

**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

**Interviewee:** Mr Harold F. Ball

**Tape Numbers:** 38 & 39

**Date:** 23 January 1997

**Number of Tapes:** 2

**Restrictions on Use:** Nil

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names</b>
<b>Tape MAH 38 Side A</b>		
<b>0.00.00-0.00.20</b>	Tape Identification	
<b>0.00.20-0.03.22</b>	<p>Born 1930 in Wagga. Parents lived on a property at Kyamba. When 6 years old the family moved to another property at The Rock.</p> <p>Has 1 brother and five sisters.</p> <p>Describes the property and notes that his experience of the difficulties of farming convinced him not to go into farming.</p> <p>Describes memorable events on the property - dust storms, grasshopper plagues, drought. Family farmed these properties from the 1930's to the 1960's.</p>	<p><b>Born 1930, Wagga Wagga, NSW.</b></p> <p><b>Lived on a Property near The Rock, NSW</b></p> <p><b>Memories of dust storms, grasshopper plagues and drought</b></p>
<b>0.03.22-0.6.20</b>	<p>Speaks of the impact of the war on farming life. Was 9 years when the war started. Interest in the air battles. Recalls the training base for pilots at Uranquinty - some used to crash - a playground trade in perspex from the plane windows was established at his school.</p> <p>Notes that he did not feel the shortages of food and petrol. Recalls his mother's activities knitting and cooking for red cross parcels.</p>	<p><b>Impact of the war on farming life</b></p> <p><b>Training base for pilots at Uranquinty School yard trade in perspex</b></p> <p><b>Mother's activities for Red Cross parcels</b></p>

**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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0.06.20- 0.09.50	<p>Comments on other childhood pastimes. And recalls his primary schooling experience at The Rock Central School. Notes his favourite subjects being Botany, Drawing and English. Was Dux of the Primary School and notes that he was also Dux at the Intermediate level of schooling.</p>	<p><b>Primary Schooling at The Rock Central School</b></p> <p><b>Dux of School both in 6th class and Intermediate level</b></p>	
0.09.50-0.13.00	<p>Attended high school in Wagga at Wagga High School. Boarded with first with an aunt in Wagga and later at Tulloch Hostel. Returned home to help on the farm on weekends. Bicycled to and from Wagga.</p> <p>Describes the experience of boarding away from home.</p> <p>At Wagga High School he studied General Maths, Sciences and other subjects. Was Dux of his class.</p>	<p><b>Secondary schooling at Wagga Wagga high School</b></p> <p><b>Boarding away from home</b></p> <p><b>Dux of Wagga Wagga High School at the Leaving Certificate level</b></p>	
0.13.00-0.18.17	<p>Notes that he did not consider Engineering as a career during high school. He won a university scholarship but did not take it up and instead took a job with Department of Main Roads as Junior Draftsman. Commenced study for the Local Government Engineering Certificate by correspondence. Course was run by the British Institute of Engineering Technology.</p> <p>Describes his experience studying by correspondence - difficult because of his battle with maths. The correspondence course took him 7 years to complete. Notes that for much of this time he did not have colleagues who shared the study experience, made it difficult.</p>	<p><b>Junior Draftsman with Department of Main Roads</b></p> <p><b>Studied for Local Government Engineering Certificate through the British Institute of Engineering Technology</b></p>	
0.18.17-0.21.06	Describes the work he was involved in as		



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Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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		a Junior Draughtsman with the Dept. Main Roads 1947-1949. Firstly training in printing. Supervised by the Senior Draughtsmen. Engineers were the "top of the heap". Drafted roads for mountainous areas. Describes what was involved. Describes site visits.	
<b>0.21.10-0.28.00</b>		<p>1949, Mr Ball took a position as Engineering Assistant with the Warren Shire Council. Took this position because of advancement and increased salary. Notes stomach upsets because of Bore water they used in Warren. Describes the boundaries of the Warren Shire and the nature of the country - lots of driving. Speaks of the resignation of Mr Hicks, Shire Engineer 10 days after Mr Ball arrived. Mr Ball and the Shire President carried out the job of Shire Engineer - describes the work. Notes that supervising the workers was interesting. Scope of works included making and designing roads, repairing roads, making temporary bridges and repairs to bridges, building levee banks - 1950 floods. Notes that every few weeks the river would peak anew.</p>	<p><b>1949, Engineering Assistant, Warren Shire Council</b></p> <p><b>Boundaries of the Warren Shire</b></p> <p><b>Scope of work he was involved in</b></p> <p><b>1950's floods</b></p>
<b>0.28.00-0.32.12</b>		<p>Describes building the levee banks. Coping with the floods made for sleepless nights and comments that they lived on soup and rum. During this time, roads and access (especially to stock) were the biggest concerns outside the town. Notes that the whole community was involved in the cattle with the floods. Notes that the floods were starting to abate in 1951 when he left. Comments that the floods</p>	<b>Coping with the floods</b>

**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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	highlighted the need for a better standard of road and bridge and levee bank were needed in the shire.	
<b>Tape MAH 38 Side B 0.00.00-0.00.10</b>	Tape Identification	
<b>0.00.10-0.02.12</b>	Designs for the improvements had begun by the time he left Warren Shire in 1951.	
<b>0.02.12-0.03.22</b>	Comments briefly on the impact of the floods on the community noting the community spirit engendered. Notes that a number of houses were lost in the 1949 floods	<b>Impact of the floods on the community</b>
<b>0.03.22-0.10.36</b>	Comments that in the quest for further career experience he applied for and won a position as Engineering Assistant with Cessnock Shire Council in 1951. Speaks of the coal mining community there and recalls the work he did surveying for a new road through some mountains South of Cessnock. Married (1952) while he was working in Cessnock. Describes their courtship over the country distances. Notes that one big impetus for accepting his next job with Boree Shire Council (1952), Cudal, was the offer of a house. Notes that he was still studying by correspondence and that after his marriage he finished it within two years, sitting for examination in all the subjects at once and passing well. Notes normally one would have to do field experience before receiving the Certificate, but his work experience was considered enough to receive the Certificate immediately.	<b>1951, Engineering Assistant with Cessnock Shire Council</b>  <b>1952, Married and took job as Assistant Engineer, Boree Shire Council</b>  <b>1954 passed exams for Local Government Engineer's Certificate</b>
<b>0.10.36-0.16.33</b>	In 1954 Mr Ball won a position as	



**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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		Municipal Engineer with Condobolin Municipality. Describes the change in role that came with being Municipal Engineer and the particular position in Condobolin. Notes support of the Shire Clerk, Basil Gaggin. Describes day to day activities as the Municipal Engineer, managing the efforts of others. Comments on performing management tasks being so young (he was 24 at this time) and describes his approach. Elucidates the differences in Engineering requirement and work between a small shire like Condobolin and a large shire such as Warren.	<b>1954, Municipal Engineer, Condobolin Municipal Council</b> <b>Shire Clerk, Basil Gaggin</b>
<b>0.16.33-0.20.19</b>		Discusses his return to the Warren Shire Council as Assistant and then Shire Engineer in 1955. Explains that he was at first only Assistant because an old engineer Montague Smith was filling the position on a part time basis. Took on position as Shire Engineer on Mr Smith's retirement. Describes the program of works he was involved in between 1955 and 1961. Causeways, flood works, roads etc. Describes the inclusion of the town of Warren in the Shire and notes the different sort of work that he was then involved in. Notes the support of the Town Clerk, Bob Deacon.	<b>1955, Assistant and then Shire Engineer, Warren Shire Council</b> <b>Shire Engineer, Montague Smith</b> <b>Program of works undertaken</b> <b>Town Clerk, Bob Deacon</b>
<b>0.20.19-0. 22 15</b>		Notes that the only reason he left Warren was a decision to go into the private sector. Felt that his career was limited in the area of Local Government. Comments on the political difficulties experienced in some Shire Councils and his reluctance to be involved in that. So decided to make the move into the private sector and moved to Sydney.	

**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

<b>Time</b>	<i>Harold Ball</i> <b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names</b>
<b>0.22.19-0.25.54</b>	Notes that the particular problems of Country area Shire Engineering are; lack of unity in the Council, distance - provision of all-weather roads over long distances.	<b>Particular problems of Country area Shire Engineering</b>
<b>0.25.54-0.29.56</b>	Discusses changes in Local government engineering over the period from 1950 to 1963. Over time the level of local government facilities increased.	
<b>Tape MAH 39 Side A</b>		
<b>0.00.00-0.00.20</b>	Tape identification	
<b>0.00.20-0.05.08</b>	In 1961 Mr Ball took up a position with Civil and Civic, part of the Lend Lease Group, in Sydney. Describes the move to Sydney and the impact on his family, traumatic for his wife and family. Describes how he found the change from Shire Engineering to working for Civil and Civic.	<b>1961, move to Sydney to take position as Project Engineer with Civil and Civic Impact of move on family</b>
<b>0.05.08-0.06.00</b>	Notes that early on in his career with Civil and Civic he became involved in retail projects. Firstly, Monaro Mall as a Project Engineer. Next Major one was Bankstown Square in 1966.	<b>Monaro Mall Bankstown Square</b>
<b>0.06.00-0.13.39</b>	Explains the Civil and Civic system of Project Management which was new to Australia then. One company took entire responsibility for a project from design to costing to construction. Client only deals with a Project Manager. Further describes the way Civil and Civic worked. Notes the advantage of this system is that there is one point of responsibility for the whole project, often it is a more economical deal for the client.	<b>Civil and Civic's system of Project Management</b>



**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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		Speaks of the economies of good design and a close partnership with the construction team.	
<b>0.13.39-0.15.59</b>		Second position with Civil and Civic was as NSW Design Manager. Describes what was entailed in this position, ultimately he was responsible for the output of the office. Work mostly in the city.	<b>NSW Design Manager, Civil and Civic</b>
<b>0.15.59-0.18.05</b>		Comments of the differences between working with Civil and Civic and his former work in the country. Generally quite similar. More pressure in the company situation, more diverse range of people to deal with. Notes that there was less autonomy at least in his first years.	<b>Differences in working for Civil and Civic and for Local Government</b>
<b>0.18.05-0.20.00</b>		After 8 years he transferred to a Lend Lease named company - a development company. Sought commercial opportunities to develop shopping centres shopping centres etc. Finding finance etc. Left behind management of design. Made the change for advancement.	<b>1969, Project Manager, Lend Lease Development</b>
<b>0.20.00- 0.23.50</b>		Speaks of the increase in development in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Notes that it came to a halt in 1974 due to the recession. Business sector in disarray. Discusses reasons for the boom - catch up from the war years, maybe even from the 1930's Depression. Speaks further about the sudden halt in development in 1974. Recalling that before he went overseas in that year he had agreements from major stores to be part of several new shopping centres. When he arrived back they had been forced to renege on these commitments.	<b>Development boom, late 1960's and early 1970's</b>  <b>Sudden halt to the boom in 1974</b>

**The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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		The lull in development continued until the late 1970's.	
<b>0.23.50-0.24.50</b>		In the early 1980's Mr Ball transferred again out of development to become Managing Director of Lend Lease Management. Describes this as a financial role. Expands.	<b>1983, Managing Director, Lend Lease Management</b>
<b>0.24.50-0.25.24</b>		Retired in 1987 after 27 years with Lend Lease.	<b>Retired 1987</b>
<b>0.25.24-0.29.03</b>		Backtrack to discuss Mr Ball's dealings as Project Manager, with Local Councils, State Government and Contractors. Describes this experience, and notes that in general he feels that Councils were not helpful in getting approvals etc. Explains. Notes that State Government Planning Authorities are very slow to move. Frustrating.	<b>Dealings with Local and State Government as Project Manager with Lend Lease Development</b>
<b>0.29.03-0.30.56</b>		Nominates some of the retail projects as his most significant projects. Speaks of the trend in developing large shopping centres in the 1960's and notes that from the late 1960's to the mid-70's Westfield did a lot of retail work. They got back into that area in the late 1970's.	<b>1960's trend for the development of large shopping centres</b>
<b>Tape MAH 39</b>			
<b>Side B</b>			
<b>0.00.00-0.00.10</b>		Tape Identification	
<b>0.00.10-0.05.37</b>		Speaks of his trips overseas noting that in 1974 he worked in New York on developing shopping centres - not successful then but now they getting lots of work in the US, managing centres. Describes what is involved setting up retail development projects from market	<b>Overseas experience during the 1970's</b>



The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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		research through design and construction to inviting specific retailers to operate within the centre to opening.	
0.05.37-0.07.30		Speaks the activities of Lend Lease Management where Lend Lease Management would own a shopping centre and subcontract out the management of those centres back to another Lend Lease company.	
0.07.30-0.08.50		Describes trends in Centre Management - has developed a community centre focus with the emphasis on including child-minding centres health clinics etc.	<b>Trends in Centre Management</b>
0.08.50-0.12.11		Speaks of his study with Julian Ashton's School of Fine Arts after retirement. Enrolled in order to further his skill and interest in painting.	<b>Diploma of Fine Art, Julian Ashton School of Fine Art.</b>
0.12.20		End Interview	