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Interview with Giancarlo ‘Johnny’ Marchioro recorded by Madeleine Regan for the Italian Market Gardeners Oral History Project of the State Library of South Australia. The interview takes place at Nailsworth, South Australia, on 21st July, 28th July and 11th August 2008. Eleonora Marchioro is also present and contributes occasionally.

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This is an interview with Giancarlo Marchioro, also known as Johnny Marchioro, recorded on 21st July in his home at Nailsworth, South Australia. Also present is Johnny’s wife, Eleonora Marchioro. So, Johnny, were you born in Australia, can you tell me a little bit about your early years?

GIANCARLO: Yes, I was born in South Australia at Frogmore Road, Findon, but the hospital was at Torrensville, 17th August 1940, where I was there for nine years, in the market garden with my mother and father, that worked the glasshouses, up till 1949, and then we shifted to White Avenue, Lockleys, and we stayed there till 1965 before getting married and shifting to Port Wakefield Road, Bolivar.

Agreement. And when you are a child, the first nine years at Frogmore Road, can you tell me something about the life there that you had with your family?

GIANCARLO: Well, 1945, that I remember, Dad being called up to go to the army or they were taken to Alice, he was sent to Alice Springs because of the War, I think it was 1945, stayed there for – or ’44 – for one year before, the mosaic flooring company, called in that they wanted men to do cement work. And so Dad come back and worked at the Adelaide Railway Station doing – – –.

ELEONORA: Meantime your mum had to cope by herself.

GIANCARLO: Yeah, with two children, me and my brother that was two years younger. We had to milk the cow of a morning and night (laughs) – not at the age of five, but when I was seven, eight, I started milking the cow. [We’d] have our own milk and cheese and butter.

And your mum made that?

GIANCARLO: And Mum made that, yes. And I don't know what – the vegetables that we grew, how we got rid of them, but we must have had some friends that took them to market for us. And then Dad had fourteen glasshouses on the property. Then in 1947 he bought himself a new Chev truck. Before that he used to go to market with the horse and cart.

Wow.

GIANCARLO: For a few years.

And what kind of vegetables do you remember your father growing?

GIANCARLO: Tomatoes were the main vegetables and during the summer he had trombones, and I remember in summer they had a lot of trombones and a few potatoes and enough money to shift to White Avenue, Lockleys. Where at Frogmore Road we were renting, renting the land, so White Avenue we bought it freehold, and there we started working – well, when I was about fifteen I started working the land as well.

Can we go back to the Frogmore Road time and just talk a little bit about what you remember, because I understand that there were a lot of Italian families there?

GIANCARLO: Yes, there was half a dozen Italian families around the area that being small we used to go to school with them – Bruno,, they were Adamis[?] not far from where we were living. Grade one, two and three was at the Flinders Park Primary School, first three years of schooling.

And had you learned English before you went to school?

GIANCARLO: That I remember it must have been broken English first year, but after that I don't remember having difficulties at school.

But you would have spoken Italian at home.

GIANCARLO: At home it was always Italian, yes.

And in the community that your parents belonged to?

GIANCARLO: Well, the children my age, we all started speaking in English, so that made it a little bit easier, but for the first four years where I was home all the time

there was no prep or kindergarten (laughs) at the time, we just – well, we had to speak Italian all the time. Until we went to school.

Can you tell me a little bit about your parents and when they came to Australia? Maybe if you started with your dad?

GIANCARLO: Yes, with my dad, he come out he said 1927, because his friend, he had a friend that his brother was in Australia and his friend said, ‘I’m going to Australia’, and so my dad said, ‘Oh, I’m going to come, too’. So in about six months he’d made his papers and he was on the boat as well, come to Australia. And I think started off in Hindley Street, because my auntie – no, in Currie Street, Waymouth Street – and then they come into the land, in 1930s I think my uncle was in the garden and Dad come to help, and so until 1937, Dad wanted to get married and probably letters were only written once a year, (laughs) and he wrote to Italy to his sister in Italy and said that he wanted to get married and my auntie in Italy mentioned that this young girl that was working with her, she wanted to go to Australia. Then my mother – or to be my mother –

ELEONORA: Got married.

GIANCARLO: – came to Australia and they got married by proxy. And they a good ---.

ELEONORA: Mum had to go and live with his family for six months while she was in Italy.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: Soon as she got married.

GIANCARLO: Yes. She got married before, by proxy, but without seeing my father, and they lived together (laughs) for the next sixty years.

And the area in Italy that they came from?

GIANCARLO: Was Vicenza, suburb is in Monte di Malo, yes, and Mum come out in 1938 I think it must have been, ’37, ’38.

And how old was she?

GIANCARLO: She was about twenty-two, twenty-three.

And your dad?

GIANCARLO: Dad must have been – he was born in 1906, so [in] 1938 he was thirty-two.

And when they arrived, or when your mother arrived, your dad was already living on Frogmore Road?

GIANCARLO: Yes, with my uncle and auntie.

And were they in a house?

GIANCARLO: A tin house, yes, a tin house. Yes, they borrowed the money to make an extra room for my mother, by the Italians, they were Crottis and Bailettis, they were well-known in Adelaide.

ELEONORA: They lent him the money.

GIANCARLO: Lent him the money.

ELEONORA: Lent him the money to build an extra room for his wife.

Wow. So they lived there in that house for – – –.

GIANCARLO: Until 1949.

So you grew up in that house?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

So two families living – – –?

GIANCARLO: No, my auntie shifted into Pierson Street, Lockleys, after a couple of years, so I must have been two, so they must have shifted.

Can you tell me a little bit about what that are looked like, because the area we're talking about is Frogmore Road on the west?

GIANCARLO: To Grange Road, yes.

Grange Road on the north –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– Frogmore on the west or east?

GIANCARLO: That was, yes, north–south, and then there was a the River Torrens at the end of Frogmore Road, there was a wooden bridge to go across that, and there was all boxthorns to the east, was all boxthorns about twelve foot high, and we used to have a little track, dirt track, to go into next door’s of a night-time. I can remember Mum going there after tea and talking with the ladies, because at that time Dad was in Alice Springs. And on our way walking to these houses she’d say, ‘The moon’ll see Dad in a couple of hours’ time’, she used to tell us, the same moon. So not every night, but we used to walk over, there used to be, say, half a kilometre of a night-time.

ELEONORA: Who did you use to go and see?

GIANCARLO: There used to be ands, they used to live in a tin house as well and they’d bought a train with all these little compartments that they – four children, three boys and a girl.

ELEONORA: Who used to live in the train?

GIANCARLO: Oh, probably the younger ones use the to live in the train, till they got married.

And in your estimation, Johnny, what size land are we talking about?

GIANCARLO: Oh, Dad had seven, eight acres where we were, and then it was divided up till Findon Road where Robinson used to have a trotting track on the corner, Grange Road and Findon Road. And I think used to be Harris Scarfe’s owned the property and they leased it out to all these market gardeners in the area. They all had ten-acre allotments for a long time, and then 1950, when we’d already shifted to Lockleys, it got sold to the people that were occupying that piece of land and we missed out. (laughs).

Who went to your land when your family left?

GIANCARLO: One of the boys of the, got married that year, so he shifted into our land and he’s still living on the property.

ELEONORA: The family.

GIANCARLO: The family, yes. He's passed away now. But he continued market gardening –

ELEONORA: His wife's still alive.

GIANCARLO: – market gardening until seven or eight years ago, ten years ago. Yes. And that was a dead-end road, it was only asphalt up to our property and then there was just a track that went into the river. Balletta[?] Road, that's a main road now, wasn't even there (laughs) then, back in the '40s, it was a track but not a proper road.

And I've seen some of the photos where the separation between the owners was with bamboo.

GIANCARLO: Bamboos and boxthorns, yes. And that was the separations.

And, Johnny, in 1950 when your family moved to Lockleys, can you tell me something about your memory of that?

GIANCARLO: Well, there I was a little bit older so I can remember a little bit better, that we shifted fourteen glasshouses from Findon to White Avenue, and there we had three acres – there was a five-acre block, but my auntie that had lost my uncle wanted some land, too, so Dad let her buy two acres and we had three acres, and then the next-door had another five acres on the top, next door, because that land that we were on was about a metre higher than the rest of the area, because it was taken out in the '20s when the River Torrens was cleaned out, and so we had a metre of topsoil, so it was good for gardening. Right on the river, we pumped out the water out of the river with a motor for all our glasshouses. And we worked until I got to sixteen and then every year we bought another couple of glasshouses until we had twenty-one glasshouses on the property and worked them. And Dad and myself at the time we used to go to the market and sell our own vegetables every morning.

That was the East End Market.

GIANCARLO: At the East End Market, yes. But then it was three o'clock in the morning and come back home and start working again.

How many days in the week would you go to market?

GIANCARLO: Well, summertime or since September till February, be three times a week, up at three o'clock in the morning. And the East End Market was good then because the growers had to park outside on the road on the Rundle Street and East terrace, and the shopkeepers account buy off of you until the siren used to go and then we'd all rush in, get our spots, and the shopkeepers come and buy off of us then. But we weren't allowed to deliver until about six o'clock in the morning where the shopkeepers use the to come and pick up their vegetables, until they changed the law that we had to deliver the vegetables. It made it harder for us. Plus growing the vegetables we had to deliver it to them, so it made it a bit harder.

ELEONORA: What was it that you used to grow at Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Oh, at Lockleys we had like beetroots, onions, bunched onions, because our next-door neighbour had a lot of bunched onions and he'd give us a lot of plants for ourselves because at times I used to help him, Saturdays and Sundays I'd help him, so to repay me he'd give us some onion plants for us to grow. And they was a hard job because you had to put them in one by one and first you had to go with the horse to make the furrows and then we had to rake them to make it nice and fine and then we'd plant the onion on top. And (laughs) then we'd start picking in September and pick the larger ones and every morning you'd have to pick those of the right size and take them out onto the track with a hose and wash them one side and then the other side, and then put them on the truck and get them ready for market.

And did you group them, did you bunch them?

GIANCARLO: You put them in fives, yes. And then we had beetroot to do the same thing, but then beetroot was sown into the rows, and then with had to thin them out, go down on your hands and knees and thin them out.

Where did you get your seed from?

GIANCARLO: At the market there used to be Holbrook's & Son, and fruit growers, but mainly Holbrook's, we used to buy off of him because he'd come around of a three o'clock before market start and with his little book and go around to all the growers and ask them if they wanted manure and string and all garden materials, you know. Every morning he'd be there, the old Mr Holbrook come along with his pencil and pad. And then after market at eight o'clock they'd come out to deliver, put it on your truck before you go home.

Ah, so you got your seeds that way.

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes.

And what did you grow in the glasshouses then?

GIANCARLO: Well, in the glasshouses mainly tomatoes. We used to make our own seed by at the end of the season squashing our tomatoes, our nice – we tried to pick the perfect ones – squash them; and with the rest of the tomato we'd make sauce; and make our seeds and dry it off and ready to plant in January, in February, sow it and start off again.

And what varieties do you remember?

GIANCARLO: Well, that was a Chinese variety, they used to say. It wasn't a hybrid seed because you could make it yourself. And it used to be a semi-dwarf and it used to be a flat tomato where there used to be some crinkly ones and they were sold at half price. You used to have your customers that wanted only the cheaper variety, and you knew who they were so you'd keep them to a side for them shopkeepers, and the better shopkeepers'd buy the first-class tomato. And that's what we done for a long time.

And twenty-one glasshouses, that's so many.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: And no tractors.

No tractors.

GIANCARLO: No, no Dad never did have a tractor at the time.

Would it be possible to describe what an average day would have been – say, I know it would depend on what season, but maybe if you chose a busy season and describe ---.

GIANCARLO: Busy season, Mum and Dad and myself would have to start at six and finish at six and not much time for stopping or anything like that, you know? But it was long hours – that’s without going to market, market days was three o’clock.

ELEONORA: But he used to deliver even at the Central Market Thursday night, he used to take ---.

GIANCARLO: Of a Thursday night we used to deliver bunch stuff –

ELEONORA: In the Central Market.

GIANCARLO: – at Central Market. There used to be one good shopkeeper, Eddie Smith, he’d only take good vegetables, and he’d come around of it Friday – yes, Friday morning – the week after with a kit bag full of money, going paying all his growers. There’d be two of them: one of them with a book, writing down what you’d given him the week before, and the other one taking out, giving you the money. And that happened for I don’t know how many years; it was a long time he used to come round and do that.

If you think about your days beginning at six and ending at six, can you tell me what kinds of things you were doing in that day?

GIANCARLO: Oh, well, in the morning we’d always pick our vegetables first because it’d be in the cool and you could be in the glasshouses till lunchtime, and you’d pick them and get them ready for market; and after there’d be watering or hoeing and kept going that way. And did the repairs to be done – not on machinery because there was no machines (laughs) – but on your glasshouses, and hoeing grass because with no tractors you’d have to have your gutters clean because we’d get the water out from the river and we didn’t have pipes to go into all our patches of vegetables. There’d be they used to call it a gutter, you know, just a big furrow, dirt furrow, and you had to keep it clean because if it’d get clogged up with grass the water wouldn’t go through. So you’d have to keep that clean. And on the

pump every now and again – there used to be like a belt, about forty-foot-long belt, from the top to the bottom, and that'd slip off at times when you're looking at the water again in your glass and you saw no water. What happens, the belt's fallen off the pump, so you'd have to run down the river and put some – used to be a bit of tar to make it stick onto your motor and that, and start off again. Lot of running.

So you were very fit.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And did you say that your mother worked with your dad?

GIANCARLO: Yes, because in the market garden by yourself you can't do much, especially in glasshouses. The ladies go quicker pruning tomatoes. (laughs)

ELEONORA: And pick beans.

GIANCARLO: And pick beans, yes, because we planted beans the second crop around. First we'd have tomato and then you put your second crop in and they'd be beans in the glasshouse. They used to take a long time to pick, used to be – we used to have a good variety of stick bean and they'd be nice and long. And you have to pick it properly to sell it, your vegetables had to be picked properly to be sold at a good price.

And you continued to work – you finished school at fifteen –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– and up began working with your dad and mum.

GIANCARLO: Yes, I had a couple of jobs in between but I wasn't very put into it because I was always thinking about Mum and Dad working by themselves. And I done a bit of shop work for six months but never put my mind to it because I was always thinking about them. And so when the time came that Dad said to work at home I jumped at the idea and I know it probably wasn't the best idea, but after that with haven't had any – since after we got married we've had a pretty good time working in the garden. So at the beginning I shouldn't have, but after that I don't find any regrets in working the land.

Why do you say that maybe you shouldn't have?

GIANCARLO: Oh, well, it would have been a lot easier to have an office job or (laughs) other jobs. We worked hard in the land, but on the long run it paid off for us.

When you were a young man you played football.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Dad never stopped me from playing sport. At school I was captain of the cricket team and the football team at thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, my last year at school, and then decided to play football for West Torrens and winning the McCallum Medal in 1957, '59 I played my first league game for West Torrens and till '63, then I wasn't quite good enough, so (laughs) played a couple of years in the country and '65 got married and that was the end of my football career.

How did you manage to keep football going with that very busy focus in the garden?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Well, that's why probably – when I was young I was fast, and after that, when I was nineteen, twenty, I started probably getting a little bit slower where I should have been getting faster if I had an easier job. But in the glasshouse we had to dig our – not all the time, but I remember digging some whole glasshouse with a fork, me and Dad, by hand. Like the fork was the ordinary fork they use in the garden: yes, we had to dig – – –.

How long would that take?

GIANCARLO: Oh, it'd take you three hours.

Two men.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Yes, because it was a hundred and twelve foot long and you had to dig all of it, it was fifteen foot wide and a hundred and twelve foot long. So you didn't have time to say, 'Oh, I'm tired'. (laughs)

So that's half a day.

GIANCARLO: Oh, you don't get up early. You're five o'clock until nine o'clock, then you had to level it off, too; you just couldn't leave big lumps on there. And in

the later years, to drill our rows, I'd pull it with a rope and Dad'd hold this little scarifier and we'd do the rows in the glasshouses, up and down, up and down. (laughs) So that'd keep you fit, but probably didn't keep your muscles for your football career properly, you know, they'd keep them strong but not elastic as they should be. So I had nearly ten years of good football career.

ELEONORA: Do you reckon?

GIANCARLO: In the juniors and a couple of years in the A grade.

So how was your week, then, like how did you organise time?

GIANCARLO: Well, I used to throw everything down at about four o'clock Tuesdays and Thursdays and play Saturdays, so a little bit of the work got left for my father and mother to do extra. And for a while that's what it was, you know. Probably work a little bit harder when I wasn't at the football to make up time, because the vegetables still had to get into the market. And at the time there was the captain, old captain of West Torrens, Bob Hank, he was in the market garden too, so he said his brothers used to do a little bit extra, so somebody has to do a bit extra when they're not there.

And did your brother work ---?

GIANCARLO: No, my brother at the age of ten got polio and so for six months he was in hospital and sick, but he was –

ELEONORA: He was in isolation.

GIANCARLO: – in isolation there at Northfield for three months. But he was strong, too: instead of being tied up he was always on the loose, and after one year he was back at school. And he done carpentry, so he done – there used to be there at Torrensville Carpenter & Suttons Furniture.

ELEONORA: He wouldn't have been able to work the garden because he had the polio ---.

GIANCARLO: Yes, and three acres, we had three acres, there probably wasn't enough land for the four of us. So he did that and he done a carpentry job until he

got married, and he worked on that bridge on the Findon Road, there was the bridge in between Rowells Road and Findon Road – I think they must have fixed it, they done a new bridge in 1966, '67 – and he fell and broke his leg, and so his father-in-law told him to work with him at the Barbecue Inn in Hindley Street.

ELEONORA: Because he owned it.

GIANCARLO: Because he owned that Barbecue – and he's still got his own barbecue shop down Jetty Road at the moment. So that was the end of carpentry for my brother.

And going back to White Avenue and the time that you were growing up there and living and working, can you tell me what it looked like, what White Avenue – – –?

GIANCARLO: We, White Avenue had from Pierson Street or halfway up Pierson Street to the end of White Avenue there was a row of bamboos there as well to separate little properties. On one side there was bamboos, on the other side there was lemon trees. Yes, all empty, no houses there. In White Avenue we had the first – '49 till '55, so for five years we were in a tin house, big shed sort of thing.

Cement floor?

GIANCARLO: Two rooms they put timber on the floor and two – kitchen and that – there was bricks laid down flat. And we lived there for five years. And then Dad built the new house, brick house, on the property.

He built it himself?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

As well as doing the garden?

GIANCARLO: Well, subcontracted, yes, because we were still living in the tin house until – it was right next door – until we pulled down the tin house and got left with a brick house, that's still standing.

And you were almost at the end of White Avenue.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And if you think about White Avenue going south to Henley Beach Road –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– were there many houses or was it all market garden?

GIANCARLO: There was all market gardening there, 1949, '50. Yes. Not up till Henley Beach Road, but five hundred metres before Henley Beach Road, there was a few houses there, but there was still market gardeners back then. They used to grow even outside tomatoes, them years, with sticks.

ELEONORA: We used to grow – – –.

GIANCARLO: Well, there was Huelins and Frys and who else was there? used to have potatoes and onions on his. And then 1960 Baulderstone's bought a lot of land there where John Martin's have got their bulk store now, and for ten years they had cabbages and celery and cauliflowers, and they had about fifty shopkeepers that used to come there Tuesdays and Thursdays and pick up vegetables, used to pick it up at home. And all those that used to be – they used to call them hawkers at the time because they used to go from house to house selling their vegetables with their truck covered over, and for about ten years they sold all their vegetables there. And he wanted some of our vegetables so we'd give it to him as well. Some would go into market but a little bit went to this Baulderstone, Charlie Baulderstone.

And in that area, did most people grow the same kind of vegetables?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes.

Seasonal?

GIANCARLO: Yes, glasshouse. But back then a lot of them that didn't go to market used to send their tomatoes to Melbourne, so they'd pack them up and they'd have an agent that you could just put a stamp on and take it to the Mile End railway station and they'd go to Melbourne. Well, Dad was always lucky that we always sold most of ours here at the East End Market. But a lot of growers that grew tomatoes sent them all to Melbourne, because the Adelaide market wasn't big enough for all the growers that were here. And even the celery, those that – even Findon Road they used to grow a lot of celery, they used to send it all to Melbourne then. Now Melbourne sends it to Adelaide. (laughs)

And was it the same kind of money, if you sent it to Melbourne? Or I guess you were paying extra costs.

GIANCARLO: You'd have to pay extra for cartage and new boxes and lids and they had to be rowed and graded, you had to pack them as well, where here you'd just put them into the box and as long as the box was full the shopkeepers were happy.

Are you talking about the half-cases?

GIANCARLO: Half-case, the wooden half-case. Used to be twenty-four pounds at the time – they used to call it in pound weights – used to be twenty-four, twenty-five pounds. Those that probably wanted to sell their tomatoes more they used to put extra, (laughs) so the shopkeeper'd see, 'Oh, there'll be extra tomatoes in that box', so they knew what they were doing, you know.

And do you remember how much it would cost to sell or buy a box?

GIANCARLO: Oh, in the beginning they were pounds, even if you could get a pound, twenty-four shillings, twenty, thirty shillings, that was good money then because the empty box you used to buy them second-hand from the shopkeepers, used to give them back tuppence or threepence. Yes. The pound notes were then till 1967, so even beans you used to get thirty shillings a dozen, used to be in bags, used to weigh them up in like ten-kilo or twenty-four pounds, and that was good money at the time. Where now, still getting two dollars a kilo, three dollars a kilo for tomatoes where it's ten kilos it's not too good. A lot of expenses have gone up now.

But yes, all back in the '40s where Dad had twelve, fourteen glasshouses, he could make a living with the whole family. Now you need thirty glasshouses to make a living.

I remember you telling me a story about your parents, how they had made some good money when they were living at Findon and something dramatic happen to that money. Can you tell that story?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Dad had made enough money to buy himself a truck, but before that in 1945 he bought a second-hand one that was breaking down all the time and he wanted a new truck, and he had three hundred pounds – don't know

where, under the bed somewhere – and my uncle was sick, so it was 1945, he used to go and see my auntie from Frogmore Road to Pierson Street that used to be a couple of kilometres away, of a night-time after work he used to go and see my auntie that had three daughters, and come home and the house was all upside-down and they said, ‘Oh, thieves, the thieves’, and being small I did not know what thieves were – (laughs) but yes, he looked for his money and it was all gone. So that was the end, so they had to wait a bit more longer time to buy his new truck. That’s why Mum didn’t like to live at Frogmore Road any more, because of that, and the first chance that Dad got to buy his own land he shifted.

And what would you say that you learned from your parents, Johnny?

GIANCARLO: Well, from my parents I’ve learnt that they’ve been honest and they’ve been well-respected by all the Italians at Lockleys, I don’t think Mum and Dad had many bad words with any of their friends. And I tried to do the same, and lucky to get married in 1965.

And your parents liked your wife?

GIANCARLO: Probably did. (laughter)

But you would have learned a lot about hard work, too.

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, hard work never bothered me. And then, because when I took off and my dad helped me to shift the glasshouses, I started off with fourteen and every year we put on two till I got to twenty-one glasshouses at Bolivar, and yes, our summertime was putting up glasshouses and shifting, because the side rows were only four foot high and so every year we’d try to lift them up to at least five or six foot high so we could get in with a tractor proper and do it easier work. When I got to Bolivar I got myself a tractor and a rotary hoe and it was a little bit easier. But we still had – every tomato plant that you have to put in the soil you have to look after it every week for three months. And then what I found out by going to market myself with the vegetables, if you had good quality, you never had any trouble selling it, and that’s what I found by going to market for the last thirty years. You have your same customers and not to put rubbish down the bottom because the next day they’d give it back. So we never did any of that.

So quality was ---.

GIANCARLO: The quality, yes. And now that I've retired I look at the fruit shops and they've got these flat beans and I think to myself, 'Jingers, I couldn't sell them if I had to sell them beans in the market myself the way they are, presented at the time, well, they're not like now'. But yes, we had – how many years, '65 to ---.

ELEONORA: Thirty-eight years for sure for working.

GIANCARLO: Yes, thirty-eight, forty years, in the glasshouses.

ELEONORA: It's only the last three or four years that we slow down, we've stopped.

So you got married in 1965.

GIANCARLO: '65, yes.

And you immediately –

GIANCARLO: '66 we started working at Bolivar.

At Bolivar.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

So your dad helped you move the glasshouses.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And you had a new house.

GIANCARLO: Yes, we put up a new house.

ELEONORA: Had a new house with nothing on the floor, no television, we were still happy. We had a new baby straight away. (laughs)

GIANCARLO: Yes. That made it a little bit harder, for the first year. We were still learning how to live by ourselves for the first year, but after that we soon ---.

ELEONORA: Well, how many months before you collected any money?

GIANCARLO: Well, when you plant stuff you can't collect straight away, so from January we never collected till August because –

ELEONORA: First year.

GIANCARLO: – by the time I put the glasshouses in and put our first tomato plants in in May, so it took us five months to put fourteen glasshouses up ready for market, so put them in and started our first tomatoes, money was in August. But in between I was helping Dad at Lockleys and he was paying our groceries and a bit of expenses. So it's after that we started by ourselves with our own.

ELEONORA: Yes, well, the first vegetable that we grew at Bolivar wasn't very good.

GIANCARLO: Well, we had to work hard to get the ground in proper condition because it was new ground but it was very clayey and we had to put in a lot of loam and fowl manure and cow manure for the first four to five years, we put in a lot of manure.

This is into the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Into the glasshouse, yes.

And that was done manually?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, with a wheelbarrow and spread it out by hand. (laughs) Then after that I got a tractor to put in with a scoop and put seven, eight scoops of manure in, in the glasshouse. But then we still had to spread it by hand with a shovel, me and the wife had to do it.

What had the land been used for before?

GIANCARLO: It was nothing there. It was barren land, it wasn't worked at all.

And how many acres did you buy there?

GIANCARLO: Dad bought seven acres at the beginning, but then they took one acre off for the highways – two acres – so we got left with five, and so we worked five, for forty years we worked with five acres. But then after last twenty years we put

some artichokes in, that comes in July, August, September. But the first years we used to plant a few cabbages because I'd sell them at the market with my tomatoes and beans –

ELEONORA: That was outside.

GIANCARLO: – outside, yes – and then we used to have broccoli, just to keep my shopkeepers going, and zucchinis, plant zucchinis for a long time as well. [When] they were in season you have to cut them every day because you had to have them the right size, because if you had any that'd get left behind they'd go over size and they weren't any good. So the more harder you worked and kept to the right size the less wastage you have, and so that's where you made a bit of profit, you know. Like even with the tomatoes, we never threw one little tomato away because I always had a shopkeeper that wanted the small tomatoes, and sort them out properly, and they'd ask, 'How many smalls you got today?' I'd say, 'Four, five'. And greengrocer would buy the lot. So that was tomato growing.

And when you were at Bolivar, how long did it take you to female like it was a going kind of business then?

GIANCARLO: Six, seven years. To have everything really going to order, yes. But the first five years we got things going properly.

ELEONORA: Yes, but it still took you six, seven years to get a really good crop out of everything.

GIANCARLO: Yes, but in the land you can never have a perfect year because there's always – – –.

ELEONORA: Oh, not perfect, but still we got better at it.

GIANCARLO: Yes, we're getting better every year.

But that's quite a long time. A lot of work.

GIANCARLO: It takes a lot of work.

ELEONORA: Oh, yes.

Like absolute focus on –

GIANCARLO: On growing.

– **getting things right.**

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: Yes, but because I was learning because I didn't know anything about market gardening, so by then it took me five or six years to be able to help him properly.

Yes, and you had two children in that time.

ELEONORA: I had two children. (laughs)

Yes. And your dad sometimes helped you?

GIANCARLO: Oh, yes, they used to come up market days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, to help us to pick in the morning. They'd be there at six – from Lockleys they'd be there at six o'clock in the morning to pick tomatoes because in the winter we wanted to finish a bit earlier; in the summer time you had to be out of the glasshouses because of the hot weather, you know? And so we'd have to have them picked by ten o'clock and then you'd have sorting them, getting them ready, putting them on the truck, and then you'd do a bit of watering, and then you always had beans to pick as well, always had beans, and they'd take twice as long as your tomatoes to pick your beans. Used to be in the morning from six o'clock till twelve o'clock picking beans.

ELEONORA: That was a hard job, picking beans, it's a hard job. Time, a lot, it took a long time. But my father-in-law used to like picking beans.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Mum did.

ELEONORA: Not your mum, but your dad did.

How old would your parents have been when you moved to Bolivar?

GIANCARLO: When we moved to Bolivar, '65, so Dad was sixty. Dad was sixty. And for how long, for twenty years?

ELEONORA: They used to come up all the time.

GIANCARLO: Every year for twenty years twice a week.

ELEONORA: In the winter it was only once.

GIANCARLO: Probably once in wintertime.

ELEONORA: Yes. In the summer twice a week.

GIANCARLO: Twice a week.

ELEONORA: But they used to like it.

GIANCARLO: Picking, to pick the vegetables.

And when did your dad and mum finish their business at Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Their business there finished about in 1968, '70, because by himself he couldn't do the job properly. So he got rid of the last glasshouses to me so I got twenty-one, and he finished up that way. So it would have been 1970, would have been '65.

ELEONORA: Yes, that's it.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: That he stopped.

GIANCARLO: Working for himself. But he still worked another twenty years coming up to Bolivar.

And did he sell – did your parents sell land as they finished working the business?

GIANCARLO: Yes, they had to sell their land because at the end they didn't have enough money to continue on and there was no pension money if they kept the land at the time, so they had to sell their land to keep going.

ELEONORA: So they could get a pension, otherwise they didn't have enough to live on.

GIANCARLO: It was the wrong time, really, because after that the land went up, skyrocketed. But at that moment that was the going price.

And the rest of White Avenue, when did that start changing in terms of building?

GIANCARLO: Well, when Dad sold, the next-door neighbour had already sold, he sold when we left, didn't he? He'd already, '65 our next-door neighbour that had five acres, he was the one that build all these houses, so that would have been – yes, and so we kept it until they were building houses and so that's why Dad finished up selling. When they'd finished building all the houses on that block they come over to Dad's. My auntie that had the two acres near the river, it was all taken by the council, there was no land left for them to build, so that was all taken; but they got compensated by the council. And my cousin, they still had a little bit of room to put two houses on there from two acres of land.

So things changed a lot in White Avenue in that last part of – – –.

GIANCARLO: '65–70, yes, all houses. Because even before that, they were sold before.

Yes. Well, thank you, Johnny, that's the end of this first interview. So thank you very much.

GIANCARLO: We're right.

END OF DISK 1: DISK 2