



Fitzroy History Society Oral History Project 2015-2017

Transcript of interview with Ivy Dawson

(interviewed by Rosa Simonelli and Marion Glanville of The Fitzroy History Society 02 of February 2016)

Ivy Dawson has lived in Fitzroy for 74 years, moving into 62 Gore Street at the age of 12 (a house which she and her husband eventually bought for £1500). She left school at 12 and kept house for her father and by 14 was working in the first of a variety of jobs, including cleaning, cooking, child-minding and waitressing, until she retired at the age of 62. She speaks about raising her four children in Fitzroy and the positive changes brought to the suburb with immigration.

She also talks of some of the old Fitzroy characters, and the general hardness of life back when she was young. While she speaks about the men drinking and domestic violence, she feels herself fortunate to have had a good man, and raised their four children successfully where they could see “the other side of life” and realise that life for everyone “wasn't all stars and roses”.



START OF TRANSCRIPT

- Facilitator: How long have you lived in Fitzroy, what year was it when you moved here?
- Ivy Dawson: I've lived in Fitzroy for 74 years and I was 12 year old when I moved into 62 Gore Street.
- Facilitator: Wow, so how did you come to live in the suburb?
- Ivy Dawson: Well my father and I were living in Richmond and closing down the house so our father found a two bedroom at 62 Gore Street. It was run by Mrs Pascoe at the time and we were renting two bedrooms.
- Facilitator: Fabulous, so you were 12 when you moved into Fitzroy...
- Ivy Dawson: Yes.
- Facilitator: ...with your dad.
- Ivy Dawson: Yes. [0:42]
- Facilitator: So what are your earliest memories of Fitzroy, Ivy?
- Ivy Dawson: Well, my earliest memories of Fitzroy was the fact that men seemed to be in the hotel all the time and the women were waiting home for them and nine times out of 10 a husband would go home to their wives and their children and back to the pub. The woman would be lucky if she got any money to keep the house going for the week, but that was the thing in those days, that was the way it was.
- Facilitator: So was it the six o'clock drinking time, was it?
- Ivy Dawson: Yeah. Six o'clock swill they used to call it.
- Facilitator: The six o'clock swill. So what about, what sort of chores did you do around the house?
- Ivy Dawson: Well when I was a 12 year old basically I used to have to look after the two rooms and I used to cook the meals for dad. Poor dad, he ate some terrible food because I didn't have a clue how to cook, but at least he ate it.
- Facilitator: So was it just you and your dad?
- Ivy Dawson: Just me and my dad.



- Facilitator: Okay, no other family members.
- Ivy Dawson: No.
- Facilitator: So what sort of food did you eat back then, Ivy?
- Ivy Dawson: We used to eat lamb and sausages and a lot of offal, a lot of offal.
- Facilitator: What was the reason for that?
- Ivy Dawson: We used to have hearts, kidneys, livers, things like that. That's what we ate mostly.
- Facilitator: Mm, did you like it? [2:13]
- Ivy Dawson: We used to really enjoy it, it was really lovely. I used to love a light piece of liver and I used to love bullock's heart.
- Facilitator: Yum. Did you cook it?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, I cooked it but you baked it in the onion very, very slowly with a little bit of water and oil, fat.
- Facilitator: Beautiful. So where did you go to school?
- Ivy Dawson: Well basically I went to school at St John's East Melbourne until I was 12 and my father pulled me out of school at 12 years old and I never went back.
- Facilitator: What about school, what was school like?
- Ivy Dawson: Terrible, it was run by the nuns and we used to have very, very strict nuns and I wasn't really bright in school, I was more frightened than anything. I wasn't what, [didn't get] what you call a good education.
- Facilitator: So would you say that you were glad to leave school?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, totally so. I've learnt more having left school than what I did at school.
- Facilitator: Yep, okay. So what were your friends like at school, Ivy, do you remember?
- Ivy Dawson: I really don't remember that, but having lived in Gore Street there were four of us, there was [Gloria Phillips, Wanda Freeman and Patty Wang] and there was myself and we were all about the same age and we used to have some good fun



together. Just sit out the front and play, go over [to] the gardens together and have a really good time.

Facilitator: So were they friends outside of school as well, were they?

Ivy Dawson: They were friends outside of school as well.

Facilitator: Mm, and what about the neighbours, what were the neighbours like, do you remember?

Ivy Dawson: Well altogether the neighbours, you'd go in and you'd have a cup of morning tea and you'd have sit down and talk and we all [4:02] complained about the sort of life we had. But we had no possible hope of making it any better so we just had to face up to it.

Facilitator: Right, so you basically were all in it together.

Ivy Dawson: Well there was a lot of neighbours, a lot of neighbours had it very bad with their husbands. I was very fortunate, I had a good husband.

Facilitator: So it sounds like you did a bit of mixing, did you visit each other's houses much?

Ivy Dawson: Oh yes, we'd always visit one another's houses and we were there for one another. If one were sick you'd do the shopping for them, do a bit of housework for them. We were in line together, not like today.

Facilitator: Yeah, so you actually see each other and mix with each other.

Ivy Dawson: Yes, we'd see each other and we'd go to one another's houses, as I say, and have a cup of tea and a biscuit and we'd talk to one another and sort of just air our woes.

Facilitator: Now, what about the poverty of the situation, Ivy? Do you remember the poverty that you were living in?

Ivy Dawson: I really never noticed poverty except the fact that we never seemed to have blankets, we always seemed to have coats over us and a sheet we didn't know about. As far as being fed I think I was well fed, considering. We weren't as clean then in those days as what we are nowadays because we, I never had a mother to start with and it was just one of those things. You had a bath once a week, you washed your hair once a week and that was it.



- Facilitator: Now I remember you telling me that your dad took you to the, was it the City Baths?
- Ivy Dawson: Yeah, my father used to take me to the City Baths once a week and he let me have a lovely bath and wash my hair and that was a thing with dad and at least once a week he'd take me to a restaurant and we'd have a dinner of a night time. That was his sort of way of saying, I love you Ivy. [6:06]
- Facilitator: Do you remember what the food was like at the restaurant?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, it was very good. I can always remember barley broth and I can always remember roast lamb and apple pie and cream.
- Facilitator: Mm, are those things that you still like today?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, yes.
- Facilitator: Okay. Now, what about being in Fitzroy, was it a scary place do you think?
- Ivy Dawson: Well in my time was around, it was pretty scary. There was a lot of criminals lived around. There was a lot of gangland type of thing, it's not much different from today except for the drugs they've got today is much worse. There was a lot alcohol in our day, I don't think there was much drug use, but there was a lot of alcohol and men seemed to find the art of fighting one another quite good [laughs]... and coming home and bashing their wives up later [when] they did.
- Facilitator: Right so that was the thing what they did. They drank and then they bashed their wives.
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, yes.
- Facilitator: So what about, did other people think Fitzroy was a bit dodgy?
- Ivy Dawson: Well I never found them creepy. Well you have a woman may, and she was a half, quarter to half Aboriginal and her name was Big Nancy.
- Facilitator: I remember Big Nancy, yep. [7:32]
- Ivy Dawson: Yeah, and she was pretty scary so if I seen her coming down the street I'd turn and walk the other way and she done her block one night and threw a poor little woman down over the first floor from the stairs and killed her.
- Facilitator: Did you see that?



Ivy Dawson: I didn't see it but I seen the bod[y], basically the body was there the next morning and the police arrived and she was dead and they found out that Big Nancy had did it. They got her and put her in gaol.

Facilitator: So do you think other people thought Fitzroy was a bit dodgy?

Ivy Dawson: Well, let's put it this way when I was a teenager and I used to go dancing and a boy would bring me home I'd never say I lived in Fitzroy I'd always walk down Victoria Parade and step into one of the big houses and say I lived there and I'd say goodnight at the gate. I did that because once a guy knew you lived in Fitzroy you were cheap. You were cheap, an easy target.

Facilitator: Yeah, fair enough. So what about, so you wouldn't have had many school holidays then because you left school early.

Ivy Dawson: No, no because I left school at 12.

Facilitator: Okay, so do you remember what you might've done on the school holidays, during school holidays?

Ivy Dawson: Basically we never done much we had just the four of us and we got a, we used to roller skate a lot and we used to go to the movies. We'd walk from Gore Street to the State Theatre and we'd walk home. You'd look at Deanna Durbin... [9:03]

...nobody would remember her, I suppose, but she was great and that, we'd just go roller skating and go to one another's houses and go dancing. We all grew up together and we all stayed together until Patty [Laing/Wang] got married first, then Wanda Freeman, then Gloria Phillips. That broke us up, basically.

Facilitator: Yeah, so that sort of - so, how did things change over the years then?

Ivy Dawson: Well Fitzroy got better. On the corner of Gore Street and Gertrude Street there used to be a, what you'd call a rooming house and I met Jack. I'd known Jack all my life but he wanted to go to a dance, a ball, and he had nobody to take so he asked would I go with him. So I went to the ball, we went to the St Mary's in Nicholson Street, North Fitzroy and I had a good time. I didn't drink, everybody else did, and so I came home and we just, sort of, I was about, ooh I'd be about 20 then... and we just sort of met up together and we just went ahead and we just got - I'd be about 19, I suppose - and we just sort of joined up together and we've been together for 65 years, 64 years.



Facilitator: That's amazing.

Ivy Dawson: Mm. It was 20-, no 67 years. Yeah it's been, yeah.

[10:39]

Facilitator: Yeah, so you mentioned some landmarks.

Ivy Dawson: Well on the corner of Gore Street and Gertrude Street there used to be a rooming house there and Jack and I when we first found one another we lived there and we had a room there. It was an absolute terrible place because they were all drunks and no hoppers and we had the downstairs front room.

Facilitator: But do you remember some of the landmarks in Fitzroy, mum, like you mentioned the State Theatre?

Ivy Dawson: Well, next door to that rooming house there used to be flats, luxury flats, that's what you would call them then, and there was posh people lived in those. Then next to the posh flats there were two factories which made fire screens and then they pulled them down and they were under, they were condemned. They were basically condemned so they had to pull them down and they stayed idle for a few years. Then the factories got pulled down and that land was idle and it belonged to St Vincent's and then St Vincent's basically, which [Kerry] would remember, had a sort of a vegetable garden there for people.

Facilitator: Oh yes, that was the, for the Commission flats.

Ivy Dawson: Yes. No, no, no. I'm talking about opposite 62 Gore Street. ...That was all, got into it. Everybody in the street grew vegetables and, yeah.

Facilitator: Yeah, but a lot of the Commission flat people used that land for their vegetables.

Ivy Dawson: The Commission flats are right up the other end.

Facilitator: Yeah, but the actual land, they used it for their vegetables.

Ivy Dawson: Yes. [12:20]

Facilitator: Yeah, and what about some of the dance halls, mum, do you remember some of the names of the dance halls that you went to?



- Ivy Dawson: Well not in Fitzroy we didn't have a dance hall bar The Exhibition Hall and that's about it and Forester's Hall in Smith Street and that's about the only two dance halls that were there at the time in Fitzroy.
- Facilitator: So did you dance at The Exhibition?
- Ivy Dawson: I danced at The Exhibition, I danced at St Mary's in North Fitzroy, I danced at the Forester's Hall, I danced at [Mickey] [Unclear] in town. You name it, we danced, the whole four of us.
- Facilitator: The Trocadero?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, the Trocadero. That was in St Kilda.
- Facilitator: Beautiful. Now, mum getting onto the sort of work that you did.
- Ivy Dawson: Well when I was 14 dad went in, you had to get the permission of the Government to get work and dad got me a permit to work and I worked for Mrs Foley in Smith Street and she made dresses, little kids dresses and that and I did all the needlework. From there as I grew up and with Jack I've done cleaning, I've done waitressing, I've done childcare.
- Facilitator: You, was it a cook, you were a cook?
- Ivy Dawson: You name it, I've done it.
- Facilitator: You were a cook for the priests at the...
- Ivy Dawson: I cooked for the Brothers over at St Patrick's School and I, that's about it. [13:45]
- Facilitator: You were at *The Herald* office for a long time, supervisor.
- Ivy Dawson: I held up a, for 20 years.
- Facilitator: You were the cleaner supervisor, you supervised them.
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, I used to get up at 2:30 in the morning.
- Facilitator: Yep, six days a week.
- Ivy Dawson: Yes and it was a good job and I enjoyed it. But I was 62 when I left and I were tired so I just left and took the pension and that was it.
- Facilitator: Did you enjoy work?



- Ivy Dawson: I loved work, I loved work I really did and I got so used to getting up at 2:30 that it took me a long time to get into the [way] of sleeping in of a morning. But I was glad and with my money I'd saved I'd go on my holiday.
- Facilitator: So what about, did you have many friends when you were older and...
- Ivy Dawson: No not really, not really. Because I've never been a mixer and basically I lost a lot of friends through not answering letters and answering phones and I just sort of never bothered. I, just to stay at home and looked after the house and whatever.
- Facilitator: Yeah, well it sounds like you worked a fair bit and you had everyone to look after.
- Ivy Dawson: Well actually when Jack and I first moved into 62 Gore Street before a Mr [Latique] had bought it from Mrs Pascoe and he let Jack and I have it rent free if I did the, kept the house up. Well, I had to polish the passage and keep all of, there was one, two, three, four tenants and I had to do their linen and I had to polish the floors and clean it all up and keep it respectful and collect the rents. [15:28]
- It was a good job but it was very difficult with a couple of older people I had there because I was only in my 20s and they were drinkers. It was a bit of hard [unclear] and I've worked hard and that's about it.
- Then we made up our mind, Latique was going to sell and Jack went to his boss, [Testro], and - Joan, Joan Testro's husband, I can't think of his name now.
- Facilitator: Joan Testro, Rex.
- Ivy Dawson: Rex, Rex. Rex gave Jack 10 shillings to put a deposit on the house and we paid the house off at £5 a week.We took a long time to pay it off but it was only basically £1500 which is basically \$3000 today.
- Facilitator: It's amazing, isn't it?
- Ivy Dawson: Now it's worth over \$1 million, I would say.
- Facilitator: So mum, do you reckon, were you happy to raise the kids in Fitzroy?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, yes. I raised four children in Fitzroy and I'm proud of them today. Not a thing they did that got into the bad vices, they all stuck pretty good.
- Facilitator: Mm, so you reckon that Fitzroy was a good place to raise kids?



- Ivy Dawson: Well it didn't do my children any harm and it certainly didn't do me any harm. ...But it brought the children up to see the other side of life, I would say.
- Facilitator: What do you mean?
- Ivy Dawson: Well it wasn't all stars and roses, I've seen things in Fitzroy that [they possibly] wouldn't have seen in Toorak [unclear].
- Facilitator: Yes, what do you mean? [17:05]
- Facilitator: So how were our lives, the kids' lives, different to yours?
- Ivy Dawson: Oh your life, you children, the four of you, were much different to our life in as much as I worked all my life. We had money coming in and we could spend up and send you to a good school and give you a good education and good clothing, good food and good family upbringing. That wasn't around in our day, it was a case of surviving in our day. Dog eat dog. Life has proved a lot better as it goes on and in the next generation it'll possibly be better still, that's what I find, anyway.
- Facilitator: Mm, so we were in a much better position, is that what you're saying? We were more comfortable?
- Ivy Dawson: Oh yes, oh yes because we both had wages coming in and Jack paid the education for the girls and the boys and I basically kept the house going and that's the way we worked it. He paid all the bills and I just kept the house going with my money and if I seen something I liked for the boys and the girls I'd go and buy it. But they were brought up much different to us and much better.
- Facilitator: Yeah, okay. So what about, mum, was religion important to you?
- Ivy Dawson: Not really, I was very grateful to God for what I've got and what I've had but as far as being a churchgoing person no, I'm not. But I definitely do believe there's a God and I wouldn't go to sleep of a night until I've said my prayers.
- Facilitator: But mum, you sent us to Catholic schools. [18:54]
- Ivy Dawson: I sent you to Catholic schools because I think Catholic schools give you a better education.
- Facilitator: Yep, that's what you feel?



- Ivy Dawson: I'm not saying I'm right, but I feel that you've all had a good education and you've all come up on top.
- Facilitator: Mm, so what about, do you think religion impacted on people's lives back then?
- Ivy Dawson: Yes, I do...
- Facilitator: Yeah, in what way?
- Ivy Dawson: Well I don't know, you've only, basically as far as I'm concerned religion has got a lot to do with what's going on in the world today because it's, well in our day Catholic and Protestants were not allowed to walk on the same side as one another, you had to walk on opposite sides. You were not allowed to speak to a Protestant if you were a Catholic and to me that's ridiculous. But now it's got to the stage with the churches and all that that you've only got to look at the likes of overseas, it's all caused basically from religion. It's just not on.
- Facilitator: Mm, so was it very, it was the Catholics and the Protestants back then.
- Ivy Dawson: Basically, yes. No, they made it together years later and it didn't go, the Church didn't sort of intervene or worry about you. But I'll tell you an episode. St Vincent's Hospital had just basically opened, it had been a couple of years, and it was run by the nuns. Now, if you were a protestant you were very lucky if you could get in, you basically had to be a Catholic.
- [20:34]
- Facilitator: Wow, that's pretty serious. So mum, when did migrants start to live in Fitzroy?
- Ivy Dawson: Migrants, I think I was around about 14, the Italians started to come into Fitzroy and I had no hassle with them but they had a hard time because the people didn't like them and they used to call them 'It is' and they gave them a really rough time. But as far as I was concerned it didn't worry me, I mean I was only a kid of 14, but they had a hard time of it. I must admit that they brought a lot of change to our community and they brought a lot of changes in the food and gave us really tasty food and they...
- Facilitator: Right, so were they mostly the only migrant group who were around?
- Ivy Dawson: Well as far as I knew, [unclear] there must've been Maltese, et cetera and that but I'm only speaking for the Italians that I knew and they were very nice people.



There was Phil that had the shop across the road in Gertrude Street near the Builders Arms Hotel and...

Facilitator: What about Peter and Gina on the corner? They were Greek.

Ivy Dawson: Peter and Gina had the grocery shop on the corner of the lane and they were lovely people, and I can truly say that most of the Italians that I've met in my life have all been nice people so I really don't know what people were going crook about. Because God knows they left us alone and they weren't a worry.

Facilitator: So it sounds like you did get on well with the migrants.

Ivy Dawson: I did get on well with the migrants, yes.

Facilitator: Yeah, were they in your street?

Ivy Dawson: We had two families in our street right down the other end near Victoria Parade, they took rooms and because most of Gore, most of Fitzroy actually, were rooming houses in those days and boarding houses so that was it and if you owned your own home you were very, very lucky. [22:30]

Facilitator: Yes, okay. So what about, do you remember any conflict or trouble with the migrant groups?

Ivy Dawson: No, not really. I can't remember anything, if there was I really wouldn't know. Because I didn't mix very much, I really didn't mix very much. There was, just as I said, the four of us and we stuck together and we sort of never sort of bothered with anybody else. There were just the four of us and we had a good life and a good time.

Facilitator: So what about, because there was the community garden across the road, so there would've been a lot of migrants who used that?

Ivy Dawson: With the garden across the road from us there was a lot of migrants, they were mostly Italian and Greek and Maltese and they used to keep their gardens there and keep them up and they kept them lovely.

Facilitator: Right, did you have much interaction with them when they were there?

Ivy Dawson: Yeah, they interacted together and they got on all well together, there was no...

[Over speaking]



- Facilitator: Did you interact with them yourself?
- Ivy Dawson: I'd say hello to them when I seen them and I'd always give them a smile which they returned with me, they'd say hello and a big smile.
- Facilitator: Yes that's lovely, that's really - do you reckon they brought some benefits to the suburb?
- Ivy Dawson: Oh yes, oh totally so.
- Facilitator: Yeah, what do you mean, in what way?
- Ivy Dawson: Well I think they brought a lot of benefit as far as taste goes in food and as far as clothing goes in colour and that sort of thing. They were colourful people, I found the Australians to be very dull in their sort of clothing and I was one of them.
- [24:05]
- Facilitator: [Laughs], and what about the way they worked?
- Ivy Dawson: They worked very well, they worked all together and they always had jobs and they worked that hard, they really did, until they managed to get their homes and buy them. They'd have big families, around about six children, and they always, yeah, they always kept to, not kept to themselves but they were just nice people, I always found anyway.
- Facilitator: That's great. So mum, you've seen the suburb change many times, I suspect, with Fitzroy, what are the things you most miss about the old Fitzroy?
- Ivy Dawson: What I miss most about old Fitzroy is the companionship. There's no togetherness anymore because most people are at work and when you're older, as I am, it's very hard to see anybody to even talk to. Of course that goes on at every suburb I suppose.
- Facilitator: So, but what do you think has changed for the better then?
- Ivy Dawson: I really feel what's changed for the better is the fact that, as far as I'm concerned in Fitzroy, that there's a lot of elderly people and they've kept Fitzroy pretty good. The younger generation is in a bad spin, I think that there's not enough work around to start with and it's just that I really couldn't put a [finger] on it but I just think that Fitzroy has improved and miraculously. Because richer people have come into it, they've bought the houses and they scuttle them down and then



they rebuild them and they're beautiful homes where before they were just old wrecks.... They were condemnable, but...

Facilitator: So new people have come in and fixed up the place.

Ivy Dawson: Yes, yes.

Facilitator: Yeah, and what about, there's a lot more sort of shopping and interesting places down Smith Street...

[26:16]

Ivy Dawson: Oh [unclear], it's improved immensely. I mean we have the supermarkets and the shops, the Asians have taken over Smith Street but that's a very good thing too because they have a lot of taste, they have a lot of - well, they're very courteous people and they really work hard for what they've got.

Facilitator: Yeah, so when did the Asian population come into Fitzroy mum, do you reckon?

Ivy Dawson: The Asian people came into Fitzroy say around about, it would at least have to be 30 years ago and literally they just took over Fitzroy's Smith Street. But then again, you've got to give them credit because they worked damn hard to get where they are, and the same as Victoria Parade. They took over [literally] but nobody gave it to them, they worked for it.

Facilitator: Yeah, so I suppose too, mum, there's a lot of eat out places and cafés and...

Ivy Dawson: Yes, there's a lot of cafés in Fitzroy, particularly in Brunswick Street and Gertrude Street and there's quite a few in Smith Street. I've not been into them because they're basically night time jobs, there are a few that open of a day but not too many. They open for dinner of a night and then that's it, they carry on from there.

Facilitator: So mum, what sort of work did the people in your neighbourhood do?

Ivy Dawson: Well mostly in my neighbourhood in my street it's full of lawyers, actors and doctors and psychiatrists and that's about it.

Facilitator: So there's a lot of professional people.

Ivy Dawson: Oh yes, oh yes and they buy the homes and they gut them, as I said, and they build them to their liking inside. They're not allowed to touch the outside, it's under the Government Trust.



[28:04]

Facilitator: So do you remember any sort of, do you remember what your neighbours were like back then?

Ivy Dawson: Well the neighbours basically were all alike when I was younger. We were housewives and mothers and that was our life, that was our life. You got up and kept the house clean, fed the family, got them off to school, picked them up. You had to walk everywhere because nobody had cars and that was very hard but we never noticed it because we were so used to it.

Facilitator: Mm, and you've never driven a car either have you?

Ivy Dawson: I've never driven a car.

Facilitator: Never had a licence?

Ivy Dawson: I could have, Jack wanted to buy me a car and I said no way would I get into a car and drive it, I'd kill somebody.

Facilitator: So you've never had a licence, dad's never had a licence? So you walked and got public transport everywhere.

Ivy Dawson: Yeah, basically I walked most places, basically I walked most places.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's good. So mum, do you remember any strange characters in Fitzroy, or really interesting characters in Fitzroy?

Ivy Dawson: Not really, except that Mary one I was telling you about and then there was...

Facilitator: Black Nancy?

Ivy Dawson: I can't think of their names, they were criminals [unclear] something or other, they lived in Fitzroy in the Commission flats and, oh not in the Commission flats, in the houses before the Commission flats took over. But there was a couple of shootings in Gertrude Street, a lot of crime gangs were around in those days, not like they are now, they were a different type of crime gang,

[29:43]

not as vicious as they are now. If they fired a gun to kill somebody they made sure it hit the floor.

Facilitator: So mum, have you liked living in Fitzroy?



Ivy Dawson: Yes, I've loved living in Fitzroy, I've lived in Fitzroy most of my life and I couldn't not, no way. It's been an experience and I've got four great children and it's never affected them.

Facilitator: Yep, yeah. Did you feel like you were a really big part of the community?

Ivy Dawson: Oh totally so, yes, totally so. I have some good neighbours, I couldn't tell you what their name is but we all say hello to one another and how are you going, how do you feel and that's about it. Because everybody's so busy.

Facilitator: Yeah, yeah but so it sounds like you have enjoyed being in Fitzroy.

Ivy Dawson: Oh yes, I like being in Fitzroy.

Facilitator: Because you've never lived anywhere else, have you?

Ivy Dawson: No, basically not. I lived in Richmond for a while when I was little and then we moved to Fitzroy but I haven't got many memories [today] and...

Facilitator: Mm, so from the age of 12 you were in Fitzroy.

Ivy Dawson: Yes, yes. ... Prior to that I lived in Richmond at Mrs [Sharpe's] place.

Facilitator: Okay, so if we work it out that's like 75 years you've been in Fitzroy.

Ivy Dawson: Basically, yeah.

[31:05]

Facilitator: Now mum, we're getting towards the end of the questions. So, can you tell us the story about Pastor Nicholls and his wife's shop?

Ivy Dawson: Oh, Pastor Nicholls.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Ivy Dawson: He had a shop in Gertrude Street and his daughter Mary used to run it and it was a second hand shop in those days and I, myself, had bought quite a few things there, they had some lovely things. He was a lovely man, he really was, and Mary was a lovely woman and they made quite a success of the shop. Why they closed it down I wouldn't have a clue, but they did so there you go. Now it's a barbers.

Facilitator: In Smith Street?



Ivy Dawson: On the corner where Rose's costume shop is that used to be a barbers shop and [Gabriel] used to own that and that's about it.

Facilitator: Mm, and what about the Lamonds and the Testros?

Ivy Dawson: Well Toni Lamond was married to Max Reddy and she had two daughters, I can't think of Toni Lamond's mother's name, but I don't know whether Toni Lamond came under her mother's name or a former husband. But then she married Max Reddy and she had Helen Reddy to him and they used to live in Gore Street right down the end on the other side. They lived there for a few years and Toni took off in a musical career and then they moved out and they moved out to Kew or Hawthorne, I'm not sure which.

The Testros, [Jean/Gene] Testro and Joe Testro with Keith and Rex, they all lived in Fitzroy in Gore Street down the other end. Maggie Testro, she was on the stage and she was a singer and a comedienne and she died, oh, many, many years ago, I couldn't put my finger on how long ago. But then the girls married and Joan married Rex Testro and Jean married Keith Testro.

[33:23]

Facilitator: You said earlier that Rex lent dad some...

Ivy Dawson: Rex lent, Rex went guarantor for your father to buy the house, otherwise we'd never have been able to buy it because we had, in those days you had to have a guarantor and Rex stood up and guaranteed us. Your father asked Keith to do it and Keith wouldn't do it, but Rex had no hesitation.

Facilitator: Wow, how long did dad work for the Testro brothers?

Ivy Dawson: Well he retired when he was 70, so I would say he worked for them for about 40 years, easy. ...They were a good mob.

Facilitator: Now mum, the other last story is the annoying landlord, the murder of the annoying...

Ivy Dawson: Oh, Michael used to own number 66 which is two houses up from me and he's really a, he was a pest, he was a real pain. When we seen him [in the neighbours] we'd just shut our doors and go inside. He was a nice person, but a pain. So anyway, he sold the house to Frank and then he went to live in a boarding house in North Carlton and obviously there was a chappie there that was a bit off the



beat mentally. Michael could be very, very annoying and he pushed Michael down the stairs and killed him.I don't really know what happened to the guy but that was the demise of Michael.... So that was that.

Facilitator: That was that. [34:55]

Ivy Dawson: He had no family or anything like that and oh, I don't know, I don't really know what he did after that all I know is I gave him a machine that was absolutely priceless and I never got it back.

Facilitator: So mum, is there anything else you want to say about being in Fitzroy for all those years, for, what, 75 years?

Ivy Dawson: Not really except the fact that I've seen a lot of changes for the better, I've seen a lot of changes - as far as teenagers go - for the worse with the drugs and all that. But then again in our day we had alcohol so it's six of one and half a dozen of the other.

Facilitator: So also, I do remember quite a decent Aboriginal community up in the flats, is that right?

Ivy Dawson: I always found the Aboriginals quite good, I can truly say they'd be down Smith Street and no matter when you seen an Aboriginal they'd bid you good day and they'd give you a smile and ask how you are. I've never had a bit of trouble with the Aboriginals then and I still wouldn't have trouble now. If you walk down Smith Street and seen them they'll still say g'day ma'am, how are you, ma'am.

Facilitator: Yes, yeah. Alright mum, I think that's the end of it, so thank you very much.

Ivy Dawson: Thank you. [36:14]

END OF TRANSCRIPT