Fitzroy History Society
Oral History Project
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Transcript of interview

with Sam Marasco

(Interviewed by Alison Hart and Marion Glanville from the Fitzroy History Society at Fitzroy on 6 May 2016 in Fitzroy)

Sam Marasco came to Fitzroy as an 18-month old from Calabria in the mid-1950s and has lived here ever since. He talks about his childhood, games they played, the street life and selling papers from the age of 6 or 7 and collecting beer bottles for money. He was heavily involved with the local community and the football clubs and reminisces about his school days, the formation of the multi-ethnic Fitzroy Stars football club – which integrated migrant and indigenous players and later became a well-known fully indigenous team. He talks about the days when Fitzroy still played at the Brunswick Street oval, about the changing street-scapes and gentrification and about the origins of the thriving Arts and music community in the 70s and the interesting personalities who grew up in the area and later became well known in the Arts.

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator 1: So this is an interview with Sam Marasco on Friday, 6 May in Fitzroy. There, so, okay.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, my name's Sam Marasco. I'm a long-time resident of Fitzroy. I was born in Italy and we came to Australia in 1954 with my mother, elder brother and sister. I was 18 months old. We, it was a 27 day journey from Calabria, which, the port that we left from was Messina in Sicily, that was departing point. I've got papers to show that where we left from and they could be provided to the…

[1:01]

…Historical Society there.

My father came previously in 1952 in December and he left me as an eight month old baby and he worked here for two and a half years to save the money to have the rest of the family sent over. During this time he worked menial jobs around the countryside, say Wangaratta, Dandenong, just to save the money. At that time he lived at 189 Gore Street, Fitzroy… So just opposite near the Union Pub where they film *Offspring*. Right, so, but there's a photo there and that's it there. That's Condell Street there. That's Condell Street there.

Facilitator 1: Who's that on the bike?

Sam Marasco: That's my cousin, because my uncle owned the house and the house was one stage, I think it was owned by Mark Tuckey, he's got a furniture… It's the house next door to the one with a swimming pool, that one there. My uncle owned it and at one stage there was 19 young single men living in it because that was the way of the times. Then…

Facilitator 2: Yeah, there was no housing, there was hardly any, no.

Sam Marasco: There was, no because what happened the Italian community was insular and what happened you had to have a sponsor's letter to sponsor you to come over to Australia. …So they all congregated together and that was, that was their way of life. What happened is then they had their wives sent over and that was the time there was proxy marriages, too. [3:02]

They'd go to the local church, there would be the priest from All Saints Church, he would be conducting the ceremony here and it would be concurrent in Italy and

they would be actually married. My father wrote in his poetry book about the lady who's standing at Station Pier with a photo of her intended spouse.

Facilitator 1: So they would not even have known each other, yeah.

Sam Marasco: No, but that was negotiated because of families, because the family set this up. Then they came over and then there was the, and that's what happened to a lot of them. They worked, the single men, and then brought their wives over and the family and then it flourished after that, done. From there, when we came as a family we lived with my uncle in 328 Gore Street for about two years, my father saved the money and he bought a house 326. So we moved virtually next door.

So from there my father, my father worked as a shoemaker, he was trained as a shoemaker in Italy but he worked at [Wybrow's] Shoes, 200 Wellington Street, Collingwood and he was a lift operator which afforded him time to write. So he used to bring all the stock up to the other floors, to the second and third floor, and during that time he used to write poems on the back of stock sheets. Alright, so there's another backstory there.

He wrote about the times in Melbourne, he's got poems of his early visions of Australia, migration and how it affected, unemployment, even the Melbourne Cup in the 1950s, because it was a holiday. Poems about his fellow work friends and such.

So we went to school in George Street, but I was still young and I think back, I think back when my brother and sister, when we came, we arrived in Australia on a Thursday. So they went to school on Monday, George Street State School, number 450. So I'm just thinking how hard it was for my brother and sister because going to a school with no language.

[6:00]

Facilitator 1: So they came almost straight off the boat and…

Sam Marasco: Straight off the boat, yeah, and my aunty used to live in the same house with my uncle and she was engaged to a market gardener from Werribee. They said to my brother, when you go to school and you want to go to the toilet you put up your hand, I want to go to the lavatory. So he goes to the school on the Monday, well he's got to go to the toilet. He goes, he just remembered the word lavatory, lavatory, lavatory. Somehow he puts his hand up and goes, excuse me, I want to go to Werribee.

[Laughter]

Facilitator 1: Oh, everything was going to Werribee anyway.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, he remembers the word Werribee, right. So that story, that's a story handed down, like things like that. Because we're Italians but we speak a dialect, and my father, he relates to Smith Street and he's got it down as [Smitty] Street, which is classic, and Collingwood as [Collingvood], with a v and they spoke it phonetically. Because - and the hardest thing being a migrant is we're brought up with a dialect and what happened is, and suddenly English comes into the language and then you learn and you say, I'm going to the [shopu], we used to put a u on the end of it. We're going to catch the [busu].

One of my aunties says [anu driveatu], they drove, driveatu, right. So those words, my father kept a lot of it in writings. Like licking the gelato, [lickinu], there's no such word in Italian, right, and all these things.

Facilitator 1: Like a mish mash, yeah.

Sam Marasco: That's why they're trying to retrieve their dialects because they don't believe that when we migrated that we kept our customs. Because now they're sending people over, research teams and such, because now with influx of the 457, the tourists who are coming over on the visas and such, it's opened their eyes that there's a hidden

[8:40]

generation living in Australia, now they're third generation and they want to know because they don't believe, they can't believe that we kept our custom of making tomato sauce, making your home…

Facilitator 1: Yeah, well that's the thing, yes.

Facilitator 2: Things change back in the home country but then…

Sam Marasco: Change there, no well they go to the supermarket, the homemade pasta and the grapes, doing the wine. Dissecting the pig to make salami, prosciutto every year because, and that was a ritual. That was a ritual and what happened was we kept those.

Facilitator 2: So it was about keeping the culture, not necessarily about the food, but the, yeah.

Sam Marasco: Keeping our culture, keeping our culture, keeping our traditions, our language. So these things flourished but what happens with the next generation, they didn't learn Italian because the elder brothers and sisters, they didn't speak it at home. We as a unit, we spoke it at home. So that was another one of those things. Going to state school, it was pretty hard because there was racism, it was prevalent at the time. We were…

Facilitator 1: What sort of like ethnic mix was there at the local school?

Sam Marasco: There was mostly Greeks and Italians. There was the odd Spanish, Yugoslav here and there, a Pol and a German. Because there was, Eastern Europeans came out too as they were technical workers and they came at the time when they were building the Snowy River complex. They were more of technical adaptability they had as workers.

But the Italians, they were basically labourers and we had relatives who were farmers too, because our background is farmers. We were farmers of the land dating back to, in Calabria, we originally we had land and the house and we've still got land over there. But we were farmers who used to go out and plant flax. Because the town I come from, Soveria Manelli, is like the mana, you know, the mana is [11:05] the nectar of the Gods, mana. Manelli [linu] it comes the linen. So there's a big linen mill there and what happened was they used to make their own linen.

You see recently when I was going through my mum's glory box she had her mother's bedspread and all these beautiful linen, cotton pieces of Manchester that she brought over in the trunk. One specific bedspread has got my grandmother, it's got AC, the initials, embroidered in the old English like that. So they were taught at school, they were taught as young girls four, five and six they had to learn to crochet, embroider and they did all their own. They did all their own so which went eventually into their glory box.

What happened when they got married, and I've even got the one, the dowry from my mother's family to my father. So it was 12 sheets of this, napkins this, bed linen, it's all itemised and signed.

Facilitator 1: Oh right, what she brought into the marriage.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, what she brought into the marriage like that, and just itemised like that. So that's sort of the backstory of the family. So we transported these customs with

us. Then what happens is you go to school and like I said there was a bit of racism but what happened with me specifically is I attacked it front on and just the way that, to be accepted was on the sporting field, right. So to make the football team and the cricket team, so that way you're accepted. So it's a bond, it's a bond with everyone else. So when you're in the first team like that they just back off because…

Facilitator 1: Yeah, you're untouchable.

Sam Marasco: Well when you play football the camaraderie as a team unit, there's no I in team.

So that way there, that was the way that I confronted it. We had good teachers there, they were hard, it was hard, it was those days, you still got the strap and cuts like this if you stepped out of line, but it

[13:48]

was discipline and we learnt to live with it. In those days I used to sell papers on Smith Street.

Facilitator 1: So how old would you have been then?

Sam Marasco: I was, I would've been about seven, eight and in those days there was a six o'clock closing so you had the six o'clock swill. Then I would go to the Birmingham in front there, just a little knee high like that, and I'd go through the packs there when all the drinkers lined up and I'd wait out the front. *The Herald* was worth threepence, *The Herald* was worth threepence at the time, *Sporting Globe* was sixpence, it was a Zack, right. *The Truth* was worth nine pence, and *The Women's Weekly* was worth a shilling, a [dina], right. It was like that.

So I used to love it on a Saturday night especially if Collingwood won because Collingwood was across the road at Smith Street, Fitzroy being the demarcation. The tram tracks was the demarcation line. So I used to love it if Collingwood won and they'd buy *The Herald*, threepence, and a *Sporting Globe*, sixpence and they'd give you a shilling and they'd go, keep the change son. I used to go from pub to pub and in 1958 there was 52 pubs in Fitzroy.

There was 52, oh you see them, they're still, the old Labour in Vain, that was, right, that was behind the Standard. You've got the Provincial, the Perseverance, the Birmingham, the Union, the Sydney, the Grace Darling, the [British], the Gasometer down there. It just…

Facilitator 1: Whoa, make a fortune.

Sam Marasco: Now well, no but it's, it was because it was a six o'clock closing. So I just worked as a paperboy, you save your money because we were poor, we didn't have money. Whatever tips you got you came and you gave the mum some money and you had your spending money. So that was the way and it teaches you, and even as a kid we used to collect the old beer bottles, we used to get a ha'penny each.

[16:14]

We used to get a ha'penny each and we used to drag them with our billycarts down to Alexandra Parade, there was a scrap metal and bottles and they used to give us, we used to get a ha', it was a shilling for two dozen. So and we did that and did lead and the old when they demolished buildings the old cast iron pulleys that are in the sash windows.

Facilitator 2: Yeah, so they'd go to the scrap…

Sam Marasco: They'd go to the scrap with a trusty billycart, like that. So you were just, you were always doing something. We didn't have toys, we used to have to go from the fig tree, my aunty's fig tree, and we used to cut the branches and make [shanghais].

Facilitator 2: Is that that one that I can see just over the fence there?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so make shanghais, we improvised everything, there was no toys, the kids are different today, they've got every-…

We used to play games like that, draw on the ground with chalk and just get bottle tops and flick them. They used to land there like that, that was it, we improvised. You made something. We had yo-yos and then the hula hoops came in and all things like that, but you improvised the toys and then you played in the street. You played football and cricket and then in those days also there was the bonfire firecracker night, because we celebrated Guy Fawkes, November.

Facilitator 2: Oh yes, the fifth of November, I remember it well.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so we celebrated that. So in those days there were skyrockets, I mean they're outlawed nowadays, but we just knew no danger and we used to hold penny bungers in our hands.

Facilitator 2: Well yeah, kids could buy them any time from the local milk bar.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so those things. What happened, that way there is all the neighbours come together because you've got a bonfire happening.

[18:21]

Facilitator 2: Right, so there was that sort of community, yeah.

Sam Marasco: A community feel. You could leave your front door open and walk up the street, you can't do that now for fear you don't know what's going to happen. They came in and robberies happen all the time, so the times have changed. But then there was a more community feel, there was more community feel. Then as times went on, even in the '70s they said, there was a leading judge and he was handing down a judgement and he said, you come from, you're no worse than [the gonnas] at Fitzroy. Now, you've got to think how we felt, coming from Fitzroy.

Then later on in the '70s it sort of got gentrified people, it opened up. It opened up and then, and it took off with a flourish. In the '70s I remember we went to the Fitzroy Town Hall and they had a multicultural ball, it was, right, and it was compared by Graeme Blundell of Alvin Purple fame, right, and a few other people on TV. The guest of honour was Gough Whitlam, he was the Prime Minister of Australia and he comes to lowly Fitzroy.

My dad went up to him and he says, Mr Whitlam, he goes, you're a very honourable man. My dad's short, he was five foot two and Gough's six foot six, right. He starts speaking to him in Italian, and now Gough could speak in Italian.

Yeah, and they held a conversation and at the end Gough's picked him up like a little teddy bear and you cou-, I just felt just the warmth, just the warmth like that coming to Fitzroy because it happened there. The Town Hall, a lot of things happened at the Town Hall. So you've got these significant signposts, the Town Hall, the Fitzroy Bars, the iconic Aqua Profonda sign. Because that was designed just for, the kids couldn't read English, right, so they put it in Italian. The Deep End.

[20:45]

Sam Marasco: *Monkey Grip* was set there, Helen Garner, she was a teacher at Fitzroy High School.

Facilitator 1: Oh, was she? Because she lived in North Fitzroy in that house not far from the High School.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, she was a teacher at Fitzroy High. We went to Fitzroy High, now our teacher was James Mollison, who was instrumental in purchasing the Blue Poles, and Caroline Hogg, Miss [Saalbach], she was our French teacher at Fitzroy High. I went to school with Nadia Tass, the di-, *MALCOLM*, the movie.

But her name was Pam Tassopoulos.

Right, and when I read an interview 10, 15 years' ago she's dropped her age by five years. Now there is a vanity clause, isn't there, right?

Facilitator 1: We're all allowed to do that I think. How interesting.

Sam Marasco: Nonda Katsalidis, you know Fender Katsalidis, yeah well he went to George Street. Nadia Tass went to George Street together, you have probably heard of Pi the poet, Pi, we all went to school together, Fitzroy. Yeah, George Street and then later on Fitzroy High. Just people that you know kicked on in life, but some of them, they don't want to assimilate with coming from Fitzroy because they think it's a bit downtrodden of the time.

Well just, well I'm proud.

Facilitator 1: Well, and you'd think people would be because even if they thought it was downtrodden they should be proud that well, you know.

Sam Marasco: They should be proud, of course. You just…

Facilitator 1: Well in these days it's so gentrified.

[22:41]

Sam Marasco: Yeah, I know. But that's just sort of some of the people, the interaction that we had with - another student at Fitzroy High was George Spartels, he was one of the presenters on *Play School*. One of the original on *Play School*, George. Yeah, just, people just the memories come flooding back. That was our crowd at school, we had 800 students.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, now was that the one that ended up getting closed down by…

Sam Marasco: Yes, under Kennett. …They started because they did a rigorous campaign, the people.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, where it's reopened, is that the same place it was before?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, that's the original site, yeah, it's the original site there, yeah, just really, really good times. Learning, you had good times, and from school - so that takes us into the '70s. The '70s was a time music, The Beatles, things changing. Like and then what happened was the music scene started to flourish and we used to have to…

Locally there wasn't that much, there wasn't that much. There was T.F. Much More Ballroom in the top of…

Much More Ballroom, right, I remember seeing Ross… Ross Wilson…. He was in The Pink Finks, I think, something. I think he was in a band before Daddy Cool, the Much More Ballroom, and there wasn't much else around music wise. Then later on the pubs started, because we would have to go to the Village Green and all these other places… For music, yeah.

[24:37]

Facilitator 1: So there wasn't music in…

Sam Marasco: There wasn't much music, there wasn't much music because also in those times there was the espresso bars, everyone gravitated to the espresso bars because…

Facilitator 1: So they were like the community meeting.

Sam Marasco: The community, and then it was like you'd have to, you'd go to Johnny's Blue Room and such, and the Green Room, like that. But there wasn't much. Espresso bars were hangouts for the young kids and…

Facilitator 1: So what other sort of things did kids do for entertainment?

Sam Marasco: Then, well there was sport and there was, that was in between study and then the other ones who worked.

Facilitator 1: Was the football club like an important part of the community then?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, but the actual football club is, and then we played, we played football with a team called the Fitzroy Stars. We started off in YCW and we started our first year out of King William Street, All Saints Church Hall. Our first coach was Father Fitzpatrick. Father Fitzpatrick, and then we were playing out of McAlister Oval or playing out of Royal Park. So we played there for two years, the next year we got a coach, [John Finlayson], he came to be a youth worker at Fitzroy.

They had their offices on the side of the Town Hall down there, and there was, I think Bill Warner, he was the, I think he was in charge of the youth club prior to that. Because my brother was a youth worker there, too, my older brother and he worked with Harry [Van Morst], Albert's father? Or who was the son? One was the father and one was the son, I can't, yeah. Anyway, and they were, he became a youth worker, John Finlayson, and he was younger than the priest, Father Fitzpatrick, so we said, you're the coach.

[26:50]

So what happened is, we were basically mostly Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, a few Australians, but we were more ethnic that we had gone to school together at Fitzroy High. Some from Collingwood Tech, a few from sort of Parade College, so we were mixed. Everyone knew mates from here, there and everywhere so that was the nucleus of the team. So we played two years in YCW and then I think in 1974, '74, we went into the Metropolitan League and what happened was we got half a dozen players, they came from a defunct Westgarth team. So they came down, there was Ronnie Smith and we made him coach.

But what happened, there was indigenous players that came and one of them was [Lloydy Johnson] who happened to be the father of Chris Johnson, three time Brisbane Lions premiership player and one of the last eight who went to Fitzroy at the time of the merger. So I played football, we became a sort of a fusion team. So what happened is we were migrants and we copped barrages through ethnic taunts and the Aboriginal component, they copped it too. But this gave us a bond, a brotherhood.

So what happened was we knuckled down and the first year we played in a grand final on the Fitzroy Football Ground and we got beaten after a dubious timekeeping error. The last quarter went for 35 minutes and we lost by a point. The loser's medal was handed out by Pastor Doug Nicholls, and he used to have his little church up there. When we were at state school he used to come and teach us religious instruction, Pastor Doug Nicholls before he was Sir and knighted. We could associate with him.

Then we made a commitment and we bounced back and we won the grand final the next year and then we won one two years later. We became a successful team.

Facilitator 1: This was the Fitzroy Stars.

Sam Marasco: Fitzroy Stars, yeah. So that was that side of the Fitzroy Stars then, but nowadays they are a fully integrated Aboriginal team

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virtually. What happens is there's always contention because they sort of thought that they started it and they'd take ownership but it didn't happen, because I was there original, and our mates. So, and they look upon me, they've got their team of the century and then they've got the other team of the century. So I'm in that one, and my mates, alright. So there's a divide, and I'm the last link, alright, because I was elected captain but I relinquished it.

I said, because the Aboriginal boys, they won't follow me. So I relinquished the captaincy and they still went on and we're still good friends and I see a lot of them down there. That was the football side. The other football side was the actually Fitzroy Football Club, Butch Gale, he was a captain in the 1950s, is a much revered figure.

Facilitator 1: Was Brunswick Street Oval their home ground still then?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and they left there in 1966 and they went to Princes Park for two years and then they went to the Junction Oval. From the Junction they went back to Princes Park and then they stayed there until '84, we went to Victoria Park for two years and then we went back to Princes Park from about '87 to '94. In the last two years the Fitzroy Lions, they played their home games out of the Western Oval. So that became the demise, in '96 they were sent to merge with the Brisbane Bears but technically it was a, we were just exterminated with extreme prejudice because…

Facilitator 1: Was it about money in the AFL interstate spread, or…

Sam Marasco: We didn't have enough supporters and the bottom line is they wanted to get a team, another team, Port Adelaide. So Port Adelaide took Fitzroy's position.

Facilitator 1: Mm, do you think that was about changes in the sort of, the type, the people who were living in Fitzroy in the general population? That football was less important?

Sam Marasco: No, the general population didn't follow Fitzroy because our players, we had a feeder area from the East Doncaster and Balwyn,

[32:20]

Templestowe region. That's where - and also we had the country zone down Camperdown, Kerang, those areas in the Hampden League. So our country footballers came from there and our local footballers, we got [Bruce Perton Osborne] from here, Johnny Blakey and many, many more.

What happened was the Fitzroy Council was always at loggerheads with the Club, they couldn't reach, they couldn't reach an agreement about - the ground was too small, Brunswick Street Oval, it had limitations. Because that was the start and now no local grounds exist today.

Facilitator 1: Because they only ever had that one stand after the other one burnt down, didn't it?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, there was only one stand left but they wanted to come back and use it as a training base. There was under one councillor, Councillor Angela [Ireland], she opened her arms and invited them back, so Fitzroy used to come and train. But they still, they're still the local amateurs' team, Fitzroy who are still represented, we're in the Fitzroy strip. So and they're honoured by the actual Brisbane Lions because Brisbane Lions gave them the right to use the name.

Facilitator 1: Right, because they have, and they have junior teams and everything, don't they?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, junior teams, yeah. I was instrumental in the formation of that team because another, Alan Moore who used to live in, his father had [CC Moore] opposite the [Markus Law]. They used to make woodblocks for butchers' blocks. His daughter used to go to kindergarten with my niece and he said Sam, you used to play football, why don't you come and help the kids play. I said, he goes, well, and we ended up going to the then VFL and we saw one of the Daniher brothers was a Mick Daniher. We said we want a young team, we want to form the team. So eventually they let us in.

[34:45]

To see it flourish now, I'm so proud. I've got my 14 year old nephew playing in the Fitzroy, carry on the tradition. Because I played with the Fitzroy Stars and…

Facilitator 1: So are they part of the VFA now?

Sam Marasco: No, it's just the league, yeah. …But they're in B Grade, they're in B Grade so they're doing well. So that's a good thing because it's local football. I went there on ANZAC Day and they were playing against AJAX and they played the game and

at halftime, it happened to be ANZAC Day, they went to the cenotaph there and they had the service.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, I heard the bugle from home.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, they had the service and someone read a letter from one of the soldiers who happened to be a Fitzroy player in 1916. They'd mentioned that - oh, I'd like to get a transcript of it - that we owe you three pounds or something from back payment. So he was in France, Fromelles, at the time. The goose bumps, you just become overcome because it's still Fitzroy, it's still there… and the cenotaph happens to be there, which other ground has it? It's, to me it's like sacred ground.

When we used to play out at Princes Park I used to come home with my nephews after the footy and I'd go past Brunswick Street and if we'd win I'd beep the horn three times and my nephews would go why, uncle Sam? I says, we have to let all the spirits of the past, all the ghosts know that we won. That's how it is, it's sacred ground.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, I remember that from country footy when we won, when we went past our oval we did the same thing.

[36:46]

Sam Marasco: Yeah, it's the ritual these things. Then we move onto, I've seen the formation of Brunswick Street because it then became a leading food centre.

Facilitator 1: So what was it like, like say in the '50s or '60s before it became sort of gentrified and full of cafés? What sort of shops and things were there then?

Sam Marasco: Well shops, there was, in Smith Street they were emporiums, they were big shops. …Big furniture, there was Paterson's up the road there and there was… Mostly commercial. Smith Street was one of the most important shopping strips in the '50s-'60s.

Facilitator 2: The Foy & Gibson.

Sam Marasco: Foy & Gibson, the Foy & Gibson is on the actual location where the new Coles is, yeah, and then across the road there was Paterson's, then further up where Kathmandu is the Diamond Cut Lingerie, that was a big - then coming down there was Hickory House, Hickory House off Moor Street and there was Watersun,

Watersun they used to make the bathers. They were the precursor to Speedo, they were the big company before.

You mentioned Foy & Gibson and Foy & Gibson when Haydn Bunton, the legendary Fitzroy player won three, triple Brownlow medallist, he used to go from department to department, right? They'd sit him there and then they'd go upstairs to hardware and all the women would swoon after him because he had the matinee idol looks, Haydn Bunton. They used him as a ploy like that, he did, he was like a film, he looked like a David Niven. Things like that, these stories that really happened.

[38:56]

Just all these - yeah, and they were big departments stores and I was mentioning to [Marion] that the florist shop, the florist shop, I remember that was a place called [John Cornish] who was fine, he was fine tailor made suits. Because when we had to go to a school formal or a school social in those days to get a bow tie from there or something, the fancy ties and that. But I remember specifically he had the sign [speaka L'italiano], Italian is spoken here. Those things, and people used to come.

They used to come from Preston, Northcote, all the neighbouring suburbs, to shop in Smith Street. Because there were butcher shops galore, there were green grocers, and it happened in all other shopping strips in other suburbs but Smith Street was really dense and there were just…

Facilitator 1: Yeah, so it was more important then than Brunswick Street as a shopping…

Sam Marasco: Oh yeah, Brunswick Street. Brunswick Street just had no, it wasn't, it was just a mish mash, Brunswick Street. Until the '80s and it just started, started Henry Maas did the Black Cat, I remember Stephanie Alexander did The Seagoing Vegetable, there was the The Flying Trapeze. The Flying Trapeze was on the corner of Moor Street and the other one, this little other, King William Street. It was on the corner there. …Yeah, The Flying Trapeze, that was - then oh, on the Collingwood side, sorry, there was the Last Laugh. …The Last Laugh on the corner where the - now, the Last Laugh, that used to be an actual, it used to be an actual unemployment centre.

Facilitator 2: Oh was it, aren't we back to Smith Street then for the Last Laugh…

[Over speaking] [41:02]

Sam Marasco: Yeah, the Last Laugh, yeah.

Yeah, but it was on the actual Collingwood side just over on the corner where the tram terminal is.

Facilitator 1: Because that was around for quite a long time, wasn't it, the Last Laugh?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and then, oh and opposite there where the tram turns I think it's, oh, I forget the name, [Sifka's], or, it's a wine bar where the actual tram turns. …
In Gertrude Street, yeah, I forget the name of the wine bar there but they used to be the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service on the corner. When the great Muhammad Ali, the world champion boxer, championship heavyweight boxing champion, he was making a Soother's commercial in St Kilda Road and he also, that was the time he came for the Logies. Remember when Bert Newton… said, I love the boy.

Right, and he, he stops, he stops there and I've got an actual, I've got an actual photocopy of the photo of him with this little Aboriginal girl like that. He goes, I'm going to come back and I'm going to bring you books and tapes and so you learn, to help you. What happened, all the traffic was banked back to Brunswick Street because everyone stopped, the great Ali. He stopped everything. People were running out and they were getting him to sign dollar notes, whatever, pieces of paper. The Ali, he came to Fitzroy, he came to Fitzroy, the great Ali, yeah.

[42:42]

Because, I wrote a story on Arthur Kemp, he was a boxer, he was a welterweight boxing champion of the time and he's a resident of Fitzroy. He gave me his sort of copies from *The Ring* magazine of the '70s and amongst it was that because…

Facilitator 1: Oh, the story about Ali?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and he's central to the story because while everyone was banked around, the whole crowd, Arthur Kemp, Archie, he goes you're not the king of the world, I'm the king of Fitzroy.

Ali, with his quick wit he goes no, you're the ugliest. Right, and I had to, because I was writing a story for a U3A writing group so I had to get a verification of another boxer at the time, just to substantiate it, yeah, and it was right. He's still a local figure and sometimes you see him from of the House of Welcome there in Brunswick Street because he knows a lot of the people there. He's an ex-boxer

and sort of, you know. That's what, also Fitzroy is the local characters around, you see them, you know, and they're sort of emblematic of the time and the era and they're forever going.

It's just this thing that you always acknowledge, how you going, how you going? Because we're brought up in those times where values were different, you helped each other. Someone on hard times is you slip them $5, like this. There's just sort of this camaraderie because it is a little town, it is a little town. But now with the influx of new buildings going up, apartment complexes, suddenly you turn around - I just about went past on the corner of Napier Street, no George Street where origin-, it was Manfax before, they've just pulled it down. So another big complex is going to go up. So bit by bit it's going to lose its soul.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, because it makes for a more transient population too, having…

[45:09]

Sam Marasco: Living in Gore Street was, they wanted to build, two doors down from here they wanted to build a five storey complex. They would've seen into our backyard down there when we lived there, so I went to VCAT, I went to VCAT just as a local citizen and I put in my objection and then a few of my neighbours had to employ town planners and lawyers on their behalf. I said, this is no good for the area. They said, how does it affect? Well, I says, I don't want people peeking in like that.

So that got stopped, or the people didn't go ahead, the actual developers. But we fought. We fought when the Coles New World supermarket was happening with Val Noone, he was a member.

Facilitator 2: Yeah, I was protesting that one.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and we had our protest group called GAAG, Gore Area Action Group, GAAG. I mean Val brought out this little leaflet with a cooee on the front, like, and there was Bill Morgan [Pailor], he was a lawyer, criminal lawyer, and his wife and a lot of people in the area. We really rebelled against that but what we did get we stopped the semitrailers loading, going up Gore Street. So they have to come up St David Street off Smith Street. We stopped that, we stopped that because that was people power. It still went ahead, but we got a few amendments for the area.

Facilitator 1: Well yeah, and sometimes it's the best you can do.

Sam Marasco: So you see these things and the visions are for the future. Smith Street, single storey buildings, they're going to be infill and if it's a double storey it's got more change of staying. Because the way that it's going to go it's going to be the same as what you see in Northcote in High Street along there. Complexes all up and down, and that's what, when the community loses its soul. Because what happened is Brunswick Street became a flourishing night time district, entertainment. So people came from the other suburbs who scorned Fitzroy years and years ago.

[48:04]

Facilitator 1: Yeah, so it's something not for the locals but for the, yeah.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, but what happened is the locals, the locals have to put up with cleaning up the mess because we live here. You've got your bottles strewn in the front there and you have to put up with that and the mess that they make, but we live with it. I always said there should be like tollgates, people coming in, protect our area. Because we have to clean it, we have to clean it in the end because we look after it. I just happen to be a good neighbour because I'll pick up some rubbish that's there.

If some of my neighbours throw dirt, throw, break glasses when they have a party I'll go and tell them. Because I'll say you've been in Fitzroy five minutes, you've got to respect the area and the people that live there.

Facilitator 1: I always think that, how hard is it to pick up a bit of - because I always pick up glass when I take the dog for a walk up the park. Like, how hard is it to put it in the bin?

Sam Marasco: It's like that, yeah. It's just, that's what I see of the area becoming and it's just a lot of people now - and, you know, I ring up the radio pretty frequently on the sports station and they know I'm from Fitzroy and they jibe me about the hipsters. I said, don't give me hipsters, we were here in the '70s, I was wearing hipsters for crying out loud. These hipsters have been around and they make out, you know. I just got a pamphlet for Stephen Jolly in the letterbox and he said the average wage in Fitzroy is $2400 a week…. $2400 a week. I said, where do we get [our money]?... I've got it in there, yeah, $2400.

[50:01]

Facilitator 2: That's gentrification with a capital G I think, isn't it?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so and these people and what happens is they come and they go to all the fine restaurants, so Smith Street suddenly has taken the lustre from Brunswick Street.

Gertrude Street has always been knocking on the door, but that's more shops like fine artisan type shops. If you go there they've got shoemakers, dressmakers, fine furniture stores there. So, and it's a real good bookstores.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, it's maintained that, and art galleries and sort of that, yeah.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, an art gallery feel there. But Smith Street more for the shopping complex and now it's really spawned with the eating side. Brunswick Street, it's sort of dragging its heels because they put up the rents. They put up the rents and so you can't have your cake and eat it too.

Facilitator 1: Don't get me started, I think it's a conspiracy … It's a developers' conspiracy to get rid of them all.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and… Around Fitzroy there's other sort of landmarks that while it doesn't fit in Fitzroy, but you've got the Fitzroy Gardens.

That's more East Melbourne, isn't it? You've got the Exhibition.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, well and Edinburgh Gardens which is North Fitzroy… but it's kind of, a lot of Fitzroy people spend time there.

Sam Marasco: Edinburgh Gardens, yeah. [51:36]

These, sort of these little perimeters things happen just around the outskirts of Fitzroy. I've seen it really change, really change.

Facilitator 1: When the Council changed from, because it used to be just Fitzroy Council and when that amalgamation happened, which when we were talking it was a Kennett thing, was it? Or the '90s. Did that, was that a noticeable change living here, that when it changed to Yarra?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, well suddenly they changed all the rubbish bins and they brought out those, you had City of Fitzroy on your no advertising stickers and they became Yarra, the sort of logos and all this. So incorporating the other sort of… There was parts of Carlton, there was part of Richmond, City of Yarra. So you weren't that one municipality. Fitzroy was formed in 1858.

Facilitator 1: Did it make a difference to like the services or your relationship with the Councillors, that sort of thing, do you think?

Sam Marasco: Not really, not really. It was just made, it was more streamlined. It was a message from upstairs from the Victorian Government just to streamline things. Your rates went up, of course, which they always do.

Yeah, and services and such. But then that lost a bit of its soul too because it was suddenly Fitzroy.

Facilitator 1: Well yeah, that's what I sort of wondered. Like you lost that local kind of identification.

Sam Marasco: That local feel, yeah, the local feel.

Facilitator 2: Mm, well I was thinking that because now for some things you have to go to Collingwood Town Hall for parking tickets, or Richmond for planning permits.

[53:23]

Everything used to be like in Fitzroy at Fitzroy Town Hall.

Sam Marasco: In Fitzroy yeah, yeah. It was more centralised.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, no I was incensed when I had to go to Richmond for an [IDAP] meeting recently, I was like what? What's it doing at Richmond?

Sam Marasco: Yeah how's it going? Not bad there? Oh, you know. …Yeah, we'll just give it a bit of a rest for a minute, yeah.

[Audio recording break]

Sam Marasco: …following Fitzroy, and Fitzroy was always a downtrodden side, we used to finish at the bottom of the ladder pretty frequently. But what happened was it engendered sort of spirit, friendship, amongst all the supporters. We used to camp out for finals tickets, it would've been the '70s, and they let us sleep under the grandstand, under the club rooms there, under the grandstand. I remember Bert Newton coming along just to lift everyone's spirits and tell them a few jokes and that and that's how it was in those days.

They used to have, the footy club used to have the pleasant morning, pleasant Sunday mornings, and even going back my mother was the housekeeper to Alan

Butch Gale who owned the Birmingham Pub on the corner of Johnson Street and Smith Street. She used to work as a kitchenhand and also she used to clean upstairs. The great Butch Gale, he had a few young kids and we were poor at the time and one of them had an old football which was really tattered and everything. I said, Mr Gale, can I get the bladder please? He let me have it and I took it home and my dad, being a shoemaker, he put a patch on it and suddenly we had a real football.

[55:29]

Even though it was a bladder, to us it was like heaven because we had a football instead of the rolled up *Sun* newspapers and we used to, whatever. That's just sort of things that - and we went to George Street State School and we won our school's division grand final and they said if you win that you can get to train with the Fitzroy team.

You can meet the players. So we ran a lap and there was Kevin Murray, Kevin Wright and you get to meet you heroes. You're a young kid, it's a big thing. The closest that you could get to them. It was great. There was, across the road from the Perseverance, the Perseverance at the time Allan Ruthven, the Baron, he was a Fitzroy Rover and Brownlow medallist 1950, he owned the Perseverance. Across the road was the Regent picture theatre, the old Regent picture theatre. It's now, it's now sort of a grey, dark, two storey office complex.

From that little lane where there's a 7-Eleven on the corner, there's that lane that goes to the back like of the Universal on that side, Victoria Street, and that was the Regent picture theatre. That's where they used to film *Sunnyside Up*, and *World of Sport*, Channel Seven used to be there. I think it was later at, that was later at Dorcas Street but they used to film *Sunnyside Up* and it was a picture theatre. We used to pay, it was threepence to get in and it was threepence to buy an ice cream at half time. So we used to go there as kids, and that was your entertainment, you would get to go to the pictures.

Facilitator 1: Yes, I wondered what you spent your paper money on, so that was the sort of thing, yeah.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, there was the pictures, yeah, there was the pictures. The pictures, and you'd have to come home because in those days we didn't have TV. TV came in 1956 but my dad was against it because he was a literary man and he says, you've

got to read, you're better off. Write something, do something. Instead we'd sneak out and go in front of the milk bars and watch the TV on the screen. [58:15]

That was inside, right, and that was it. We didn't get TV until a long, long time afterwards. It was just more participation and it was radio, we listened to radio. It was Keith McGowan and all these Happy Hammonds and Norman Swan and all those, we're bored, you just listened to that. Then growing up and there'd be the advent of music. Popular music was 3HY, 3AK and - but there wasn't much. There was youth clubs, there was youth clubs because we had to go to Collingwood for the youth club, it was the Ramsay Mailer Youth Club.

Facilitator 1: What sort of stuff, was that sort of sport oriented stuff?

Sam Marasco: No, that was, the youth club was during the school holidays. During the school holidays they'd take you to different locations. We'd go to, one place we went to Eastern Beach, another time maybe the Zoo or something. Just one day outings. We rarely got out of Fitzroy, the only time I got out as a kid from state school they sent us to Cottage by the Sea. Now I think it's a big restaurant, [Dalgarno, Dalgarni's 59:52] or something, at Queenscliff, it was like a little hostel.

All I remember is eating porridge for the first time. I go, what's this? It's sort of, like what's this? Our mum used to give us a beaten egg with sugar in it and a drop of marsala and that was our breakfast.

Facilitator 1: So you didn't really get out of Fitzroy as a kid much… like even to go into the City or…

Sam Marasco: No…. No, I used to catch, no I used to go on my own because I'd sell papers from when I was eight, 10 years old, I'd go, yeah. I had liberties, yeah, I just, we, yeah.

Facilitator 2: But also, work but also I'm intrigued, I haven't heard that recipe for breakfast before with other interesting… [the egg and sugar and marsala].

[60:44]

Sam Marasco: Oh it was like a zabaglione, yeah, that was it. It was just a beaten egg with… a half a teaspoon of sugar and just with a drop of marsala and it'd be just to, like this. Because as kids our dad used to give us shandies, so from when we were young, so you could appreciate the wine. When you get older you're immune to being drunk, so if you're brought on it early.

My nephews and that, they'd dip their little dummy in it right from when they're young, so just to get the taste, it was a thing.

Facilitator 2: So at school if you took your lunch, we hear all the stories of people, the children swapping their lunches with other children at school?

Sam Marasco: Yeah, we just had piece of bread, we just had a piece of bread and no butter. It was when the times, during winter when we used to make our own sausages, so you'd just cut the sausages and there'd be a sandwich or then it was Kraft cheese, cheddar, in those slices like that, a bit of tomato. But nothing real exciting but it still, yeah. Other kids used to bring half a bread and a big chunk of [kabana] the Greeks, the Greeks brought a chunk of kabana and they'd have half an onion or something like that. But we just, it was just, we were just regular sandwiches yeah, to us.

It wasn't, I mean we had spaghetti two or three times a meal as kids because my mum was a good cook and when she went back to Italy everyone just freaked out how good a cook she was. Because she'd learnt at her time when she worked in the kitchen, she picked it up. In the kitchen they use a lot of boosters and such but she used to make her own, she used to make her own. Roll her own bread, the dough, the tagliatelle, and it was big like this.

[63:10]

I've still got her old wooden, the wooden handle and she'd flip it over like that and then she'd cut it like that. She had a broomstick and then she'd put the strands of the tagliatelle…[to dry] …between two chairs, between two chairs to dry. Then we'd go to church, we'd go to St Joseph's because that was our parish. We didn't belong to All Saints, our parish was St Joseph's in Collingwood which has now burnt down.

Denis Hart, I saw him one day in the Italian Republic Church in June a couple of years ago, a feast with the Italian Republic, 2 June. I said, when are we getting our church back? I was pretty vigorous to him. He goes yeah. I says, I remember seeing you there, because George Pell, George Pell was there at the opening of St Joseph's after the restoration because the Parish put money in to restore it, and then it burnt down. It's just the shell.

Facilitator 1: Well yeah, and they're not allowed to take it down, are they?

Sam Marasco: It's a shell. Then they had services in the presbytery. There were services in the little presbytery, which is a shame. But we used to go there. We, because we didn't go to, we didn't have outlets for religious instruction we used to have these ladies, oh I think they were nuns or they were lay preachers, they used to come and pick us up and take us down to St Joseph's Thursday night for religious instruction.

Facilitator 1: Oh, because you didn't have it at school.

Sam Marasco: Yeah we didn't have it at school, yeah, we didn't have it at school. Then because, and we'd go there because we knew at the end of the year they'd have a Christmas party which was in this little street where St Vincent's is. It was the Emergency just behind there and I was in St Vincent's last week, I had an operation. I was on the ninth floor and I looked back, my heart gleamed, that was when I was a kid [65:36] and we used to get our Christmas presents there. We'd just look forward to it.

When my mum was in hospital, my brother, he brought out that story and he said, we want to thank all the pastoral staff and everyone at St Vincent's for helping us because it means so much to us. Because we remember as kids across the road, it's still Fitzroy, see? All these little things, they knit in, these memories. Yeah, you go up the top of Brunswick Street and Mary MacKillop's first house and there's a plaque, there's a plaque in front of the Richmond Flats in one of those street. … Yeah, there's a plaque, there's a plaque. I used to go to U3A in Belgium Avenue and there's a plaque that Mary MacKillop lived here.

Right, and so I knitted it into a story and it said:

Highett Street in Richmond I stepped over a brass plaque in the footpath. It stated that Mary MacKillop lived here on two occasions during the 1850s, what a revelation. It highlighted how many significant landmarks, occurrences, people and events both social and political and cultural can be found within the confines of the City of Yarra. Last October celebrations for Mary MacKillop's elevation to sainthood started with a walk from her former house in Brunswick Street to the Exhibition building, culminating in a direct transmission of her ordination attended by a large cross-section of Melbourne society, be it religious and general.

Alfred Deakin, Australia's second prime minister, lived towards the top of George Street, Fitzroy. In fact the Harvey brothers, noted sportsman Neil Harvey played test cricket for Australia, attended George Street State School. Brunswick Street

became a culinary and entertainment hub for the '80s onwards. On the local music scene the Collingwood, the hotel it was The Tote and other cultural icons [67:57] the Fitzroy Baths, the famous Aqua Profonda sign from Brunswick Street, featured in the film *Monkey Grip*.

In the local area in Fitzroy *Offspring*, a local television drama series, is filmed in prominent locations and football is a major theme in Fitzroy. Cultural diversity can be seen in various nationalities who inhabit the Fitzroy Flats, Atherton Gardens. There is a fusion throughout the City of Fitzroy. A walking tour of Fitzroy covers landmarks such as Pastor Sir Dough Nicholls' first church in Gore Street, a short distance from the large premises that the Matteo Bros - it's in that book under there.

The Matteo Bros, that's there. That was in Gore Street, on the corner of, that's the corner of Gore and George Street. So there's a little, this little, there see, the Little Gore Street there, that's just up from there, there. That's our house, 324, so this is a walk…

They, the Matteo brothers, they were Italian immigrants, they made religious statues seen in Catholic churches.

Facilitator 1: Are they the ones who had the place in Gore Street?

Sam Marasco: Yeah.

The MacRobertson's Chocolate Factory can be found in this area as it has since been converted into luxury apartments. Fitzroy and Collingwood was a booming area in the 1950s and '60s for the shoe trade providing employment for many. Other focal points, you've got the Fitzroy Gardens, Captain Cook's Cottage, Nicholson Street, the Exhibition Gardens and the local area around.

Facilitator 1: So what was, you wrote, you said you wrote that for something?

Sam Marasco: I wrote this, yeah I wrote this for a, it was like a competition. Then I submitted it to our local writing group and the guy who won it was a immigrant refugee from Richmond who was talking about [70:31] Victoria Street. He was a boat racer, because [yacky for a stacky] he was on the selection committee. I should've told them, but I don't know, I think it was - they only read it at the last minute. …If I had have typed it up properly like his, but [there you are].

Facilitator 1: Yeah no, that's really good.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so that was my vision and I know it incorporates a lot of Yarra too. The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign things, but like we're talking about Fitzroy but all these things relate.

Facilitator 2: [Unclear] - I know I interrupted before - did you work in Fitzroy, or what…

Sam Marasco: I worked in Fitzroy. I worked just across the road from Johnson Street and that used to be called Sonata Furnishings, there was a whole-, he was a wholesaler of sleeping bags, fabrics, quilts, soft furnishings, carpets and he was under the company called Sonata but it was [Marchon and Miller] and that was in the building, it was called the Lyric Theatre. They want to build flats and it's a heritage site, it's a heritage site. It was a picture theatre, later became a boxing stadium. A boxing stadium where there was also another one on St David Street, St David Street where this, [Vigonas] is on one side, on this side, they're now apartments.

I think they're called Max Apartments but the old [Gloweave], the old Gloweave shirt factory used to be there. I worked part time, my aunties all worked at Gloweave because in those days all the ladies worked in the knitting industry, machinist. My mum was a machinist and they worked because that was the work for the migrants. If you got a good job you worked at Gloweave. That was the really good jobs at Gloweave and you had to line up to get a job there. Otherwise you just worked for - it was the rag trade, it was hard.

[72:50]

It was hard, because they used to be driven, they're driven by the bosses and that's why a lot of the mums they were pretty proficient in sort of mending like…

Facilitator 1: Yeah, long hours, low pay.

Sam Marasco: That's it. I worked as a storeman during the '70s for a while and then I went to other jobs, but I have worked a lot around Fitzroy. So during the working life I've seen a lot and at that time we were working there, and then the ACF, Australian Conservation Foundation, shared half of the building on Gore Street.

They came and I think it was Patricia Caswell, she was, Tricia Caswell, she became a sort of Fitzroy Mayor, Fitzroy Councillor and then I think she moved. She was big in the Trade Union Movement and at the opening Bob Hawke came, the Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The security came and they opened the doors to little Bob. I was amazed at his size, he was short. Because my brother, my brother's ex-wife

she used to do volunteer work at the Brotherhood of St Lawrence and his wife, Hazel, she used to do volunteer work there. …Yeah. The Brotherhood, yeah.

Facilitator 1: Oh, I didn't know that, no.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, his wife Hazel used to do, yeah, the Brotherhood, in Brunswick Street up there, she used to do, yeah. Because, and you used to have this, an old painter and docker, he used to drive Bob Hawke and he had a sort of, I think it was a 1968, it was a tannish coloured station wagon, Ford station wagon and I think his name was [Brian Chadder, Brian Chadder], I think it was. Because Bob was in the ACT, ACTU then and under, I think he took over from Albert Monk, he took over from Albert Monk and one of his mentors was Sir Peter Abeles, Sir Peter Abeles, the TNT magnate.

[75:27]

He took him under his wing and he showed him how to dress properly and presentation. He was a mentor of Bob Hawkes, right… and to see Bob Hawke then, you remember him from there, and then later on he becomes the Prime Minister and then to see him there again in Fitzroy, like that. So it just, it was a timespan of about 10, one dozen years, but just to see the difference.

Facilitator 1: The change from the tan Ford station wagon.

Sam Marasco: The change, yeah, to the security guards in the big limousine, right, open the door and it's all hush, rush, rush, rush. Then Peter Garrett become, he became president of the Australian Conservation Foundation. I think he was president, no, he was still in Midnight Oil, but I think he became president, I'm, I…

Facilitator 1: He was still, yeah, he became heavily involved while he was still in Midnight Oil, yeah.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, so that's memories of where we were there, that specific building. There was the MacRobertson's building. Now, MacRobertson's, they had a lot, they had a lot of buildings all over the place.

Facilitator 1: Oh White City, is that what the…

Sam Marasco: Yeah, there was the one opposite the Marcus Law, that whole complex down there and then they used to have their own printers. They used to have their own printing for the thing… For the labels and such, it was just, they were big. Because

in between MacRobertson's and there was sort of the shoe factory, [Gee & Raymond] and just, and that was just - to get up in the morning and it was just workers, it was just workers.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, so a lot of people would just work locally.

Sam Marasco: Work, yeah. [77:19]

They'd come from all other suburbs. They'd come from all other suburbs because the boot and shoe trade was big, it was only the '70s when after Gough Whitlam they cut the tariffs, it put a dint in the whole industry, yeah. The boot and shoe trade industry. Then they had to go offshore, they went overseas and produced and there were just an influx of footwear from overseas which just killed it. The textile industry flattened out. So to see that, and it was really heavy manufacturing. There were tanneries around, still, in those days. There were tanneries.

I remember there was in, just behind Moor Street there's a lane that used to be Larcher's Dairy, used to be Larcher's Dairy and [May and Picky] here on the corner of, I think that little street that goes, the one after the Standard? There's a little street that goes, a little nib that goes out to Bell Street. I forget the name, May and Picky's on the corner. May and Picky were, they made those mannequin dolls, they were Italian. They were an Italian company, they made the mannequin dolls around, just like the Matteo Bros did the figurines for the churches.

Tucked in behind there, that street, used to be Larcher's Dairy and when they had the opening of *Hair* they had the after party in the disused dairy.

Right, we were 16, 17. There was Marcia Hines there because she was in the cast and that, all the cast of I think it was *Hair* or *Jesus Christ Supe-*, one of them

Yeah, *Hair*, it was…

[79:17]

Facilitator 2: It was *Hair* because, the Larcher's Dairy I went to about a week ago when it was, the last history walk.

Sam Marasco: Did they mention it?

Facilitator 2: Oh yeah and they mentioned *Hair* and that there'd been a party there.

Sam Marasco: There you go see, we were there, see, we were there. We were there because we, all our mates, we had mates in Moor Street, yeah. We were just on the perimeters and [unclear], have a drink like this and it was just, just these, these, just happenings that - there was no, there's not today. Everyone's got text this and there's an occasion, but just word of mouth what's doing around, just spontaneous sort of things that happen. I think Harry M Miller, I think it was Harry M Miller put it on. Was it Harry M Miller?

Facilitator 1: Harry M Miller, I'm pretty sure it was. I know, I saw it when I was 17.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, and what's his name. Then they built the Universal Stu-, the, in Victoria Street. It was the Universal there, wasn't it? That whole building in Victoria…

Yeah, the Universal because and they had picture theatres there. That was sort of, that was the theatrical side of things and things happening all over in local pubs. Then the local pubs and they started and it was the sort of, the Punters Club. … The Evil Inn, right.

Facilitator 2: What is it now if it's not the Punters Club?

[80:58]

Sam Marasco: Bimbo Deluxe. …Bimbo Deluxe.

Facilitator 1: …I refuse to set foot in there since it's no longer the Punters Club.

Sam Marasco: Yeah, we just, and they were rough and ready places where you can enjoy yourself and now they've for fancy pizzas for $15 a set or whatever it is. It just changed its lustre because the demands of the times to be, just to be out there. But now everything's so orderly and done up to the hilt.

Facilitator 2: Thinking of your story, it's, there's so much, when you think what a small suburb Fitzroy is…

Sam Marasco: Oh, yeah.

Facilitator 2: …you really didn't, didn't really have to leave hardly because you lived and worked…

Sam Marasco: Yeah, no well that's it because all these things that come and you've seen them, you've seen them on your doorstep. What happened is being retentive you can

capture the essence of these things, that's why. Just, I mean that's, I reckon it's a good 4000 words there.

Facilitator 1: Oh, easy. So, do you reckon we should give it a rest?

Sam Marasco: Give it a rest.

Facilitator 1: Thank you so much for that.

Facilitator 2: That was so interesting

[82:15]