not in the coals, were always highly successful. Rabbit, kangaroo and an occasional wild turkey provided welcome changes from tinned meats which we were forever trying to

disguise in recipes handed round from one camp to the other. However disguised though, there was always the one result – indigestion.

For labour I drew upon migrants from England and had several of them sharing my camp with me for varying periods from time to time. They were mostly nice chaps, very raw, and I often used to wonder what they thought of me and the new life they had come to. One morning one of them going out to work and having gone only 50 yards turned and looked at the shack and said, “Whose place is that?” He had completely lost his sense of direction. Another one, returning at sundown in advance of me to light the fire and start the evening meals failed to find base and I and all my neighbours whom I summoned were up all night looking for him. At one stage some of us too might have been bushed and had I not checked with the stars to find that we were travelling at right angles to the course we had laid out. He turned up smiling the next morning having spent the night – by mischance – with a neighbour whom I had not roused and who had remained blissfully unaware of our anxiety. There was yet another migrant who at one time had three of the local girls preparing their trousseau in expectation of marrying him!

My nearest neighbour was Vic Hill – a Scot. He was later joined by his father – Old Man Hill – and his two brothers, Jim and Harold. Old man Hill had been a civil engineer in Edinburgh and subsequently a medical missionary in East Africa where he lost his wife. Short and rotund with keen blue eyes, he was a ball of energy and in this respect a complete contrast to his three sons who were content to take life easily. They were all most likeable people. Mr Hill was a staunch and devout Presbyterian and shuddered at some of the language the men used. One whom he tried to check tried valiantly to do so but forthwith started to stutter and Mr Hill had to bow to the inevitable. His limited medical knowledge was also at their disposal at all times and he was a great help to me in this way on more than one occasion. I spent many Sunday evenings sitting in the dark on his verandah yarning with him on every subject under the sun.

West of the Hills and still north of me was Fred From. He was a hard-worker, had been a shearer, quietly spoken and very reserved in his manner. North of him and just 2 ½ miles from me was the Sides family – Mr and Mrs Sides and their sons Wilton and Stan and daughter Merl. They came from Geelong and Stan and Wilton never tired of telling me of the marvellous road from Geelong to Melbourne – “far better than anything you could find in W.A.” They had a wireless set so strong that we can pick up Melbourne and Sydney. They were very proud of it and Sydney and Melbourne were always on the air. Mr Sides – Percy – had at one time been an engine driver, then a farmer in Victoria. He was a dear old chap. And Mrs Sides mothered all the bachelor farmers surrounding her, including me. It was at their home that the first Methodist Church service was held. Sid Saggars – then a missionary - journeyed over from Three Springs on the Saturday spending that night under the stars to arrive by 11 am on the Sunday morning. Mr and Mrs Sides gave him hospitality for a couple of nights to enable him to drop in on all of us on our blocks and at work. I remember finding him just behind me one morning as we were swinging our axes into a tree and stopping to have a yarn with him.

At Koolanooka the local store was run by Mr and Mrs Abe Powell. Abe was the Ford agent and an alcoholic. Many a time calling to see him his wife would tell me "Abe's in but he isn't in – he's not very well" and I knew what had happened. Abe loved children and whether he be drunk or sober, children loved him. I like to recall the occasion when I saw him slightly tipsy, sitting on a chair with a child on his knee laughing up into his face. His wife was the local postmistress and like many of her kind, inquisitive. Calling for the mail one day I found a telegram which I opened at the counter. Momentarily I was puzzled and muttered "what the dickens does this mean?" and got the response "that's what I want to know Mr Walton". Comprehension came to me but I didn't enlighten her. I bought my first tractor – a Fordson – from Abe.

Soon finance permitting it. I was able to abandon the shack and move into a two room unlined weatherboard cottage with a verandah and a lean to at the back, a package deal from one of the timber companies. This was luxury indeed. "Ted Walton - he's always had sheets on his bed – now he uses a tablecloth at meals". Many of the locals were not used to such refinements of living.

It was just about then that I met Vic Rogers who became and continues to be my oldest friend. Corner-wise he was my neighbour and we soon found out that we had most of our interests in common, music, literature, the fine arts in general, in addition to the problems of farming and cooking. To return hospitality we had received from Mr and Mrs Knight of Bowgada we joined forces to prepare a meal and dine with them in high style to show them what bachelors could do. One evening Vic turned up with his face blown up like a balloon suffering from an abscess on his tooth. I wrapped the said face up in Wawns Wonder Wool and then put some of my 78 records on my portable gramophone to distract him. They put him to sleep and he stayed the night.

He "fitted in" with the Sides and Hill families and eventually with the McGlews of Morowa and together we had a highly social time. Dances at Perenjori, Bowgada, Koolanooka and Morawa – at one of them the supper drink as Elsie McGlew put it "went down coffee and came up petrol" – it had been prepared in the petrol tin. On another occasion I had a duty dance with a most generously proportioned married woman. It was a circular waltz of which she was no mean exponent. With her weight giving us both increasing momentum she spun me round until my head was swimming and finally I, (or she) guided her up to a chair I had to clutch at the wall for support. Such dances of course, would be on a Saturday and Sunday would often find us there again for Church service, the floor only partially swept, the streamers still up and the piano still tinny and full of beer.

We had tennis at the homes of the Knights of Bowgada and the McGlews at Morawa always at both places being invited to remain for tea which I enjoyed the more for its being set out invitingly as it had ever been at home. Then we turned to amateur theatricals – we blazoned abroad Wodehouse's "Good Morning Bill" – a comedy in three acts. Somebody altered our posters by writing the word "Tragedy" over "Comedy" but we achieved local acclaim. Thus encouraged we followed it up the following year with "A Little Bit of Fluff". I

had the main straight part, if you could call it such, and Vic the main comedy part, which at its richest moment became too much for him. When he appeared in costume as the little bit of fluff he brought the house down, then turned his head around to me back stage – and giggled! Again we gained acclaim but audiences in those days were not very perceptive and easily pleased.

HOLIDAYS - BACK HOME TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Every year in January once harvesting was finished and the wheat carted, I went home for a holiday, while it was still roadworthy by my T model Ford truck. The journey of 265 miles used to take me the best part of 14 hours, allowing for meals on route and stoppages to let the engine cool down and refill the radiator. The truck was of course always loaded with stores and gear for the return journey and was also useful to me moving around Perth. I remember at Claremont offering my Grandfather a lift into Perth and was delighted when he accepted and climbed in beside me. These holidays were most restful and refreshing. They made me realise however the vast difference between the new life I had chosen and liked so well and the home life in which I had been brought up. The peacefulness that came over me as I entered Perth Wesley Church on a Sunday morning was in marked contrast to the atmosphere of the church services in the bush; Grace before meals; Dorrie Mofflin at the head of the tea table (after tennis) with the tea cups spread out in front of her enquiring “Do you take milk and sugar with your tea Ted?” At all the farm tables I visited tea was always served black with milk and sugar on the table for those who required it. I had forgotten that it was served any other way and delighted to be reminded of much earlier customs. She served a salmon mornay of which I borrowed the recipe from her as yet another means of making tinned food appetising, but when I introduced it later to my country friends they forthwith christened it “salmon muck” – and asked me for the recipe. These may seem “little” things but then – and more so today – they marked two different ways of life – the gracious, leisurely, God-fearing days of old and the rough and ready and eternally busy times of today.

At home (I am referring to a period of 5 or 6 years) I was conscious of many changes. Elsie, Brian and Arthur were growing up, Elsie had made many friends through Brian who had been attending Guildford Grammar School, several master – including



1927 Walton family photo with names

Martin Ketley, newly arrived from England, had been invited into the home and I found increasingly from time to time a greatly enlarged circle of friends. They were nearly all musical and all devotees of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. With Elsie at the piano they would gather around and go through an opera page by page. I envied them their knowledge of the libretto and tried valiantly though not very successfully to keep up with them, especially in the patter songs.

EVENTS THAT ENDED A FARMING CAREER

My first crop over 320 acres averaged about 5 bags to the acre with was reasonably good. The following year I had put 500 acres under wheat and had a magnificent crop going 8 bags to the acre. But one day, blazing hot and the ears of wheat brittle to the touch, a hail storm descended and in a few minutes the roof of the machinery shed was blown right off and the paddock looked as though the harvester had been all over it. It was a total loss, fortunately protected by insurance but nevertheless yielding less profit.

Later we sold the Fordson tractor and bought a Munktehlin - possibly the first diesel tractor used in Western Australia. It was a pronounced failure and gave us endless trouble. I was forever getting "experts" up from Perth to rectify its faults. On one occasion the said "expert", a Swede going to bed said, "I'd like an early start tomorrow – what time do you get up?" I said "5.30." "Gosh" he said, "I call that bloody early!" Those days too I did the nightshift on the tractor at seeding time and would come into camp for breakfast with the men and see them started for the day's work. But I found myself unable to sleep waiting for the inevitable return of them with the complaint – "The tractor's broken down" – or something else had gone wrong. It was a strenuous time! Harvest time – I'm thinking of my first year – I would stagger out in my pyjamas in the morning early and "test" the stubble. If it were brittle and would fly I would get busy and start my day's work, but if there had been a moist or cool breeze during the night and the stubble was damp, I would go back to bed for a further hour's rest.



Amy Walton in the garden at Darlington

But bad days were coming for farmers. Wheat had approached 6/8 per bushel - £1 per bag – and many were caught trying to get that magical price. These were days before the Wheat Pool was in existence. Almost overnight the price slumped and those who had hoped to get 6/8 had to sell at about 4/- per bushel. Then it went from bad to worse and by 1929 and 1930 was down to 1/9 per bushel. Farmers were bankrupt and the Farmers Debt Adjustment Act was promulgated to deal with their sorry plight. We also were included in the situation and I am thankful that my letter to Dad crossed his to me wherein we both suggested that we call it a day whilst we could still meet our commitments. Farming for me was ended – we let the property out on a share farming agreement and I decided to try to make use of my accountancy knowledge to earn a living.

The share farming was not a happy experience. I had occasion to return to the farm when it became obvious that we were not getting our rightful returns and almost became involved in a stand up fight with the share farmer. I was indeed thankful when eventually we sold the property to Fred From.

SETTLING DOWN

Meantime in Perth in the midst of a financial depression employment was somewhat precarious. I obtained temporary jobs with various firms of accountants usually preparing statement of affairs for farmers and the Farmers Debt Adjustment Act or running a country store, or investigating wheat stealing (where everybody in the town knew I was coming although it was supposed to be a close secret). Then I got a job as relieving cashier at the Perth Hospital where my duties included a round of the wards every morning to take charge of the possessions of newly admitted patients and an afternoon round to interview patients discharged and quiz them on their worldly wealth and ability to pay their hospital account. I learnt a lot during that period. Eventually I got a permanent position as accountant to Clarksons Ltd, vendors of paints and builders hardware and on the assurance that my job was indeed secure and a salary of £5.10.0 a week, we married - the date, 26th March 1932. *(Edward married Ethleen Lilian Moore at Perth College Chapel by the Rev. King. The Walton family had rented out their Darlington house from 1929-1940 then Edward Storry and Ethleen spent the war years with their family living back in the Darlington house until 1948 before returning to the city. Edward died in 1977 aged 74).*



15 Allestree Rd, Darlington Walton residence, 2016