



Fitzroy History Society Oral History Project 2015-2017

Transcript of interview with Pat DeRango

(Interviewed by Rosa Simonelli and Margaret Woods from Fitzroy History Society on 28 April 2016)

Pat DeRango's mother came from Tipperary in Ireland, and towards the end of their life her parents lived in Hanover Street where she was born. As a child she did not venture far from home and was forbidden by her parents to cross Brunswick Street or go to Gertrude Street due to particular tough men who frequented the Champion and Rob Roy hotels.

After marrying Louis DeRango, they spent a short time living in outer Melbourne. It made them realise that Fitzroy was their real home and they returned, initially renting, then buying, the house they have lived in for 47 years in King William Street.

Pat remembers many of the local shops and owners along Brunswick Street and the commercial shops/factories in Hanover and King William Streets (woodyards, a funeral parlour, a tailer, bootmakers, dairy's, SP bookie and brothel houses). She remembers the changing ethnic groups that came to call Fitzroy their home suburb; Italians then Greeks, Vietnamese and most recently Africans. Mostly she values the sense of community despite this changing social mix.



START OF TRANSCRIPT

- Facilitator 1: You've been here in Fitzroy.....
- Pat DeRango: All my life.
- Facilitator 1: You were born here?
- Pat DeRango: Oh well in the city, the old Queen Victoria Hospital but my grandmother was very ill. So they moved into Fitzroy so that they would be near St Vincent's because mum used to take her up there. So they rented a house, 43 Hanover Street and mum got pregnant there with me.
- Facilitator 1: 43 Hanover Street isn't there anymore is it?
- Pat DeRango: No, that's gone.
- Facilitator 1: What sort of a house was it?
- Pat DeRango: No I don't know, they weren't there very long. Then they moved to a little house further down Hanover Street which dad called the little grey house in the west, I didn't even know we were west, and then I lived next door, I lived up at 19 and then I lived here.
- Facilitator 2: So next door being 75 King William Street
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, 75.
- Facilitator 2: And now seventy three-
- Facilitator 1: How long have you been in this house?
- Pat DeRango: About 47 and a half years.
- Facilitator 2: What was it like when you moved in?
- Pat DeRango: All of them had lean-to's on the back, like the lean-to with your stove and everything out there and I think that all of them had that, yeah. Because this wasn't here, but this has been here for 30-, I don't know, 33 years or something. Other than that, and then Charlie Ford wanted to sell it so we asked for first option. No, we wanted to rent it first... [from] Charlie Ford.
- Facilitator 2: You described him as lovely to meet.



Pat DeRango: Very nice, very dressed up to the nines, big diamond ring and everything. What I didn't realise was that he had a nice little private brothel going on in there with air hostesses...

Facilitator 1: In here?

Pat DeRango: No, next door. But look, further up near the hotel, at the back of number 19, [unclear] had the SP bookmaking in a big way and they'd all be down the lane and then they'd run in and take the bets and everything. There was this little half Chinese Joe Fitzpatrick, and he'd be out in the lane and he'd be singing out to my uncle, tricked you, the coppers are coming and everybody'd go [whoosh] and they'd all fly. But oh, I've seen a lot of changes, a lot.

But as I said it had a terrible name, we never encountered any of that. You could run down the lane to the milk bar which used to be where the French place is now at any old time of the night or that, no problem, never entered your head. Not only that but you either, they left their front door open or the key in the door. Not now, no, no, no, no.

Facilitator 2: You were saying in the summer it was lovely because of all the Italian ladies...

Pat DeRango: Yeah, and especially the Italians up the top where we lived at number 19 and they'd be sitting out the front I suppose, I can't remember, we wouldn't have had fans or that - and the grandchildren would all be there and all the kids would be playing, all my nieces and nephews and everything. It was a very different, very different time. But she was lovely.

Facilitator 2: What were the kids playing?

Pat DeRango: Oh Tiggy - but they'd be playing in the middle of the road too, playing, on scooters and dress ups and all that. Of course all the houses were on the other side,. That was quite different to down this end the houses, like there was then three little bluestone cottages, three or four, and then like there was a two storey house and then there was some more and then further up the top where the electrician was he had ... It wasn't onto the street

Facilitator 2: Where was the electrician?

Pat DeRango: Sparky, up the top on the left hand side.

Facilitator 1: Just before the lane where the flats are now.



- Pat DeRango: Yeah before the lane, yeah. It was quite a way back.
- Facilitator 1: Can you remember some of the other colourful characters who would've been around when you were a young girl growing up in this area?
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, but we weren't allowed to go to Gertrude Street. Do you know that? It was so bad. Well, Peter Moloney, do you remember them talking about Peter Moloney? He's on the internet, anyhow.
- Facilitator 1: Could you tell us about them.
- Pat DeRango: Peter Moloney? ...Oh, he was bad, he was really, really bad. Yeah, everybody was terrified of him, and the hotels on the corner, both corners, shocking, shocking fighting from them, the Champion and the - what was the other one? The Rob Roy, was it?... Oh they were bad, but oh no you wouldn't...
- Facilitator 1: But you see the thing is, you know how you say that people thought that Fitzroy was bad and you lived here and this place was bad. I lived in Gore Street and we used to walk up Gertrude Street to get to All Saints to go to church, or walk up Gertrude to go to the Exhibition buildings or to go to university.
- Pat DeRango: University, yeah.
- Facilitator 1: We didn't think that was bad because we were used to it.
- Pat DeRango: I was saying to Margaret, there was a lot of old drunks, but you could've blown on them and they would've fallen over and they'd say good morning madam or good morning ladies or, you know. But I do know that some of the girls were applying for jobs and do you remember Georges in Collins Street? If you had a Fitzroy address you didn't get a job there.
- Facilitator 2: Oh, no I can imagine that.
- Pat DeRango: No, no that was an absolute no-no. Then do you remember down the corner here where the Smith & Daughters is? That was marijuana house and then a Yugoslav bloke had it as an op shop. Oh, the people around here complained very badly, absolutely. But oh no. Mind you I think there was a lot of poverty because there was families around in Fitzroy Street that had about 12 children... Pumpy Watts was in a wheelchair, he had many children. His legs were like withered, I don't know...
- Facilitator 2: Didn't stop him, did it?



- Pat DeRango: Not at all, something was working well, very well...
- Facilitator 2: Not the birth control.
- Pat DeRango: ...and next door was the Driscolls and they had a lot. But they had a boy, Hayden, who we didn't know then but we know now was a savant because his - the Regent picture, the, do you remember the Regent picture theatre?... They'd have him on at interval and they'd be saying like 1,250,700 and something like that, by the time they got to the end of it he'd give them - like in *Rain Man*. But he was quite, sort of retarded otherwise. ...Yeah. Because he'd knock on the door and he had a billy and he used to say to mum, can you give me sixpence to go and get some chop suey around at the little Chinese around the corner. They used to be sitting there making dim sims, it's a wonder they didn't kill us.
- Facilitator 2: So this was in Brunswick Street.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah. Just around about where Felix (paper shop) is, more or less. Yeah, for a billy of chop suey, my God.
- Facilitator 2: You were saying yesterday also that you could still remember and still picture all the shopfronts and who they all were.
- Pat DeRango: Yes I can, I can.... Minnie the butcher was on the corner of Hanover Street, they had the sawdust on the floor. There was Cox Bros as I thought it was as a child, I didn't realise it was Cox Brothers. There was Kingham's the drycleaners, he had a high boot like this. Across the road was a bakery and that was Pellegrini's, Richardson's, the ham and beef shop, the pawn shop which was on the corner of Ferry Street which has gone. I don't know how I can remember them. Chennaworth's which, oh my God... Chennaworth, she opened up a shop where you could buy plates and tea towels and towels and things like that.
- Facilitator 2: Homewares type.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, Burmister's, the paper shop. Conti's, the fruit shop. ...On the corner of where My Beautiful Laundry is.
- Facilitator 1: And then there was another one further down where the Red Rice, do you remember - were they Cardamone? They had a fruit shop there as well.
- Pat DeRango: Tucci's.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, and the son did engineering at uni or something.



- Pat DeRango: Yeah, Tucci's I think.
- Facilitator 1: We had the best educated fruiterers in this street because all the sons went onto uni.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, the fish and chip shop about where the tram stop is. Friday night, - it didn't matter whether you were Catholic or not you had to get in a queue and wait to go in and she was his mother, very old, Lovelaces, and that was, the sawdust on the floor. But I realise now the only fish you could get was (Bara)cuda.
- Yeah, there was no such thing like as flake or anything like that, and that'd be because they were next door to the Perners, yeah. Which one of the Perners, she married one of the Viennese choir boys and they had the Gino's bistro in Lygon Street, do you remember when Gino's...
- Facilitator 1: Yes, I do.
- Pat DeRango: She still in Drummond Street in North Carlton, and her sister's in Moor Street who I talk to all the time. We got held up with masked thugs with guns for the SP bookmaking, oh no. We used to say we could do it in serial form oh no, no, no.
- Facilitator 2: You probably could, actually, it's like the Jack [Irish], the series that's being shot in Fitzroy and they... Yeah, Jack Irish. But I don't know, it's sort of - I don't know, it was just alright.
- Facilitator 1: You didn't feel nervous?
- Pat DeRango: Never.
- Facilitator 1: It was a colourful area, it was definitely a colourful area. You'd have prostitutes living across the road, there were people of all different nationalities. Rose Mary Brondolino was telling me about...
- Pat DeRango: I know Rose Mary well.
- Facilitator 1: ...the Morans who were living close by here, Kath Moran, the matriarch of the wonderful crime family. Do you remember her?
- Pat DeRango: I don't remember her, but I remember on the corner it was like an old - I think it would've been like a hotel or something.
- Facilitator 1: A boarding house, there were lots of boarding houses.



- Pat DeRango: A boarding house, oh gee.
- Facilitator 2: Because Lou lived in a boarding house too, didn't he live...
- Pat DeRango: Sort of, Mrs Jackson rented him rooms when they came from Italy. He said she was a lovely lady, I don't know [laughs], I can't remember her. I didn't know Lou then, I only seen Lou when I lived up the top of the street and we'd be coming home. Helen, my sister, and I and I'd say oh, there's that bloke out the front again.
- Facilitator 2: He fancied you.
- Pat DeRango: Long time ago, long. But no, I wasn't frightened. Mind you, we, probably weren't allowed to go anywhere. I mean you weren't allowed to cross Brunswick Street and we definitely couldn't go to Gertrude Street so, yeah.
- Facilitator 2: So it was a real neighbourhood, very,... ..street by street play almost.
- Pat DeRango: It was yeah.... Yeah, and it's still very friendly here isn't it, really, very friendly... and it was very friendly then, absolutely.
- Facilitator 1: Which school did you go to?
- Pat DeRango: Up at the Academy.
- Facilitator 1: Did you go there for primary school as well, or did you go...
- Pat DeRango: No, that wasn't down here, Sacred Heart.... The primary was there. Oh, actually my daughter...
- Facilitator 1: There was a school in Bell Street as well.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah there was Bell Street but then that went and I think it became the intellectual.....children or something like that. ...Yeah, and you know where, in Hanover Street - God, I can't think of his name, what was his name? The politician.
- Facilitator 2: Gareth Evans.
- Pat DeRango: Gareth Evans. I think that was the first, we thought it was the first children's hospital.
- Facilitator 1: The Berry Children's Home, it was for a while.



- Pat DeRango: Right, there you go. But oh, the ones that lived on the corner there, ooh. ...It was very rough. Rough of the rough. Oh, she'd be out the front, because they were drunkards, and she'd be fighting with Minnie Moloney which was Red's sister.... No, not good. Oh no, you wasn't living here then?
- Facilitator 1: No, I was in Gore Street, yeah.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah. I was saying to Margaret, you wouldn't remember the Israelites Church. It's still there. Yeah, he showed us through there. Very much bigger inside than you think. We were kids and we'd be there looking fascinated, they'd be arriving in their long dresses and the bonnets and the men with the bobby pins holding their hair up with their long coats and that on. But then there was like a boarding house on the corner of Hanover where the, what do you call it? Yeah, the same when they closed the streets off. People were out the front saying the ambulance won't be able to come in or only the one way and that didn't go down well.
- Facilitator 1: We were talking about the mid-'60s when the Housing Commission-, when the Atherton Estate was knocked down and they built the towers.
- Pat DeRango: When they knocked these houses down.... Because when they were building them my sister and her husband were in the hotel, it was St Andrew's then. ...Yeah. St Andrew's Hotel. [John and Helen].
- Facilitator 2: They were publicans there, were they? ... Well they would've seen a few things.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah.... Oh, yeah, yeah. But in Hanover Street there was a wood yard, Jonesy had the wood yard and he'd say to mum, I don't know how this happens but there was a new set of kittens there every other day and then there was Paddy O'Reilly that was a bootmaker.
- Facilitator 2: In Hanover Street too?
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, and then there was a paint factory in King William Street. The Triakas were here, they had the statue place and they were across the road for a time where that factory burnt down. ...Then there was Apps Funeral Parlour... [Down on the corner of Fitzroy and Moor Street] ...and when kids would be coming home from school and they'd go down the back lane and the back part would be opened and the coffins would be there and some of the kids wanted to get in. They didn't have a clue what they were. That's when, after when that got sold, Rose Mary Brondolino's family bought that place. Yeah, but then that had to be sold because her brother took them to court.



- Facilitator 1: That's right. He wanted his share, yeah. ...They sold it to my brother who then sold it again, because he moved to Hong Kong for a while.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, gosh.
- Facilitator 2: Gosh, it's got a bit of history, hasn't it?
- Pat DeRango: Because from Apps they buried my little sister and my grandmother.... Yeah, so Helen was a twin, my sister was a twin.
- Facilitator 1: How old was she when she died?
- Pat DeRango: 13 months.... One of those awful childhood diseases or... Oh no, she was admitted with 24 hour pneumonia or infection or whatever it was, but she picked up gastro in there and of course they didn't have anything then and that was that.
- Facilitator 1: Can you remember Fitzroy before all the migrants moved in? Because the migrants would've come in waves after the War.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, we had a good mix. We did have a good mix and, you know where Aud lives, there was a tailor there, Jerry and then an older lady that was there and they pulled them down. They did a good job of Aud's place... Yeah, to make it look like that it fitted in. [It does fit in beautifully] ...Yeah, but oh no, a lot of difference, absolutely.
- Facilitator 2: I was going to go back to your school days too. So the Academy's changed a bit of course since...
- Pat DeRango: Oh, they had boarders. Yeah, they did have boarders and my daughter was the last of the juniors, they closed the junior school and there was only about six in her grade or something like that, and that was the finish of that. But they've done a lot of work there, a lot, yeah. Even Smith Street, people would go down there, I think they had a little bit of late shopping, maybe on a Friday or something and it was the Coles. I think things were a lot, one shilling, or one and sixpence. I've got to stop and think about that money. But no, I liked it very much.
- Facilitator 2: So where did your mother shop? Just locally.
- Pat DeRango: I think she'd go down to Smith Street. Because eventually after a while they got a Moran & Cato's down there which, it was alright, it was nothing spectacular. Oh, and we used to go to the grocers, Adamson's and I can remember he used to have



the tin of biscuits on the counter and the kids would go in and get a bag of broken biscuits.

Facilitator 2: Imagine doing that today.

Pat DeRango: If mum ever sent me, say like she sent me for Rosella Tomato Soup, I can't think of anything, and I came back with Campbell's she'd say to me you've got to take it back, I wouldn't ever take anything back, absolutely not. But he used to like to hear mum ask for currants, currants and that, because she was Irish and he'd say, what did you say, what did you say? I didn't realise she was Irish until I was a fair age, because she had a very soft, not a heavy brogue.

Facilitator 2: She didn't talk about her family?

Pat DeRango: Oh, she did when she got older. She didn't lose her memory or anything but she'd go back and she'd have the children and she'd be storytelling yeah. ...Yeah, she was from Tipperary.

Facilitator 2: When her family came were they living in Fitzroy?

Pat DeRango: Nobody came. None of her family. ...None of Lou's family. See you could've fit us all in the kitchen, we're a very small family, very small, yeah.

Facilitator 1: Was there any objection to you marrying an Italian?

Pat DeRango: No. No, I don't know what they thought in Italy, but no. Helen's married to a boy who's, well I suppose he was born here but his family's Italian, Rachellas so, no. I've been with Italians all my life. I was drinking espresso coffee at about this size because our backdoor went into Perner's, like the lane there. So we'd be in there and pasta and God knows what when nobody ever had anything like that. I think they had a bottle of chicory and coffee or whatever it was. But no.

Facilitator 2: I wonder what they did for olive oil because I mean I, there's stories of a friend of mine being sent down to the chemist to buy olive oil by her mother.

Pat DeRango: Oh, talking about that we had the dairy in Moor Street, Larcher's. ...I couldn't remember the name of it, and we'd go down and they had a little opening like that, and, well that was a billy, you'd give them a billy and you'd get the milk or you could get the cream or whatever. Larcher's Dairy, right.

Facilitator 2: So did they have a horse and cart delivering milk in the morning.



- Pat DeRango: I've never seen anybody get their milk delivered because there was milk bars everywhere.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, but we got ours delivered. They had Clydesdales clip-clopping down our street and they'd leave the milk just outside the front door. We'd have our bread delivered by the baker, the green grocer would come around with an open backed truck and you'd get the fishmonger would come around. Later on Mr Whippy came around.
- Pat DeRango: See on the corner of Hanover Street where the units are, that was a milk bar. There was a milk bar on the corner of Moor Street and Nicholson Street. ...There was one on the corner of Palmer Street and Fitzroy Street and there was Blundell's around the corner, just around the corner. They were just everywhere, and the bakery was just across the road and then the Webbers had the second hand bookshop.
- Facilitator 2: Very well catered for.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, when you stop and think. I mean we didn't know any different.
- Facilitator 1: Smith Street was just packed, Foy and Gibson, Coles.
- Pat DeRango: They had a huge amount of property, Foy and Gibson.
- Facilitator 1: Enormous on both sides of the road, yeah. Heaps of furniture stores where the Aboriginal Sports Centre is now.
- Facilitator 2: Yep, the old Paterson's, isn't it?
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, there was a huge [unclear] that I remember once.
- Pat DeRango: Where Woolworths is, that was Amalgamated Furniture and after work, it was just before television started, and all the televisions were in the window and everybody would be standing looking at the pattern. Then across the road was another furniture one, Randall's. So yeah, there was a good few things. I found it happy times. I often wonder how we filled the time in. I think we might've played games like Snakes and Ladders or something like that. Now I'm battling to get to bed at midnight. I keep shocking hours, very bad. But what do you remember?
- Facilitator 1: Oh, well I didn't get here until the '50s, so I suppose - and when I got here in the early '50s, you know I didn't sort of really get the impression that there was anything wrong with Fitzroy until I was at school and it was inviting people to



parties at my place and people would sort of say oh Fitzroy, do people actually live there?

Pat DeRango: Well, you know Michael next door, with two daughters - oh they've finished now - MLC, Methodist Ladies College, and some of them there passed a comment about living in Fitzroy he was telling me.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, yeah we get, you get lots of comments like that. I remember too in the early '70s when I moved into Hanover Street there was a French couple who came out here to lecture in computer science at Melbourne Uni and they were put in the apartments across the road. The secretary of the department said to them look, terribly sorry to put you in the slum area but it is very convenient because it's close to the university.

Pat DeRango: Right.

Facilitator 1: I met them because our daughters went to the same school - and Catherine said, I don't think she travelled very much if she calls this a slum.

Pat DeRango: Oh, right.

Facilitator 1: Because by the '70s it was starting to gentrify too. You had lots of professionals moving in.

Pat DeRango: Do you remember the ice man?

Facilitator 1: I do remember the ice man with their hessian sack on their shoulder.

Pat DeRango: Mum used to say we're a victim of the drip.

[Laughter]

Pat DeRango: Yeah the ice man, God.

Facilitator 1: Did you have all of this in Chadstone that you remember?

Facilitator 2: We had the brickette man, I do remember. But we had a fridge in those days so when I grew up in Perth, or the outside of Perth, there was definitely the ice chest.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, victim of the drip.



- Facilitator 2: But that, yeah. Even an ice chest being delivered was pretty exciting in those days. More modern in the way of cooking.
- Pat DeRango: Oh yeah, absolutely, definitely.... But really there was no modern cons, I mean I'm 100 years older than you. I mean I can remember when the steam iron and all that things. People just had a flat iron and they'd put it on the stove.
- Facilitator 2: That's right yes, that's right. So it was a separate laundry in all these houses around here, wouldn't there...
- Pat DeRango: Oh they were never really laundries. ...Toilet was down the corner.
- Facilitator 1: ...and Thrilby Meters, the cooking [unclear] stuff you...
- Pat DeRango: Then they went to a shilling.
- Facilitator 1: The other thing I remember was that you had to share your house with people because there was such a shortage of housing...
- Pat DeRango: A lot.
- Facilitator 1: After the War, a huge shortage of housing. When my father bought the house there were people already, there were tenants already in and you couldn't get rid of the tenants, you were only entitled to a certain number of rooms depending on the size of your family.
- Pat DeRango: There used to be a lot of what they call moonlight flitters, they'd move into one place and then they'd be gone... Yeah, not pay the rent.
- Facilitator 1: ...and you couldn't charge pregnant women rent. ... Well you could, but you couldn't throw them out, you couldn't evict them if they didn't pay.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, couldn't you? ...Oh right. My grandmother and grandfather went into a little place in James Street, because mum used to take her in the wheelchair up to the hospital or that. But that was nothing spectacular there. She died at 57, so she was quite young, and crippled with rheumatoid arthritis.... Oh yeah, yeah very much so.
- Facilitator 1: Do you think the changes have been for the better in Fitzroy?
- Pat DeRango: I've loved it always, I've got to say. I know...



Facilitator 2: You've told me about the time when you went for a, Templestowe, was it? Or lived in Templestowe for a...

Pat DeRango: Oh, very short. [13:12]

Oh I said to Lou, what have I done? He said well, I'm not going back to Fitzroy because the Commission are going through. Ooh I thought, God. So I can't remember now whether it was there six months or nine and when they were doing the patio at the back and Lou said to them oh no, make it bigger, take it - I never even stood out on there. All I thought I could see the city from there and I thought oh no, and I said to him well, I can't stay here. He said well, we're not going back. I said well listen, I'm going, you can stay. So we put it on the market and the first person bought it, because it was brand new. Brand new.

Facilitator 2: That's when you bought this house?

Pat DeRango: No, no we had to go into Station Street, North Carlton and rent for 12 months and then we heard, because we knew Charlie Ford well, the Rosen's were here for about 40 years renting and he was going to rent it. So mum said to him oh Charlie, she said, if you're going to rent it well then give us first offer. So he rang us the next day and he said no, he said I've decided to sell it and she said, still give us first offer. So he gave her the price and then he rang back the next day and he said, I can't let it go for that, I want another £400.... It was £10,400.

Facilitator 2: But that was probably a lot of money.

Pat DeRango: Well, I don't know.

Facilitator 1: What year was that?

Pat DeRango: Ooh about 47 and a half years' ago. Wait a minute, - somewhere between '67-'68.

Facilitator 2: So it would've been in, that would've been in dollars, not pounds in

Facilitator 1: It would've been in dollars because I know from people who bought one of the houses in my row for \$17,000 and then two years later - dollars - two years later after Whitlam had come to power and we bought the house that I'm in now it was \$35,000 and I was distraught. I thought, we'll never pay this off, never pay it off at \$35,000, oh my God, what have I done? I said, we've got to put this back on the market, we just can't afford it and we did and within - this was two weeks after we



moved in and we got an immediate offer for about \$55,000 and I thought no, we'll stay. We'll stay, we'll do something...

Pat DeRango: Well Charlie Ford He owned that house, this house. I think at one time maybe his mother might've had the lot of them. But when he died he left that one (number 71) to his nephew and this one here to his other nephew, which I thought was wrong. Because he never seen that nephew whereas - well not that one, this one was his partner who was with him forever and a day.

Facilitator 2: When you think of the huge escalation in value over the years, and particularly in the last 10 years...

Pat DeRango: Oh yeah. What was your maiden name?

Facilitator 1: Simonelli. Which I'm using again, yeah.

Pat DeRango: Oh, a lot of people do that, oh yeah. Yeah, I was Gascoigne. I said, all my life I had to spell Gascoigne and then I had to spell DeRango. I thought, because they'd say drongo, you know, that's the girls work... Yeah, and you've got to say, like capital D-e, and then a capital R-a-n-g-o and with Gascoigne evidently you could spell it three ways. So I had the French way with a g in it, so G-a-s-c-o-i-g-n-e.. Yeah, that's what happened. But Helen's Rachella, her married name.

Facilitator 1: They don't live in Fitzroy, do they?

Pat DeRango: No, lower Templestowe, couldn't live there.

Facilitator 1: Would she come back to Fitzroy?

Pat DeRango: In a jiffy, but not Paul. No Paul wouldn't, no, no, not Paul. Do you remember the Methodist Mission Church?

Facilitator 1: Yes, I do, it's been knocked down.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, they'd never allow that now. ...Opposite Manderley or was it in the next block? Let me get myself together. It was bluestone and it only had like a small veranda like that in the front of it and they knocked that down.

Facilitator 1: They knocked a lot of really good stuff down.

Pat DeRango: Oh yes, yes.

Facilitator 1: What was put up was the same that you saw everywhere.



- Pat DeRango: Well you know them ones, the Commission flats in Condell Street, as you go straight down here, those houses could've been made really well, especially in Atherton Street I think it was. There was quite a way up to the door and they pulled those down and put up those, what are they? Like cardboard.
- Facilitator 1: But the one positive is that they've got gardens, that's the one positive and... the irony is that they were built to last for, I think, 50 or 60 years...
- Pat DeRango: No, not those ones.
- Facilitator 1: Oh, all of these Housing Commission flats were not built to last.
- Pat DeRango: No, not the Housing Commission - it is Housing Commission, but on the right hand side going down they're prefab or something and they've just got the concrete out the front where the cars park. Have you seen some of the cars they're living in there? They've got the top, top cars and I think, I get pretty cross with that if I say. I think to myself God.
- Because a friend of mine, her marriage broke up and that and she ended up she put her name down for the Commission and eventually her name was called and they said, you've either got to go to Healesville or to Tecoma. So she had to go to Tecoma, she's got no family and that up there. They said, you take that or you go to the end of the list.
- They're here five minutes and they've got a place. Anyhow, that's what caused her death on that Black Saturday, the fires.
- Yeah, so, but I can remember all the Commission getting built. There used to be a lot of suicides off the top of that.
- Yeah but, and now they never say, there's about six or seven a week, not from there but from everywhere. But, I don't know, I'm just trying to think of some places. There was a place further down where they used to have the boxing.
- Facilitator 2: In Brunswick Street?
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, yeah.
- Facilitator 2: Lou talked about, Lou used to talk about dance hall and things...
- Pat DeRango: The Cathedral Hall.



- Facilitator 1: They used to have ballet classes there, I remember attending, with May Downs, I don't know if you remember that.
- Pat DeRango: No I went to the actual dance and then Perner's mother would escort us there, Gina, Nina and Patty [laughs], and over to Kay Street in Carlton to the Italian dance over there, yeah. But I'll have to...
- Facilitator 1: I think there were a lot of places around here where you'd go for a dance on a Friday or a Saturday night. The San Remo Ballroom, they'd have dances there every week and...
- Pat DeRango: I have to say now the young ones... The young ones now, they've either got to go to the hotel or a bar or something like that. There's nowhere for them to meet anybody.
- Facilitator 1: I remember parties that would spill out onto the street because the houses couldn't accommodate...
- Pat DeRango: Accommodate [laughs].
- Facilitator 1: It would be out on the footpath, yeah.
- Pat DeRango: Did you know many people in Gore Street?
- Facilitator 1: Oh yeah, you knew everybody. You knew all your neighbours, you knew everything about them and there were always people in the streets.
- Pat DeRango: That's what I liked.
- Facilitator 1: ...and say I went to Canberra and I couldn't see a soul, or I moved to I don't know what suburb and the streets were empty. The streets in Fitzroy have never been empty, they've always been teeming with life.
- Pat DeRango: That's what I, it's, that was at Bulleen and I thought I swear to God they tunnelled underground, I didn't see anybody and I mean nobody at all.
- Facilitator 1: I realised recently, we had relatives who moved to places like Pascoe Vale and Preston and in Pascoe Vale there were still chicken farms and dairy farms and all sorts and you'd go for a walk and you'd buy fresh eggs or whatever. In Preston people had to contribute to pay to have the roads in their streets built.
- Pat DeRango: Oh in their street, yes.



- Facilitator 1: Yeah, and we sort of thought oh, those poor unfortunate people having to go to these dreadful places. Pascoe Vale was the end of the tram line, it was just like paddocks.
- Pat DeRango: Paddocks.
- Facilitator 1: There was a butcher and a milk bar and that was it and then you headed off for miles to get to the place you were going to. I just found out recently that they actually pitied us because they had these huge triple fronted brick, solid brick places or whatever and here we were in this narrow double storey terrace and they pitied us. They no longer pity us.
- Pat DeRango: No, that's what I say, they can't afford to come back here.
- Facilitator 2: So were the gardens, the gardens on both sides of the Exhibition Buildings...
- Pat DeRango: Yes, and there used to be an aquarium there too. Do you remember the aquarium? They used to have the seals, which was amazing. Yeah, and there was a maze at one time. Yeah, and then the bloke would be there taking the photos.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, I loved the maze.
- Pat DeRango: You know how they put the cover over their heads, mum used to say to me, if you close your eyes [laughs]. Yeah, she used to take us up there all the time and she would...
- Facilitator 2: Where was the maze? On this, on the Carlton side or the city side of the...
- Pat DeRango: In Nicholson Street. Yeah, and then - I can't actually remember when the aquarium went. You wouldn't have even been born, I don't think.
- Facilitator 1: No, years ago. What I remember are the weddings and the parties in the Exhibition Buildings, yeah, and the fact that the gardens would be just teeming with people especially at weekends. It was like a job exchange, lots like the CES, you'd turn up to find out who was hiring and where you could get a job.
- Pat DeRango: Mum used to take us to feed the ducks. But that playground like it is now, that was never there.
- Facilitator 1: It was a traffic school at one stage.



- Pat DeRango: Yeah, they'd take them around, miniature lights and that. Absolutely. Do you remember the French nuns?... With the big white hat? We used to call them the aeroplane sisters. ...But they were around here where... not the nunnery. The House of Welcome.
- Facilitator 1: Oh, St Mary's, of course.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, they were there and I used to say oh, how would you be with that hat on? They must've been so hot.
- Facilitator 1: There were lots of nuns and priests around in those days...
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, we would've been frightened of our priests, there's no way they'd be on the television for what's happening now. Ooh, and the nuns.
- Facilitator 2: Oh yes, well you hear dreadful stories...
- Pat DeRango: So strict, very. But we had Miss Jeran or Jones there, she was the lay teacher. She was absolutely the worst.... Oh, yeah, she was atrocious, absolutely.
- Facilitator 2: So what sort of discipline did they...
- Pat DeRango: I don't know, I never got hit off them. But I think a few got the feather duster. But a lot of them played up something fierce anyhow, so - have you been in the grounds up there, at the Academy?
- Facilitator 1: Well they haven't got any grounds left [laughs].
- Pat DeRango: No, they haven't got much.
- Facilitator 1: I have, I've walked in through the front. I taught there for a couple of terms.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, did you?
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, this was back in the '80s. So I know the ground, I knew the grounds quite well. They have very little left because they've built all kinds of things.
- Pat DeRango: The church, the chapel.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, the convent is gorgeous.



- Pat DeRango: I used to visit Sister Eugene oh, at least once every three weeks, give her a little bit of money. Helen loved her. Yeah, I used to go there, go in the kitchen... Yeah, it was a big kitchen.
- Facilitator 1: I didn't go to school there, I went to school at CLC, it was in East Melbourne.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, in East Melbourne, then they went to Eltham. ...But when Helen finished at the Academy, because there was no more juniors, she started in the babies, I tried to get her into Genazzano, CLC and that, because then you used to have to be within a certain area and I couldn't get her in. But now I believe you can, I don't think they do that anymore.
- Facilitator 1: I don't know. I went to CLC because I had the same nuns in the primary school so you just went through the system and they were the same nuns who ran St Vincent's Hospital as well. There used to be lots of them around back then. They'd visit the sick, they'd do all sorts of...
- Pat DeRango: Oh right. ...Well the nuns were dressed as nuns in the Hospital. Do you remember Mount St Evans? Where the St Vincent's Private Hospital is now. That was Mount St Evans.
- Facilitator 1: What was there?
- Pat DeRango: Hospital, private hospital.
- Facilitator 1: I remember the beautiful period building that was where Peter MacCallum is now, it was St Andrew's Hospital back then. It was a beautiful building and they knocked it down.
- Pat DeRango: Have you seen the new Peter MacCallum? I believe it goes down about three or four storeys of car parks ...it's got the bit of an appearance of a boat, I think, out the front. Oh, it's huge and they've got that walkway - I don't think they've actually moved into it yet, have they?
- Facilitator 1: No, I don't think so because the current Peter MacCallum's still operating.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, this one's huge, really. Well it takes up the block, doesn't it?
- Facilitator 1: That was the old dental hospital where they had a theatrette...
- Pat DeRango: Yes, that's right.



- Facilitator 1: ...where you'd go and watch plays. At uni various departments used to hire it out to put plays on there.
- Pat DeRango: You know up where Mary is, they were nearly all rooming houses. Because I remember Jan's sister when she got married went there and I think you had the use of a kitchen but not a kitchen. ...Yeah, a shared kitchen.
- Facilitator 2: Toilet, dunny down the back.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, and where Eleanor is now on the corner, that was her uncle, Anna's uncle, and he used to have the upstairs boarded in. Oh, he used to rent out rooms to all the drunks and everything. I think so, and he'd sit out the front with his wife and that and gather Italian people down there. Oh, and then we had Panzitta's, in number 77. ...That was Panzitta's. Then they went to Keon Park, like going to the country [laughs]. No, not going to happen.
- Facilitator 1: Some people would sell one or two or three houses in Fitzroy to buy a brick veneer in Dandenong.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, I've never had the desire to do that. People say to me, do you like the country? Maybe for the day, but that's it.
- Facilitator 2: It's always good to get back to Fitzroy.
- Pat DeRango: I don't want to go any further. But I was just trying to think of some other places. We used to have a very odd man on the corner of Hanover, Sir Ernest. Beautifully spoken, English but there was something terribly wrong with him and he'd be bowing all the time, bowing, and he'd never stop talking about the Royal Family and that. Oh, yeah. Hello Sir Ernest, and he'd bow.
- Facilitator 2: The family had probably banished him to the colonies.
- Pat DeRango: God, yeah.
- Facilitator 1: Like that Russian aristocrat who died, prince who died alone in the Northern Territory, mm.
- Pat DeRango: Right, I couldn't go to the Northern Territory. Only for a holiday. Henry says to me, come up. He lives in Darwin, no way. Absolutely no way. Actually, he was just looking on the internet before and the fare at the moment to Bali is \$109.
- Yeah. [30:52]



- Pat DeRango: You like being in Fitzroy.
- Facilitator 1: Oh yeah, yeah.
- Pat DeRango: I do too.
- Facilitator 1: I moved out to, when I first got married I moved to Preston and look, all my life was here anyway. I was at uni and I had friends here so I'd be here every single day, it just didn't make sense. You'd just go home to sleep.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, the French nuns used to live where it's a nunnery.
- Facilitator 2: Oh they did, I was going to ask you about the nunnery.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, they were there. Sister Theresa and... Yeah, [with] the wimple. All that gear that the nuns had to have on too.
- Facilitator 2: It's a lot easier now, isn't it?
- Pat DeRango: Like those long things, the heavy beads and...
- Facilitator 1: Maybe that's why women who sort of cover up here don't bother me at all, you grew up with it.
- Pat DeRango: Coburg, you see such a lot of - it's not a hijab, what do they call it? You know the one where they've just got, they're all in black and you can just see the eyes. I think it draws attention to them.
- Facilitator 2: Well it does. I'm not, oh I'm glad I don't have to wear one of those.
- Facilitator 1: I wouldn't want to wear it but it doesn't bother me.
- Pat DeRango: They'd laugh at me. I say to Helen I'd whip around the corner and take it off once I got out. But that must be - they don't have to wear it in the house.
- Facilitator 2: Not unless I think someone, some male unrelated to the family visits...
- Pat DeRango: To the family, yeah. Oh, I think they'd be very hot.
- Oh no, no. Because there's a lot, I see a lot of them because Helen's husband, their business is up in Coburg, so you see a lot, yeah. He's in Gaffney Street, do you know Gaffney Street?



Yeah, Magic Kitchens and Furniture. That's Helen's father-in-law and her brother-in-law and Paul. It's a big place, that takes up the block, yeah. But Paul wouldn't move from where he is. I mean, he'd maybe move but not in a million years would he come to Fitzroy.... Yeah, he'd be too worried about parking his car. It's the same as the day he bought it.

Facilitator 2: Well you're lucky to get a car park around here.

Pat DeRango: But we won't if that, if that development goes ahead.

Facilitator 2: There's a proposal in Moor Street and it's not much of a change from what's already there. It's just an extension of hours.

Pat DeRango: Is that the one behind Zetta Florence?

Facilitator 2: Yes, it's the one where the caravan is, and the little garden...

Pat DeRango: Oh right, yeah.

Facilitator 1: Oh yes, what are they planning there?

Facilitator 2: Extend their hours basically to 1:00am and 3:00am Thursday. Through the weekend, Thursday's through the weekend.

Pat DeRango: For 200 guests or not guests but... No. 200, we were laughing. 180, when was that?

Facilitator 2: After 11 o'clock.

Pat DeRango: Who's going to stand there and count? 180, I don't think so.

Facilitator 2: It's managed very well with the Labour in Vain because they have a roof terrace. At 11 o'clock on a hot summer's night when the doors are open you can hear oh, just noise. But 11 o'clock at night there's absolutely nothing.

Pat DeRango: Oh, that's good. You know where the hotel is up here, they've turned...

Facilitator 1: The Old Colonial.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, that they've turned into a...

Facilitator 1: I checked that out and we protested and I think we had a few little victories there in terms of the exterior decks and not being able to have live music on those



exterior decks blaring out over the neighbourhood. But it hasn't created any issue at all, not with parking, not with crowds...

Pat DeRango: No because Lou's friend Vince's lives next door and he was really, really worried.

Facilitator 1: How does he feel about it now?

Pat DeRango: Well Helen bumped him yesterday or the day before and he said so far it's been alright. ...I don't know how it will go, but anyhow. It's got three different restaurants or something in it, hasn't it?

Facilitator 1: It has. I went there for breakfast with my grandson and my son when it first opened and that was very pleasant.

Pat DeRango: What about upstairs, there's an outdoor thing is there?

Facilitator 1: Yeah, there's an outdoor terrace on both - there's a basement level, there's a mezzanine level, there's a ground level, there's a floor above that and then a floor above that. Downstairs is an outdoor area and then on the two upper levels there are outdoor areas as well but they can't have live music out there and just diners eating.

Pat DeRango: Mm, someone was saying they had a retractable roof, I don't know if that's true or not.

Facilitator 1: She offered to turn the music down, she said, "but that's not the vibe that we're after here". I said well, you won't be getting locals my age and over in here then because a lot of us can't hear each other.

Pat DeRango: When that was a hotel I'd been in there many, many times. ... Because my friend Nina Graham lived there - she had a crush on him - so she'd take me because her mother would've killed her.

Facilitator 1: When was this?

Pat DeRango: God, about 62 years' ago. She ended up she married him. Yeah, oh it didn't go well with the mother. She got married from my place. I can still see her in a little hat and a suit and that.

Facilitator 1: Why did the mother object?



- Pat DeRango: Well, he was Australian for a start off. But yeah, very, very, very Italian and very, very bad tempered. I remember they went straight to Hastings but her mother came around and knocked on our place in the night and she said to mum, do you know where my Nina is? She wanted to sort of patch things up. But then she didn't get, the other one she didn't get Italian either because she married - and she used to take me, too. Up to near the Cathedral Hall, he lived with Mrs Monahan because he was one of the choir that was stuck here, the Viennese Choir. She used me as a thing to go out. Well, she married him and he was Austrian - and then her son, Mimo, he married an Australian. So she didn't get anything.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, there's lots of intermarriage.
- Pat DeRango: Now, but look how many Italians and Greeks are together now. You would've never, ever, ever seen that, ever.
- Facilitator 1: The Italians and the Greeks didn't like each other very much?
- Pat DeRango: No, Patrick's brother-in-law's married to a Greek girl.
- Facilitator 2: Down at Sila coffee shop amongst the Greeks and Italians, it's usually about football, on the street where Lou used to sit, they've got that little plaque for Lou on one of the seats there.
- Pat DeRango: Oh God.
- Facilitator 2: They're always arguing about something or other.
- Pat DeRango: I tell you what, that Sila has been there for a long time. The espresso place. Do you remember his father? ...I used to like the way he made the snacks the way and that. But I think the sisters bring the cakes from Reservoir on the way in. He might make some of them but not all - and the bread was beautiful.... Oh, yes...
- Facilitator 2: So it's changed a bit.
- Pat DeRango: It tasted like bread, now it's like sawdust, isn't it?
- Facilitator 2: You've got to get proper bread. See the type of cafés too, I mean Sila has remained a little haven of...
- Pat DeRango: They own next door, too. Because Cathy used to be a hairdresser. Do you remember her mother?... Yeah, her mother had lost her hair, she had a wig, and I



seen her sister like not long after and her sister was losing her hair and one of them girls saw that it must be a bit hereditary.

We used to have a wood yard in Moor Street, yeah, because that one I'm talking about the mother, the Italian mother, they owned the two houses and where the wood yard was. So Nina got one, Mimo got one, and Gina got the, she wanted the land. So which they've built, not far from the lane. So they would've got that, I suppose, I was going to say for a song. It'd be a song if you're talking about it now, but not then. But they lived in Brunswick Street. Then there was the barber, Hoffman's.

Facilitator 1: He was on the corner, wasn't he?

Pat DeRango: No, no.

Facilitator 1: There was one on the corner where the, you know up near the bottle shop.

Pat DeRango: ...opposite the Commission.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, opposite the Commission. There was a barber there, yeah.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, that was a barber, yeah.

Facilitator 1: We should take photos of these places and...

Facilitator 2: Yes, yes. Do you remember - talking about our place, number 77, when we were digging our cellar when we were renovating the house, there were a whole lot of animal bones in there. Do you remember what was in there, years gone by?

Pat DeRango: That's where Panzitta's lived and I never knew them to have a dog or that.

Facilitator 1: They wouldn't have had a cow.

Pat DeRango: No. Oh, but anyhow if you want to talk about cows or animals. You know we've got a little lane at the back here, it's, you can't drive a car up there or anything and it never had the gates on the bottom and you'd go out and there'd be all sorts of things there. I caught poor old Philip, I told him off one day, coming up dumping - we went out there one day and there was the carcass of a black sheep. Another time a wooden leg with the sock and the shoe on it. I mean a really old wooden leg, not the modern ones. Yeah, but after that Lou arranged to have the gate on the end. Yeah, and then Pianto lived next door, what an animal - it might've been him - what an animal he was.



Absolutely. My poor Lou, he was on our roof and Lou, and he abused everybody. He was going to go Ann with a tomahawk. Oh, he was awful, really awful. So he was on the roof and we went out and he said to him, get down off there, and he said something else so I walked out and he said oh, she's got no neurones and all the rest of it and then he swore at me which - I don't care about swearing anyhow. Whatever he said upset Lou terribly, he chased him with a broom handle. I was so frightened that he'd catch him, I thought to myself if Lou - that was unlike Lou, to get stuck into him with a broom handle. I'll tell you who else he had a terrible fight with, Rose Mary Brondolino.

Facilitator 2: Her father? What was he? What was his profession.

Pat DeRango: Do you know I can't remember what he did. ...Allan Pianto.

Facilitator 1: Allan Pianto. I'll ask Rose Mary because we still have to finish our interview with her.

Pat DeRango: She'll know, she'll know, absolutely she'll know. Wrong, Pianta. yeah. Oh no, he was a horrible person. Ann, had a go in with him. Oh yes, yes, that's not good.

Facilitator 1: He wouldn't have won the fight with Rose Mary, I don't think.

Pat DeRango: No. No, Rose Mary can look after herself. Do you remember when she was in trouble with the ambulance? ...They went to cut her off and she chased the ambulance. You can't do that. She got fined.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, oh there've always been interesting characters around here.

Pat DeRango: Yes, I like interesting characters.

Facilitator 1: It makes life a bit more exciting, yeah.

Pat DeRango: Definitely. Oh, God.

Facilitator 1: Do you remember the Kiodos who lived further up on the right hand? Tony and Jack.

Pat DeRango: Yes. Tony, yep I do. Yeah, I can remember a lot of them. The Sparks, Blundells, Jerry Damasca, a lot, yeah. Yeah. I loved it. To me it's a life, it's - we were going through suburbs and I'll say to Helen there's not a soul, you never see a soul here and I just don't like that.



- Facilitator 1: You don't need a car if you live here, you can actually manage by public transport.
- Facilitator 2: But when you think about it, - you were talking about the Chinese, someone going around with a little billy to get some Chinese food...
- Pat DeRango: Chop suey.
- Facilitator 2: That's changed when you think of all the restaurants.
- Pat DeRango: Well the one that was there, that was Charlie, we were kids and we'd go inside and they'd be making the dim sims, probably a shocking looking place but we didn't take any notice. Then later on another crowd, his name was Norman, Norman Lee I think, they took it over. He was one of them ones arrested in that big robbery, the bookies robbery.
- Mm, another colourful character, yeah. But oh, there was some, there were some roughies. But I'm not going anywhere, no, no matter how rough it gets.
- Facilitator 2: No, you're here - Fitzroy conceived, born, bred.
- Pat DeRango: Liking it very much. But you know my family must've liked it too because they never moved out. They went from one dump to another.
- Facilitator 2: They liked it, obviously.
- Pat DeRango: Evidently.
- Facilitator 2: Or didn't think they could go anywhere else.
- Facilitator 1: Well it was the same, it was the same with my family. They liked it, they wouldn't move until they absolutely had to.
- Pat DeRango: Where'd they go?
- Facilitator 1: They went to Thornbury but the reason why they had to is that they had a double storey house and they just couldn't get upstairs...
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, well I don't go up...
- Facilitator 1: ...and once mum couldn't get up the stairs and dad retired they figured they may as well move where he could have a really big garden and continue growing more vegies.



- Pat DeRango: Where we've seen a lot of change was - because there was a lot of Italians and that in Fitzroy and especially around this way, and when they moved they either went to Reservoir, Bulleen, whereas the Greeks went to Lalor, Thomastown, like they went that-a-way. But the Italians sort of branched out. But there's still a lot of Italians in Reservoir and a lot in Bulleen. Yeah, whereas the Chinese are in Doncaster, East Templestowe, Templestowe, yeah, there's a lot.
- Facilitator 2: That's right, interesting how they fan out.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, they do, yeah. But I wasn't going there.
- Facilitator 1: But there used to be a lot of variety here though, I mean in the post war period there were the Italians, the Greeks, the Yugoslavs, Macedonians, there were lots of Chinese around still, there were lots of Jewish people.
- Pat DeRango: Carlton, in North Carlton.
- Facilitator 1: More in North Carlton, but there were around here too. We had German and Jews living next door to us. Lebanese, Albanians. Turkish people.
- Pat DeRango: No, we didn't really, no. Oh... we had one Albanian, he lived on the corner of Fitzroy Street, you know where they graffiti the wall? He lived there. Other than that he couldn't bring his wife out behind the Iron Curtain or whatever you like to call it. But predominantly they were Italian, Australian mainly.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, there weren't too many Australians down that end. There was one family of Australians who, Ivy Dawson, Mr and Mrs Dawson. We never called people by their first name, it was Mr and Mrs, and I still can't call her Ivy.
- Pat DeRango: The little children now call you by your Christian name...
- Facilitator 1: No, everybody calls you by your Christian name, but you didn't back then.
- Pat DeRango: ...and your teachers.
- Facilitator 2: No you didn't, no. It was aunty and uncle if you got on friendly...
- Pat DeRango: Absolutely.
- Facilitator 1: Very close friends of your family. So the Dawsons, but a lot of the other Australians who lived around us were alcoholics and they were the ones who sent



their kids to the Chinese shop with a little pot to bring home food because the Chinese food was so cheap.

Pat DeRango: Yes, do you remember the poor old drunks drinking bottles of metho?

Facilitator 1: Yes, I do, and a lot of them returned servicemen.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, yeah a bottle of metho.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, and one of the reasons why you mightn't have been allowed to go to Gertrude Street was because of the really high number of Aboriginal people.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, because that was their meeting place on the corner of Gore Street

Facilitator 1: But they didn't harm anybody either. Nobody harmed anybody, it was just like, you know. People had problems...

Pat DeRango: Hey, how Gertrude Street, how trendy? How very trendy that's [become] I never thought I'd see that. It's changed a lot, a hell of a lot. But...

Facilitator 1: But what has retained is the sense of community and the interesting mix.

Pat DeRango: I think so. I remember there was a family in Fitzroy Street, where some of them places are now, and they'd actually pull the floorboards up for - but oh, it was a filthy place, mm, it really was.

Facilitator 1: Was there a lot of poverty here during the Depression?

Pat DeRango: Some parts, yes. Very much so.

Facilitator 1: Did people help each other?

Pat DeRango: No, I don't think they had the money to help each other, but I think it was very hard times. But my father got a job with a Jewish man, Lou Barnett, who was fabulous and it was an electroplating place. Anyhow, he stayed there for a good while and when Lou Barnett died dad and my uncle decided to open their own business, which they did over on the corner of Albert Street and Lygon Street and they went there. So I think from when he got the job with the Jewish man, I mean he probably was getting £3 a week or something like that, but we were alright, yeah. We were okay.

Facilitator 2: Did you grow vegies in the back garden at that stage?



- Pat DeRango: No, no. I remember one year dad bought six pullets. He couldn't kill them. We weren't having them, that didn't happen. No pullets.
- Facilitator 1: What are your earliest memories of Fitzroy?
- Pat DeRango: Just playing out the front and the kids, because there was a factory opposite in Hanover Street, and they'd be playing with the ball, the boys. Ledger, they'd be hitting the ledge with the ball and, God, and Mimo, he was a bugger. He had glasses and he'd go out to Brunswick Street and put his glasses on the tram line. His sister and I were only talking about that not yesterday, the day before, she lives in Moor Street. There used to be the factory there and Mim got up on the roof, he wasn't very old, and fell through the skylight.
- Well, he was green and all the poor kid was saying, don't tell my mother, don't tell my mother, she'll kill me. He never got really hurt bad.
- Facilitator 2: What was the factory?
- Pat DeRango: I'm not too sure what it was, but it was just before you get to Brunswick Street, on that side of Hanover Street.
- Facilitator 1: Where the genetics lab is now.
- Pat DeRango: Further down, yeah. Don't tell my mother, she'll kill me. Oh, poor old Mim, yeah.
- Facilitator 1: Do you remember the shop in Brunswick Street where the façade's just been renovated, the corner of Hanover and Brunswick there's now a café, just two down from there there's...
- Pat DeRango: Where the chairs and that are? That was Cox Bros. Cox Bros. No, furniture.
- Facilitator 1: Oh, so it's gone back to its origins, yes.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, I look at them chairs and I think they must sell them on the internet because who's running in there buying all the time?
- Facilitator 1: Oh, they're very expensive chairs.
- Pat DeRango: I tell you what though, the pawn shop used to do alright. We used to call it the Monti Pete I think.
- Facilitator 1: Oh, the Monti de Peatar.



- Pat DeRango: Had the three balls out the front and that was on the corner of Ferry Street before Ferry Street went and people, some of them that were beautiful, he'd be at work and his wife would put the suit in and then get it out for him for the weekend but he never ever knew. Oh, funny my mother she was the best storyteller in the world. Oh, absolutely.
- Facilitator 2: She was Irish.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah oh, very much so, yeah, she was. She'd tell you what she wore, what they did, what the this. The grapes used to come over in a barrel from, I don't know, somewhere or other, I don't suppose they grew them in Ireland. But no, she was very good at the storytelling.
- Facilitator 1: What about, how did people dress around Fitzroy?
- Pat DeRango: Just mainly skirts, cotton sort of dresses and cardigans and just things like that.
- Facilitator 1: So did they dress up for special occasions?
- Pat DeRango: Go to church or a wedding, yeah.
- Facilitator 2: Or a funeral probably, too.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah.
- Facilitator 1: Or a dance.
- Pat DeRango: Oh yeah, you had to be dressed up for the dance.
- Facilitator 2: Was that on a Saturday afternoon?
- Pat DeRango: Night.
- Facilitator 1: Or getting your hair done.
- Pat DeRango: Or they'd go out and there used to be, I don't know it was once a year, the regatta down at the Yarra, the boats would be down there and, I don't know, we filled in the time. I don't know what the hell we did, but we did alright. We were happy, we were really happy.
- Facilitator 2: Yes, and that was something that you've said before is it was always a happy to place to be...



- Pat DeRango: Absolutely and we used to love sitting out with the Italian senora and her children and they were Maria, Maria, Maria, Rosa, Rosa, the grandchildren, every bloody kid was Maria or Rosa. But she was absolutely delightful. So beautiful, she was lovely. She really, really was lovely. Then there was the Sparda's.
- Pat DeRango: They were Italian, they were next to it. Actually, yeah, Sparta. He was still working at 1991, the father, the lamp shade place in Hawthorn Road. ...Yeah, yeah. He was lovely. She was a bit feisty, his wife, right.
- Facilitator 2: She probably had to be.
- Pat DeRango: Oh, no.
- Facilitator 1: So do you think these stories about repressed Italian women are not quite true.
- Pat DeRango: No, not any that I knew anyhow. They could stand up for themselves. I mean, Mimo's mother would've chopped you up. No, you wouldn't have done that. Oh, they had these vicious dogs, Jot and Naroni, bloody Naroni, oh and he bit Giovanni and he was in hospital with it. Oh, it was this black, horrible dog. He was always on a big chain. He was lucky he didn't get off the chain to get away from her. Oh, no, no no, no loved it.
- Facilitator 2: The women all mixed together, I would imagine. Not only socially in the front of the house but no, over the fence.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, and over the ...[Always over the back fence.] ... [Unclear] and them would come out and the other kids would come out and they were in the street and they were playing and - there couldn't have been much traffic then, could there? Because it was never a problem.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, it would've had to be slower.
- Pat DeRango: You know where the hotel is now?... That room at the back was the [unclear].
- Facilitator 1: ...so did Tom used to come and have coffee at my place quite frequently.
- Pat DeRango: He's running, he'll be running. He was a bit, what was he? A bit what?
- Facilitator 1: Incredibly bright...
- Pat DeRango: Bright, yeah. He was walking up the street, but not running anymore. So maybe the medication is a lot...



- Facilitator 1: But Tom was incredibly - he would come and have a cup of tea and some biscuits every now and then and show me photos that he was taking. He showed me some of his father's photos and.....photo, and he would know who had lived there and...
- Pat DeRango: Oh, he'd always ask you, who lived there?... Absolutely.
- Facilitator 1: ...he knew what ship I'd come out from Italy on... before I knew, before I was even vaguely interested.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah. ...Oh, he was right into it.
- Facilitator 1: Who had lived - he knew I'd lived in Gore Street, because he'd go to the Council and get all of the records and he'd know who lived there...
- Pat DeRango: They're in Northcote now, aren't they?
- Facilitator 1: They are in Northcote, yeah.
- Pat DeRango: Really they were extremely, extremely poor and their mother went to the hospital and Patty Mellis and I went into the house because there was kids and that and there was them, you know them old striped pillows, you know pillowcases, boards up off the floor and, really bad, awful.
- Facilitator 1: This was in the '30s, during the Depression, or later?
- Pat DeRango: No, later.
- Facilitator 1: Can you remember what Fitzroy was like during the War?
- Pat DeRango: Do you know I don't think I realised that there was a war on and do you remember - oh, you wouldn't remember - the brownout, you had to have your window covered. ...Yeah, well you had to have your window, so like no lights or anything like that. Then on, the Victory Day, my uncle said to me oh, I'll take you into the City. They were dancing and going around everywhere, I was a bit oblivious to it. I don't think I really knew.
- Facilitator 2: You were still young.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, and they used to have - they're still there - you know on the corner, down past the end of the gardens, the searchlights? ...The searchlights would be, they'd be going around.



- Facilitator 1: Are they still there?
- Pat DeRango: I think they are you know. ...You know that little park that comes They'd be going, you had the brownout. Yep, you did. I didn't take notice of that either, I mean I probably thought they just had a dark blind. I don't know, don't really know.
- Facilitator 2: How old were you, 10?
- Pat DeRango: I think when the War finished I might've been about 12.
- Facilitator 2: Yes, and I think Melbourne wasn't as affected in many ways, like my family talk about living in Perth at the time and they were definitely alert and alarmed...
- Pat DeRango: Oh, yeah.
- Facilitator 2: ...at times there, and Sydney of course, Darwin.
- Pat DeRango: At the back of the school that's Commission now, do you know at one stage there they dug a trench? The air raid, for the air raid.
- Facilitator 1: There were lots of servicemen over in the Exhibition Buildings.
- Pat DeRango: Yes, there were.
- Facilitator 1: Oh look, that place had has like an amazing history. After the First World War it was converted into a hospital to cope with the Spanish flu. After the Second World War it was a migrant reception centre. It's just done so many things.
- Pat DeRango: It was. [and] Yes, it has.
- Facilitator 2: Certainly had the capacity to deal with lots of people.
- Pat DeRango: Yeah, so we did have an aquarium, but I think it was only seals, performing seals. Probably one or two and a few fish as you went in. But I suppose to us it was really good. I think it was about sixpence to go to the matinee at the Regent.
- Facilitator 2: Where was the Regent?
- Pat DeRango: You know where Rose Mary is?
- Facilitator 1: In Thompson Street.
- Pat DeRango: That was the picture theatre. They were very flash, the seats upstairs.



Facilitator 1: Across the road from there, where Safeway's is now, that was the Channel 7...

Pat DeRango: No, Channel 7 is where Rose Mary was, yeah. ...I think it took up the whole thing.

Facilitator 1: You know where Coles Supermarket is now across the road from Rose Mary.

Pat DeRango: I thought Channel 7 was in, when the movie theatre went Channel 7 went there.

Because my niece was on private date or whatever, was it *Blind Date* or something and it was down there, yeah. Long time ago. Very long time. But she used to, for sixpence or a shilling or whatever it was there was cartoons and two movies and an interval. But of a night - did you ever go there?

Facilitator 1: No.

Pat DeRango: Upstairs, the lounge, they were like lounge chairs, they were extremely comfortable because Mr Hoffman that had the barbecue shop, he'd go there and he'd be asleep in about three minutes. Oh, that's what happened to me the first time I went out with Lou. He asked me for about six months and I thought oh, no. Anyhow, I went, and it was *Sound of Music*, the first time surround music came in, and it was February and he turned up done up like a sore toe in a suit and a tie and a shirt. It was about 36 degrees or something. So we get in there and we were there about oh, maybe 10 or 15 minutes and he said, do you mind if I take my jacket off? I said no. He snored right through the rest of it. Right through, that was first date, yeah. He was going for his life, head back.

Facilitator 1: You knew he snored before you married him.

Pat DeRango: Yeah, but you know I used to be able to hear him from downstairs, but later in life couldn't hear him at all.

Facilitator 1: Do you think you went deaf or do you think he stopped snoring?

Pat DeRango: I think he stopped snoring. ... I can't believe he's gone nearly three years.

[5:00]

Facilitator 1: He's missed.

Pat DeRango: Yeah. It's very, very, very different but anyhow, never mind. I go visit him, which I don't like because I don't like the mausoleum. Just looking at the marble wall, I like to be able to - like flowers, you're not allowed to put fresh flowers on the



inside. On the outside they put them but not on the inside no, you can't, no, no. No, anyhow Paul called in going past oh, about 10 days, a fortnight ago and, like when poor old Lou went in there had little stickers about this big sold, sold, sold. Like I say they were about \$25 each or something and he said oh, he said Helen enquire, we might, to be near Lou's and that for mum and dad. None left, not only that they said you'll have to wait for the new mausoleum part that's getting built now.

Facilitator 2: Goodness.

Pat DeRango: I said to Helen my God, they're all dying to get in there.

Facilitator 1: Yes, and where's this?

Pat DeRango: Fawkner. Oh, I don't know, I'm not mad about it, like you just stand there and you're looking and it depends how far up you are as to how much it costs.

END OF TRANSCRIPT