

Timed Summary

Interview with Bruce Marsden

PRG 1049/30/10

Interviewer: Susan Marsden and Alexandra Marsden

Date: 28th December 1991

Note: Key words shown in bold.

START TIME	SUMMARY
00.00	Introduction
1.05	Bruce Cecil Marsden was born in Hawthorn, Melbourne on 13 th May 1923. His father was a doctor practising in Melbourne. They moved to Torrensville Adelaide when he was 2½ years old. He was the last of five children.
2.27	Bruce speaks about his early childhood and circumstances in his family. When he was six they moved to McLaren Vale . His father was declared bankrupt in 1927 during the Depression . His father never chased debtors if they couldn't pay. So the family was split up among relatives and he lived with his Aunt Lu, Lucy Hawke , who was postmistress at old Noarlunga .
6.05	He talks about his Aunt Lu who was very jolly and very nice to him. She was kind and gentle. She was probably the only postmistress in Australia because all positions were held by men. He had a very happy time with her and did not miss his parents.
9.22	His parents were living at Gilberton . He went to his first school at Noarlunga. They next moved to Spalding .
10.16	He gives details about his parents. His father was Walter Cecil Marsden , born in Dunedin, New Zealand on 7.12.1881. His mother was Julia Ruby Stella Hawke , known as Stell or Stella, and she was born 21.4.1885; her father was an early migrant who studied metallurgy in London before migrating to Adelaide.
14.49	His maternal grandfather was Henry Binney Hawke who came to SA about 1851 and went to Kapunda in the copper boom and founded a foundry called H. B. Hawke and Co . It was in operation for over 100 years. He made nearly every weighbridge that is used in Australia. He invented a wheat farming implement and was presented with a scroll of recognition which Bruce donated to State Library Archives . He made a lot of money but lost it all in mining shares from South America and Mexico. He was rescued by locals putting money into his business.
20.45	Bruce speaks about his father's early life. His parents met at Kapunda. His father moved from New Zealand to Melbourne to study Medicine and was awarded his degree when he was 20 years old. In NZ he came top of the country in two public service exams. His father made a lot of money from a light engineering factory he owned in Melbourne, mainly from making barbed wire that was used in the trenches in France. He paid for his son to study Medicine at Edinburgh University for a year.
25.12	After university his father worked for Grace Brothers practice in Glasgow , the firm was headed by Dr W. G. Grace , the famous cricketer. This man paid Bruce's father to play in first class cricket matches in England and allowed him time off work. He then worked at Guys Hospital in London then worked on a big liner travelling around the world. On return to Australia he worked at a practice in Kapunda .

START TIME	SUMMARY
29.04	Bruce records details about his mother, Stella, who was considered to be the belle of the country. At one stage she was engaged (for three hours!) to Volly Seppelt of the Seppelt wine family but her parents wouldn't allow it to continue. The German community was very isolated and insular, and many of the women were not allowed to learn English and were ruled by their husbands. They were very loyal to the Kaiser , he recalls that this was the situation in about 1900.
36.33	H. B. Hawke lived at Kapunda and died, in his late 70's. He was laughing at something funny and just dropped dead in the billiard saloon.
39.17	Bruce speaks about his father Wally , and his experience in World War I. His father was a very private man and never spoke about his time in the trenches in France in World War 1 . 400 Australian doctors volunteered in 1914 and became members of the Royal Medical Corp , not the RAMC. One of Bruce's teachers told him what a great hero his father had been; he stayed in the trenches with the soldiers, close to the front line and treated the soldiers as soon as the fighting stopped. They thought he was God.
47.01	His father served in the war for four years. He died of emphysema from the gas. He was too modest to talk about his achievements.
47.33	Bruce left home at 12; he went to Pulteney Grammar School . His brothers went to St Peters but had to leave during the Depression. His brother Don did not get permanent work until he joined the army. He lived at home with his parents. His brother Max worked for a law firm then got a job in the country as a jackaroo at Bundaleer Station .
52.45	When the war broke out Max couldn't join up because he couldn't be released from the farm in the South East, Padthaway but eventually left and tried to join the air force. He failed the medical as he was colour blind, and reluctantly joined the Army , the infantry and hated it. Bruce joined the Air Force in 1941 when he was 18. In 1942 he marched in the Adelaide Anzac March before going to his initial training camp at Victor Harbor .