

APPENDIX A¹

Biographies

ADAMS, Arch and Peg:

Alfred Harold Adams (called Arch) was born in Melbourne on 25 July 1912.² His father died in November 1921, when he was nine, and he helped his mother with the family.³ They were Protestants and Arch went to Cambridge Street state school in Abbotsford, reaching 8th grade. He was dux. The Principal asked Arch to stay on to teach the prep students, and then organised a job for him at Carlton and United Brewery. He was 13 and began sweeping floors, working his way up to being the Manager of the Abbotsford Brewery.⁴ According to his daughters he was a Liberal voter.⁵ Margaret Adams, nee Byron, called Peg, was born in Carlton and was nearly three years older than Arch. Her father, James ‘Scobey’ Bryon worked on the trams as a mechanic and trained Stawell Gift foot race runners, suggesting a link with Purcell.⁶ A further link may have been through her older brother James Byron, who was involved with the ALP in Northcote.⁷ These connections may hold significance, as in the early 1950s Arch Adams actively campaigned against Leo Purcell, perhaps because Adams was a Liberal Party supporter. Peg’s family were staunchly Catholic. She was educated to the merit certificate at St Bridget’s North Fitzroy, subsequently becoming apprenticed as a tailor in Foy’s Department Store. She was a brilliant seamstress.⁸ She was also a classically trained pianist, attending Melbourne Technical College and the conservatorium.⁹ Peg was a member of St Patrick’s choir when ‘proddy’ (Protestant) Arch attended with a friend and was allowed to stay because of his good voice.¹⁰ They were married in 1934 and had five children; Peg, Pat, Peter, Pauline and Angela.¹¹ Arch enlisted in February 1942 and served within Australia. He was discharged in December 1945 from the 4th Australian Infantry Training Brigade, with the rank of private.¹²

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1. Transcripts of interviews undertaken by Ruth Ford (from La Trobe University) with some original Peter Lalor Co-operative residents, plus interviews with some migrants who later settled in Lalor, and those interviews organised by the City of Whittlesea Council, are available at the Mill Park library, City of Whittlesea. Transcripts of all author interviews will also be made available at Mill Park Library also.
 2. Alfred Harold Adams, individual war record, World War II (WWII) Nominal Roll, V196241. Other biographical information comes from the author’s interviews with three of their daughters, Pat Tuttle, Pauline O’Dea and Angela Adams, on 25 September 2006. Pat and Angela also provided written memoirs of their days at Lalor.
 3. Pat Tuttle, interview with the author, 25 September 2006, p. 22. All further references to interviews will cite the transcription of that interview.
 4. Pauline O’Day, interview with the author, 25 September 2006, p. 33.
 5. *ibid.*, p. 48.
 6. Angela Adams, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
 7. *ibid.*, p. 49.
 8. Pauline O’Day, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.
 9. *ibid.*, p. 36.
 10. *ibid.*, p. 31.
 11. *ibid.*, p. 31.
 12. Alfred Harold Adams, individual war record, *op. cit.*

Arch was an independent builder of a brick veneer home at 382 Station Street.¹³ His niece's husband, Neil Wright, helped him build the house. As daughter Pat explained,

But we had two builders...Gordon Skinner and Jim O'Connor [and] they would sort of fill in through the week with the windows, and all that sort of thing... just to push the house along. But most of it was done by Dad and Neil.¹⁴

Arch also enclosed the two vacant lots between himself and Bill Winterton where they both grew a very productive vegetable garden. By all accounts, Arch was a stern and overbearing husband and father. Pat described how her father arrived at their rented house in North Fitzroy one Friday night and announced, 'we're shifting tonight. We're going to Lalor. The brewery wagon's out the front'. Pat said, 'he shifted us—furniture and all—to Lalor'. Pat recalled that her mother was very upset, with five children, one only four months old. 'Mum was beside herself—because she left family and friends. She didn't really want to come did she?'¹⁵ Nonetheless, Peg settled in to Lalor and made a great contribution playing piano for many functions, mostly but not exclusively Catholic. She played the organ at St Peter's Church in Epping. She was also a worker for St Luke's credit union, which was started by her son-in-law Kevin O'Rourke and others in the Lalor community. He was married to their oldest daughter Peg. Peg (snr) voted for the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) after the split in the Australian Labor Party (ALP), but unlike many of the Lalor women she was not interested in politics. Pauline stated, 'Mum thought she had to vote DLP so she voted DLP. I don't think she could care less. I think she just thought "whatever was Catholic" was that.'¹⁶ Although initially denied access to the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmens' Imperial League of Australia (RSL), because he did not see active service, Arch was later asked by the RSL to support an application for a loan, given his standing in the community through his management role at the brewery.¹⁷ Arch's best-remembered contribution to Lalor was a good deal for the provision of kegs to most Lalor fund-raising events.¹⁸ As another symbol of his role, for his own reasons, he ensured that Leo Purcell never became a Whittlesea shire councillor.¹⁹ The Adams' house stayed in the family until 1995 when Arch and Peg moved into a nursing home. Peg died in 1995 and Arch died a year later. They were 88 and 85.²⁰

Pat Adams, later Tuttle, born 22 January 1937, is well remembered in Lalor for her cricket prowess. She played for the Collingwood Ladies Cricket Club. She commenced working for the PLC in February 1951 as a Junior Clerk/Typist and went to night school to study stenography. She worked there until the society went into liquidation in March 1954, later working for Campbell Motors in Preston. She left Lalor when she married in 1959, but returned to Cyprus Street in 1961 and stayed for another eight years. She was the only one of Arch and Peg's children to stay in Lalor.²¹

13. Whittlesea Shire Council (WSC) Rates Books, Thomastown Riding, PROV: VPRS 14620/P0001/66 & 79, Melbourne, 1948–1954.

14. Pat Tuttle, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 16. Gordon Skinner and Jim O'Connor (see biography below) were Peter Lalor Co-operative (PLC) builders.

15. *ibid.*, p. 22.

16. Pauline O'Day, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 48.

17. Angela Adams, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 4.

18. *ibid.*, p. 3.

19. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

20. Angela Adams, written memoir, 25 May 2006, p. 3.

21. Pat Tuttle, written memoir, 2006.

BONDARENKO: see HEWITT

BOYLE, Leo and Alma:

Leo Kevin Boyle was born in Hay, NSW, on 9 January 1924, son of Thomas and Mary Boyle.²² They moved to Melbourne with Leo in 1936, though he returned to NSW to finish his schooling to the merit certificate.²³ Alma Boyle (nee Sayer) was born in Footscray on 23 June 1921.²⁴ She had one sister and her father, Robert, died when she was only five and her mother Margaret brought up the two girls.²⁵ She 'took in refined business lady borders to help out.'²⁶ Prior to the war, Leo worked in a warehouse, then for an engineering firm called Huppet's in Carlton.²⁷ Leo enlisted in the CMF in July 1942 and the AIF in August 1943. He served 535 days in New Guinea, from January 1944 to July 1945. He was in the 2/11th Australian Mobile Laundry, classified as 'craftsman'.²⁸ At the time of writing, Leo was still afflicted by bouts of malaria.²⁹ Leo and Alma met at a dance in 1942. Alma worked during the war making *Boomerang* cigarette papers.³⁰

Leo attended the first meeting of the Peter Lalor Co-operative (PLC), paid his membership deposit and was later drawn in the March ballot.³¹ Leo said, 'Well actually we were all looking for housing at that time.'³² They married in 1947 and initially lived with Leo's parents, then rented the back part of a house in Oakleigh and built in Lalor from there. They originally had a block in Vasey Avenue, but when they heard that the footings were already laid on a block at 8 Newton Crescent, and the owner wanted to sell, they purchased it for £90.³³ Leo and his father built the house together. They borrowed from the Young Christian Workers' (YCW) Co-operative Housing Society. They moved into their home on 13 December 1951.³⁴ Arthur Presnell, who lived opposite, did the plaster work. Leo worked for the Shell company installing petrol pumps.³⁵ They had three children, two boys and a girl, born between 1948 and 1957.

Leo and Alma were Catholic and worked towards the creation of St Luke's Church. Leo also worked on building the 'kinderhall'.³⁶ Alma worked with Pat Donnelly (see below) for 37

22. Leo Kevin Boyle, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX145530.

23. Leo Boyle, interview with the author, 24 February 2006, p. 3.

24. The biographical information about Alma comes from her interview with the author, 24 February 2006.

25. *ibid.*, p. 2.

26. *ibid.*, p. 6.

27. Leo Boyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

28. Leo Kevin Boyle, individual war record, *op. cit.*

29. Leo Boyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

30. Alma Boyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

31. Peter Lalor Home Building Co-operative Society Ltd. (PLHBCSL) ballot lists, February to November 1947, held in the private papers of Doss Lawson, North Fitzroy, 2005.

32. Leo Boyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

33. WSC, Rates Books, *op. cit.*, nos. 59, 66 & 79. The land was originally pencilled in for N. F. Mogford, who had been successful in the March ballot. The co-operative had done the footings before they stopped building. Boyles bought the land on 27 July 1949. They took two and a half years to build.

34. WSC, Rates Books, *op. cit.*, 66 & 79.

35. Leo Boyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

36. *ibid.*, p.17. Leo said everybody worked on it.

years delivering meals on wheels.³⁷ Leo became involved with the DLP when a branch was established in Lalor in 1958. Boyle, Lloyd Hertzog and Jack Donnelly, all Catholics, were all members of the RSL together, though Hertzog and Donnelly stayed with the ALP; however their friendship continued after the split.³⁸ Marla Kyle also commented that Catholic Peter Kyle stayed with the ALP and he and Leo worked together afterwards. They just agreed not to talk politics.³⁹ It would appear that a closely-knit community, wartime camaraderie and common sense could prevail in otherwise fraught political circumstances.

BRIDGES, Walter and Sophia:

Walter and Sophia Bridges were settled in their home on the day of the opening. The PLC anticipated the 'project home' phenomenon of the 1960s as their house was opened to the public for inspection.⁴⁰ Their home was at 392 Station Street, on the corner of Gratwick Street. Larger than the average Lalor plan, with six rooms, their home nonetheless met the post-war housing limit of 12.5 squares. This brick veneer home cost them £1640 and their large corner block was to be used to good effect as they created a beautiful garden and held many functions there, fundraising for the Presbyterian Church.⁴¹ No record has been found to place either Wally or Sophie in the armed forces during the war. Wally's occupation was listed as a refrigeration engineer and perhaps he was working in an essential wartime industry and was prohibited from enlisting.⁴² Bridges strongly supported the co-operative venture and he played a constructive and conciliatory role on the Committee of Management from August 1947.⁴³ On several occasions he tried to persuade the committee to rely more on voluntary labour and the co-operative spirit of the membership to address their financial concerns. He offered to work for nothing for one and a half days each weekend after they had moved into their PLC built home.⁴⁴ Of the first five families, they and the Hunts became long term residents of Lalor, with Bridges' son Wally marrying another Lalor resident, Yvonne O'Connor (see below), some years later.⁴⁵ Michael Fielding recalled that Wally (Jnr) was a very tall, gangling young man, who had trouble fitting in to the sport-driven ethos of the young men of Lalor. Fielding laughingly reported, however, that Wally later became 'probably the first self-made millionaire' from Lalor. He worked in electronics.⁴⁶

BURGESS FAMILY:

The five Burgess children: Harry, Dave, Doug, Margaret and Lance lived in Carwarp near Mildura. Dave and Doug were the two who, as adults, had most impact on Lalor, though Lance lived there as well. David Ninian Charles Burgess (called Dave) was born on 31 December

37. Brian Donnelly (son), written memoir sent to the author by email, 15 November 2006, p. 2.

38. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p. 31; Jack Donnelly, interview with the author, 13 December 2005, p. 18.

39. Marla Kyle, interview with the author, interview with the author, 19 October 2006, p. 21.

40. Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 77; Marla Kyle, discussion group, 13 October 2005, p. 12. Greig discusses the 'unique nature' of the 'display home', even in the early 1960s. See Alastair Greig, *The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of: Housing Provision in Australia, 1945–1960*, Melbourne, 1995, p. 191.

41. WSC, 'Rates Book', op. cit., no. 59; *Whittlesea Post*, 10 May 1956, p. 8.

42. WSC, 'Rates Books', op. cit., nos. 59 & 66.

43. Wally Bridges was still on the Committee of Management when my records of meetings cease in mid 1949.

44. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 1946–1949 (held in the private collection of Neil Harvey), 2 July 1948.

45. Telephone discussion with Yvonne O'Connor, 14 February, 2007.

46. Michael Fielding, interview with the author, 23 July 2007, p. 17.

1924.⁴⁷ Harry was several years older. Their father, American born Henry Albert Burgess, called Albert, deserted the family when Dave was born, though returned periodically to father more children and to mete out a thrashing to Dave. Douglas Percival Burgess (Doug) was born on 16 June 1926. Margaret and Lance were probably born in 1934 and 1937 respectively.⁴⁸

‘The Burgess boys’ as they were known in Lalor, had an incredibly difficult childhood. After Lance was born their mother was involved in a car accident causing the death of a child, and she became institutionalised with a mental illness. The children were separated: the three oldest went to the Tally-Ho Boys Home in Burwood, and the two youngest went to an orphanage. Lance never knew his mother or father. At Burwood, the older boys came under the watchful care of its superintendent, Edgar Derrick. According to Dave’s wife Violet, he had a profound influence on the boys’ values and sense of propriety.⁴⁹ She recalled, ‘he taught those boys some absolutely wonderful things that made them into men’.⁵⁰ Later they stayed at Lincoln House in West Melbourne where they met Eric Gunton (see his biography below). Young Violet Livesay, oldest of ten children of a wharf labourer, used to walk past Lincoln House on her way to teach Sunday School at the Salvation Army.⁵¹ That is how she met Dave. They were married in 1943 and they ‘rescued’ Dave’s little brother, Lance, from the orphanage at the end of the war in 1945. He was only five or six years old and always called Violet his mother.⁵²

Harry and Dave were both in the militia, with Harry spending time in the Northern Territory. Dave served in the CMF throughout most of 1942, joining the AIF in November that year working on communication signals, and once he turned 21, he spent 250 days in Morotai in 1945 and early 1946. When Dave was discharged from the Army he trained as a plasterer with Hannah’s in North Melbourne through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. He had wanted to train as a carpenter, but the waiting time was prohibitive. He was part of Lalor’s first building syndicate (the O’Connor syndicate) but the family had to leave their rented accommodation in Carlton in a hurry in early 1949, so the syndicate erected a ‘temporary’ on their block at 374 Station Street and the family lived there for about three years until the house was gradually finished.⁵³ In this tiny dwelling were Dave, Violet and their two young boys (born 1945 and 1947) and Dave’s brother, Lance.⁵⁴ At various times Violet also tried to ‘rescue’ Dave’s mother and his sister, but found them both too much to manage.⁵⁵ Dave and Violet later had two more boys.

Starting with nothing Dave began his plasterworks business in 1954 when he rented some old chook sheds on the corner of Epping and Settlement Roads in Thomastown.⁵⁶ The business, known as Burgess Wood and Co–Fibrous Plasterers of Thomastown, expanded, employing as

47. David Ninian Charles Burgess, individual war record, NAA, series, B883, VX116467.

48. I am dependent on the oral testimony of Violet and Mavis Burgess (Dave and Doug’s wives) for this early family history. See Violet Burgess (called Chub) interview with the author, 20 April 2007; Mavis Burgess, interview with the author, 30 May & 28 October 2006.

49. Shurlee Swain, ‘Derrick, Edgar Marsh (1905–1976)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 619–20. Swain stated, ‘In his twenty-seven years at Tally Ho, Derrick earned a reputation as an innovator. He believed that a bad boy was made, not born.’

50. Violet (Chub) Burgess, interview with the author, 20 April 2007, p. 8.

51. *ibid.* pp. 12–14.

52. *ibid.*, p. 4.

53. *ibid.*, p. 18.

54. *ibid.* pp. 10 & 17. Lance was only about eight years older than Dave and Violet’s oldest child, Teddy.

55. *ibid.* pp. 5, 7, & 17.

56. WSC, Minutes of Meetings, 14 April 1954, correspondence, item no. 15, p. 330. Burgess, Wood and Co Pty Ltd sought permission to construct a private crossing in Epping Road where their factory was under construction.

many as 170 people, including many Lalor residents and young men on apprenticeships.⁵⁷ 'If any boy wanted a job,' Violet recalled, 'come down'.⁵⁸ Describing her husband's business she said:

Oh it was one of the biggest in Victoria at the time... you could go to Melbourne and there wasn't a big high-rise—the State Bank Building—there was a Burgess sign up. And he did all Leo Watt's work. Well Leo Watts was one of the biggest contractors...But he [Dave] built it up from working in this chook shed.⁵⁹

Later Dave built the only factory in Lalor (the Stockade had been demolished): a large steel framed building on Epping Road near Arndell Street.⁶⁰ He won the contract for the plastering work on the 1956 Olympic Games site, and boasted that the 'work was completed in less than 12 months' and it was completed ahead of schedule.⁶¹ However, the cyclical nature of the building industry caught Dave Burgess with too many creditors, a union black ban, and by the late 1960s Dave went temporarily into receivership, only to revive the business again at a factory in Mahoney's Road in Thomastown.⁶² Dave was not a political activist like his brother Doug (see below), but was involved with fund raising for the kindergarten, was active in the Lalor Football Club and was a member of the Thomastown, Lalor and Keon Park Men's Club (TELK).⁶³

Doug Burgess married Mavis Thelma Berry, born 25 November 1929, from Thornbury. Her father was a railway worker.⁶⁴ They had four children between 1950 and 1961. Doug got his first job in 1941 when THC Secretary and union powerbroker, J.V. Stout, selected the fourteen year old from a long line of hopefuls, for a job as office boy at the Trades Hall.⁶⁵ Doug worked his way up to Research Officer. He was instrumental in the creation of the Young Labor Association in 1948 and was Assistant Secretary.⁶⁶ As part of Young Labor Week in that year, Doug acted in a radio play written by author, Niall Brennan. It aired on Purcell's segment on the *Labor Hour*, on radio station 3KZ.⁶⁷ The play echoed the co-operative ethos of the Peter Lalor scheme: it called on the youth of Victoria to take action to create a fairer society, in the knowledge that change could be effected through solidarity.⁶⁸

57. Jim McVicar, Jack Follett, Ron Moore, Joe Adams, Jack Donnelly, Vic Michael, Jack Kernaghan all worked there.

58. Violet Burgess, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 20.

59. *ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

60. *ibid.*, p. 20.

61. *ibid.*, p. 28. See also, *The Age*, 'Special Olympic Reports', undated press clipping (1956) held in the private collection of Violet Burgess.

62. Violet Burgess, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 25. In the 1961 recession the business also suffered from the credit squeeze. Burgess was forced to retrench more than one hundred workers, and he said, 'instead of his firm doing an average of 30 housing jobs a week they were now lucky to get two.' The demand was still there, but 'finance facilities' were unavailable. See *Whittlesea Post*, 18 May 1961, p. 1.

63. *Whittlesea Post*, 30 June 1954, p. 5.

64. Mavis Burgess, interview with the author, 20 May 2006, pp. 3–4.

65. *ibid.*, p. 6.

66. Victorian Labor Party, Central Executive, 'Minutes', DLP records, SLV MSF 10389, Melbourne, October 1948, folios 160–161.

67. Son of Frank Brennan, MHR, Niall reportedly spent hours at the Purcell's home, where according to Leonie Purcell, Leo and Niall devised radio plays. See Leonie Purcell, interview with the author, 17 November 2006, pp. 26–27; Desmond Purcell, interview with the author, 22 January 2007, p. 22.

68. Niall Brennan, *Youth Looks Ahead: Dramatised Talk for 3.K.Z. Labor Hour*, 13 November 1948, ALP Victorian Branch, NLA, Manuscripts, no. 4846, Box 12.

From 1949 he attended ALP State Conferences as a representative of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, gaining a seat on the Central Executive when John Cain died in 1957.⁶⁹ In 1961 he was a 'sacrificial lamb' as the ALP candidate for the unwinnable Victorian state seat of Mildura.⁷⁰ In 1969 he reached the pinnacle of his trade union career and was elected President of the Melbourne Trades Hall Council (THC).⁷¹

After a short stint as an organiser for the Australian Workers' Union, by the late 1960s Doug was an Employee Advocate on the Workers' Compensation Board where he stayed for almost twenty years.⁷² Prime Minister Bob Hawke sent Doug a telegram on his sixtieth birthday, congratulating him on 'a long illustrious service to the Labor Movement over many years'.⁷³

In 1952 Doug was a driving force behind the formation of the Young Labor Association Co-operative Housing Society, modelled on the Peter Lalor Co-operatives.⁷⁴ Doug and Mavis bought their incomplete Peter Lalor home in September 1952 using a housing loan from the Federated Clerks Co-operative Housing Society. Doug spent all available hours finishing the home which they moved into in April 1953. By 1958 he was President of the Ratepayers Association of Thomastown and in the same year joined the executive of the Lalor Branch of the ALP, a political association that lasted until his death in 1998.⁷⁵

Both brothers were Masons, and particularly active in the community based activities associated with the Lalor Fidelity Club.

CASBOLT, Les and Hazel:

Leslie James Casbolt, called Les, was born in Korumburra on 18 June 1910, one of six children.⁷⁶ Les's father, Norman William Casbolt, was a policeman and a very strict parent.⁷⁷ When Les was about ten the family moved to Brunswick. At age 13 he started work as a messenger boy with the *Argus*, where he stayed until the war. He worked in general accounts, and then in the sports section, compiling racing statistics, a job that he did for 45 years until his retirement in July 1975, though he did change newspapers.⁷⁸ Les was responsible for 'the compilation of all the form guides that appear in The Herald, The Sun and The Sporting Glove'.⁷⁹ He married Hazel Amelia (maiden name unknown) on 30 September 1932 and they lived in Fairfield.⁸⁰ They had two children, Joan born 1933 and Norm born 1934. They were Church of England. Les enlisted in May 1941 and appears to have done clerical work in

69. Victorian ALP & THC records in Doug Burgess, papers, held in the private collection of Mavis Burgess.

70. Doug Burgess electioneering pamphlet, July 1961, Doug Burgess, papers, op. cit. See also Harry Jenkins, interview with the author, 25 October 2006, p. 3. Harry described Doug as the 'sacrificial lamb'. Burgess ran against the sitting Country Party member, Nathaniel Barclay, <<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/re-member/bioregfull.cfm?mid=883>>.

71. Doug Burgess papers, op. cit.

72. ibid. See also Judy Blackmore (nee Burgess), interview with the author, 28 October 2006, pp. 3–4.

73. Bob Hawke, telegram, 18 June 1986, Doug Burgess papers, op. cit.

74. *Labor Call*, 2 September 1949, p. 5.

75. *Whittlesea Post*, 4 April 1957, p. 1; ALP, Lalor Branch records, held in the electorate office of Harry Jenkins (Jnr, MHR, Bundoora). See also, Mavis Burgess, interview with the author, 30 May 2006, p. 23.

76. Leslie James Casbolt, individual war record, NAA, series 9301, 40602; Adele Casbolt, written memoir, 6 October 2007.

77. Les Casbolt, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, pp. 35 & 62.

78. Adele Casbolt, written memoir, op. cit.

79. *The Herald*, 3 July 1975, p. 37. I am indebted to Norm (Les's son) and Adele Casbolt for providing a large amount of material about Les and Hazel and about Lalor and the Helping Hand organisation, of which Adele was the Administrator for many years.

80. Leslie James Casbolt, individual war record, op. cit.

Victoria throughout the war, in Pt Cook, Laverton, and Air Force headquarters in Melbourne. He was made a sergeant in 1943 and to his chagrin, was not discharged until March 1946.⁸¹

Les heard about the PLC through the *Argus*, and he went to the first meeting.⁸² He was drawn in the March ballot and was allocated a block at 73 Vasey Avenue.⁸³ His house was mainly built by Peter Lalor, with the O'Connor brothers as the builders. They moved into their home in January 1950 using a War Service Homes's (WSH) loan.⁸⁴

Les's main contribution was to use his journalist skills to write letters to the council to lobby for services and amenities. He was Secretary of the Lalor Progress Association and in 1951 and 1952 was on the Committee of Management of the PLC.⁸⁵ He was also on the Lalor sub-Branch of the Epping Rural Fire Brigade, and was Purcell's campaign manager for the council election in 1951, when Leo ran as the endorsed Labor candidate.⁸⁶ He was a foundation member of the Lalor Branch of the ALP in 1952. Hazel worked at the Crestknit factory in Epping. Doss Lawson recalled that 'Les was a solid citizen in the place. He was reliable, Jack Blunt with a wonderful sense of humour. He was outgoing and did a lot in the community...I would say he was one of the very worthy citizens... and so was his wife'.⁸⁷ Les belonged to the Whittlesea Masonic Lodge.⁸⁸ He died aged 91 in 2002 and Hazel died on 14 January 2004.⁸⁹

Their son Norm and his wife Adele were part of the next generation to play a role in community building in Lalor. They were married in 1958, and lived in Edmondson Street, Lalor for 27 years in a house built by Neil Evans. Norm served on the Lalor School Council and Adele was active in the Pre-school and the Girl Guides in addition to her dedicated work for the Helping Hand over many years.⁹⁰

COOPER, Muriel and Arthur:

Muriel May Cooper, nee Baron, was born in Bendigo on 7 November 1923, moving to Preston at six months of age.⁹¹ She was the eldest child, followed by three boys.⁹² Arthur Ward Cooper was born Preston on 31 May 1921.⁹³ He was fourth of six children. They both belonged to the Salvation Army and met each other at Sunday School. Muriel went to school in East Preston, attaining the merit certificate. Arthur went to Tyler Street school, but Arthur's parents separated when he was twelve, which resulted in him and his two younger siblings

81. ibid.

82. Les Casbolt, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, pp. 35–37.

83. PLHBCSL, ballot list, op. cit.; WSC, Rates Book, op. cit., no. 66.

84. WSC, Rates Book, op. cit., no. 66; Les Casbolt, interview with Ruth Ford, op. cit., p. 37.

85. *Whittlesea Post*, 18 October 1950, p. 12, 5 September 1951, p. 8 & 20 February 1952, p. 8.

86. ibid., 24 January 1951, p. 1, 8 August 1951, p. 1.

87. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, pp. 32–33.

88. Les Casbolt, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 47.

89. Adele Casbolt, written memoir, op. cit.

90. ibid.

91. Muriel Cooper, interview with the author, 30 May 2006; pp. 3 & 20.

92. ibid., p. 3.

93. Arthur Ward Cooper, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX132160.

being placed in Salvation Army homes. Muriel recalled that he ‘was fourteen when they found him a job...in the Dandenongs...He stayed there for a year until he’d saved enough money to come back to Preston, and then he got himself into factory jobs. So he virtually looked after himself. That’s why he had no backing’.⁹⁴ Before the war, Arthur enrolled in the part-time militia (CMF) to earn extra money. He was then conscripted, as Muriel stated, ‘(crudely put, FIA—force into action)’.⁹⁵ His officially acknowledged service with the CMF commenced in April 1941, after his eighteenth birthday, and he was, what many in the AIF derogatorily called, a ‘Choco’ (chocolate soldier who melted in the heat) and served in New Guinea from March 1942 to November 1943, spending some time in military hospital with Dengue Fever and measles.⁹⁶ He worked with search lights in the 67th Mobile Search Light Battery RAA. He was transferred to the AIF on January 1943 and served there till November 1945.⁹⁷ He was granted leave in December 1943 to marry Muriel. They had two children, Ruth Evelyn, born 1945, and, Keith Edward, born 1948. They lived with Muriel’s parents in Preston for most of the time prior to their move to Lalor in cramped conditions as two of Muriel’s brothers were still at home as well. Arthur was drawn in the May 1947 ballot and gained ownership of his block of land in July 1949.⁹⁸ They employed a private builder and moved into their home over the Christmas break in January 1951.⁹⁹ They had a Peter Lalor home loan and Arthur worked on working bees with the other men on Saturdays. Arthur was employed by the Forestry Commission, first as a mechanic and then in stores. Between 1956 and 1960 the family left Lalor as Arthur’s work took them to Kingsville.¹⁰⁰

Muriel’s great contribution to the Lalor community was through the Sunday school which she ran for many years. In the collective memory of Lalor, ‘the great Salvation Army Lady’ is mentioned in most oral testimony. She initially took over the Sunday school and taught lessons on behalf of the Sunday School Union of Victoria, however, when that organisation disbanded, she affiliated the Lalor Sunday school with the Salvation Army. On average she taught seventy-five children, and boosted Army takings from the collections each week. She also taught parallel classes in Preston in the afternoon. Most of the young children in Lalor wanted to attend in those early years, including some Catholic children, and she involved the older Lalor girls as her teaching aids, becoming a mentor to many of them. She also organised excursions to many parts of Melbourne which drew in many from the community.¹⁰¹ Muriel’s other major contribution was as an instrumental player in the campaign for a primary school in Lalor and after its opening in 1954 it was her home that was used each week day, in the absence of a school canteen, by a group of mothers who prepared lunches before taking them to the school.¹⁰² When Muriel left in 1956 (returning in 1960 to take up where she left off) the *Whittlesea Post* reported on a send-off party that was held in her honour and stated that, ‘the School mother’s club and the salvation army got together. Thanks were extended to Mrs Cooper for the good work she had done for both the school and Sunday school’. The group was

94. Muriel Cooper, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 4.

95. *ibid.*, p. 4.

96. John Barrett, *We Were There, Australian Soldiers of WWII*, Ringwood, Victoria, 1987, p. 37.

97. Arthur Ward Cooper, individual war record, op. cit.

98. PLHBCSL, ballot lists, op. cit.; Arthur Ward Cooper, individual war record, op. cit.

99. Muriel Cooper, interview with the author, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

100. WSC, Rates Book, op. cit., no. 90.

101. Muriel Cooper, interview with the author, op. cit., pp. 8–11; Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, 8 December 2005, p. 2; Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, pp. 82–83.

102. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 18.

sorry at her leaving as they would 'miss her very much', because she was 'such a wonderful helper'.¹⁰³

The Lalor community's deep respect and affection for Muriel is all the more remarkable, because, apart from her Sunday school and school work, she and Arthur remained largely cut off from the closely knit Lalor community. As Muriel explained it:

We didn't smoke and we didn't drink and we didn't go to dances. Well quite frankly we had two small children and that was more important than—and we just didn't have the money to be going out either. So that apart from the folk that I met with the Sunday school, I didn't know a lot of people up here.¹⁰⁴

Their physical location, just outside the soldier settlement triangle, also played its part, but her life was also strongly focussed on the Salvation Army. She missed her mother, Preston and the shops when she first moved to Lalor, but as she explained, 'I'm the sort of person who doesn't have to have other people around me. I got used to the fact that I was on my own'.¹⁰⁵ She and Arthur did everything together, including the cooking. She went to a Salvation Army women's meeting in Preston every Tuesday, called Home League, and apart from being a busy mother, she had Sunday school lessons and activities to prepare. When they were in Kingsville, she taught Sunday School morning and afternoon. After the children reached school age, she gained a part-time job with the Salvation Army where she worked for 28½ years in the youth department preparing lessons which were posted to the various branches of the Army. She later transferred to volunteer work in public relations.

DIMOS, Mick and Steve:

Christened Vladimir Dimovski ('I call myself Macedonian'), Mick has a name that harkens back to former homeland territorial conflicts in the 1920s. Mick and his brother Steve (Christened Tilemahos) were born three years apart in 1933 and 1936 in a village they call Opsirina, but now changed to the Greek name of Ethniko. In Australia they changed their surnames to Dimos, though Mick still prefers the surname Dimov.¹⁰⁶ Born to very poor peasant farmers, their father Chris left immediately after Steve was born to join his father, cutting cane in Queensland for 15/- a week, another example of family reunion migration. 'Dad...had the marks here (gesturing to his shoulder) from carrying the seven [to] eight feet long [sugarcane]. Not like now with machinery.'¹⁰⁷ Thirteen years later, in September 1949, Mick joined his father, whom he hardly knew, and briefly met his grandfather who died the following year. The men were by then living in Richmond, Melbourne, because 'a lot of Macedoneans came then into Werribee and Shepparton and they all started keeping together'.¹⁰⁸ Fourteen year old Steve and his mother, Velika, who had not seen her husband since Steve was born, arrived in January 1951.

At last the family was reunited but they could not find accommodation to house them all. The hard work in Queensland had perhaps been worth it because shortly afterwards they were

103. *Whittlesea Post*, 2 August 1956, p. 7.

104. Muriel Cooper, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 17.

105. *ibid.*, p. 18.

106. Mick & Steve Dimos, interview with the author, 4 March 2009, pp. 2–3.

107. *ibid.* pp. 2–3.

108. Mick Dimos, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 6. Charles Price called these, 'gravitation groups': See John Lack & Jacqueline Templeton, *Bold Experiment: A Documentary History of Australian Immigration since 1945*, Melbourne, 1995, p. 68.

able to purchase a place in South Melbourne, in an unused fish and chip shop. Mick and his father worked as cleaners on the railways where they were impressed with the compassion and political integrity of Communist ARU leader, J.J. Brown.¹⁰⁹ 'He was really for the worker...Then the Democratic Labor Party, the DLP, oh we had a fight there with them bastards. Excuse my English.'¹¹⁰

After he married in 1956, Mick decided that he and his Macedonian wife, Stella, should leave the family home and make their own way. Their sole reason for buying in Lalor was the low cost of the land:

I was looking in the papers for land, to get an idea. And then land was dear, but this land here was cheap. And I said to myself, why pay so much money for living near the city, just to move further out a bit and save a bit of money, which I did. And instead of buying one block, I bought two blocks.¹¹¹

They found a builder and on Anzac day 1960 they moved in at number 147 Messmate Street. On making the decision to move, Stella, who was not pleased with the decision, had said to him 'what's wrong with you?'¹¹² Mick laughingly reported:

People were saying to me, 'You're bloody mad.' I said, 'Oh I might be mad,' but after a few years they said, 'We take back what we said. We are the mad ones not you.' And they started following me up here.¹¹³

His report of conditions in 1960 is almost identical to those of earlier Lalor pioneers. There was 'nothing', 'parrots ... there was really ... only farmers here'.¹¹⁴ With no roads, no sewerage, no drains, and constant rain in 1960, he believed the street was appropriately named 'because it is a mess'.¹¹⁵ Later Steve and his new wife moved to Thomastown. Mick and Steve described the influx of Italians and Macedonians (registered as Greeks). 'There are streets where nearly every house is Macedonian/Italian, Italian/Macedonian.'¹¹⁶

The brothers gained employment at Ericsson's factory in Broadmeadows making portable telephone exchanges. Mick drove a small Volkswagon sedan across to their workplace, west of Lalor, as the train lines only ran north-south. Ericsson's was a model employer and eventually several family members joined the workforce there:

And I tell you that factory was 'A plus' for the Australians and for everyone. The condition was tops. Kindergarten, counter-lunches...They were subsidizing the meals. Clean, providing uniforms ... showers, everything.¹¹⁷

Mick contrasts this factory with McIlrath's in Richmond where he had worked earlier, making taps and lead pipes:

109. Mick & Steve Dimos, interview with the author, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

110. Mick Dimos, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 16.

111. *ibid.*, p. 10.

112. *ibid.*

113. *ibid.*, p. 11.

114. *ibid.*

115. *ibid.*, p. 12.

116. *ibid.*, p. 11.

117. *ibid.*, p. 16.

Conditions in there, zero. ... Safety, none, union, none ... Anything you needed you had to bring from home... you were lucky if you could get hot water for a tea or a coffee.¹¹⁸

Not surprisingly, given his left-wing political values, Mick, and later Steve, found their community through the Lalor Branch of the ALP and they worked tirelessly as volunteers for more than forty years.¹¹⁹ Despite his strong feelings about his Macedonian heritage, Mick had thought deeply about political issues and for him workers' solidarity was more important than racial identity at the political level. He fought unsuccessfully against the formation of ethnically based ALP branches: Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Turkish, Maltese and Macedonian. He made this comment:

I don't go to the Greek Branch, I don't go to the Macedonian Branch, it is the Lalor Branch I go. We are here as one. Why divide ourselves? We must work together. If you go to meetings you understand. You ask questions and you listen to them and you learn something. That's how you learn the language.

At the time of writing Mick and Steve were still active in the Lalor ALP.

DONNELLY, Jack and Pat:

Jack Donnelly was born in Melbourne on 28 March 1923.¹²⁰ He was the son of a builder's labourer, John Lesley Donnelly and Myrtle Ivy (nee Edmunds), domestic worker. He went to school in Brunswick to the level of the merit certificate, and at age thirteen their neighbour, who had a shoe repair place in the back yard, took Jack in and taught him the trade.¹²¹ Jack was Church of England and one of four children. Patricia Donnelly, nee Wilson, called Pat, was born on 9 October 1926 in Shepparton.¹²² She was the daughter of Andrew Wilson (railway worker) and Winifred Linehan and of Catholic religion.¹²³ She had an older brother, Joseph Wilson.¹²⁴ Pat attained the merit certificate at St Ignatius Catholic School in Richmond and then got a half scholarship to study at the Convent opposite. 'I really didn't want to go on... I didn't want to get a scholarship (laughs). But anyway I used to just absolutely love arithmetic.'¹²⁵ She attained the sub-intermediate, or year nine equivalent.

At age 18 Jack was drafted into the CMF in January 1942. However, as he described it, he was not allowed to be sent overseas until he turned 21 and got his VX number, which for Jack was May 1944.¹²⁶ He was sent to Morotai and Horne Island. He suffered ill health, eventually being flown back at war's end to the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital with bad dermatitis on his feet. 'I'd take my boots off at night and they'd just be full of blood', he recalled.¹²⁷ Overall, he reflected, 'I never regretted one minute being in the Army. It was a marvellous experience.

118. ibid.

119. Mick showed me a photograph of a presentation in recognition of his forty years service to the ALP.

120. Jack Donnelly, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX148649.

121. Jack Donnelly, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, pp. 3 & 11.

122. Patricia Wilson, individual war record, series B884, VF517089.

123. Patricia Donnelly, interview with the author, 13 December 2005, p. 6.

124. Joseph John Wilson, individual war record, WWII nominal roll, VX119633. Joseph was born 2 December 1923.

125. Patricia Donnelly, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 11.

126. Jack Donnelly, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 2; Jack Donnelly, individual war record, op. cit. The process of enlistment, either voluntarily or through conscription is described in John Barrett, *We Were There*: op. cit., pp. 35–38.

127. Jack Donnelly, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 8.

I was lucky because I got out of it all right.’¹²⁸ Pat worked in the aircraft factory at Fishermen’s Bend when she left school, then on turning 18 she joined the Australian Army Medical Women’s Service in February 1945. She worked as a nursing aid in Broadmeadows Hospital. Jack was transferred there and this was where they met. She was discharged in September 1946.¹²⁹ They were married in May 1947.

They heard about the co-operative through Leo Purcell’s broadcasts on 3KZ. Jack went to the meeting where it was decided to call the venture after Peter Lalor. It interested Jack because his mother’s father was at the Eureka Stockade.¹³⁰ They took over their lot at 67 French Street from another man Skinner, who did not finish. They moved into their unfinished home in June 1949, because they were living in very cramped conditions in the city. Their home was in joint names. They had one son Brian when they moved to Lalor. They subsequently had five more children. The children were all born between 1948 and 1961.

Both Jack and Pat played leading roles in community development. Jack, a keen Australian Rules football supporter, was for twenty-eight years the boot repairer for the football club. They both supported the formation of St Luke’s Catholic school and church in Lalor, and Jack was one of the early Directors of the St Luke’s Credit Union.¹³¹ Their eldest son, Brian, wrote,

My mother devoted many years to catechist work, taking religious education classes at Lalor Primary School. She and Mrs Alma Boyle for 37 years were one of the Whittlesea Shire teams delivering meals as volunteers to the Meals-on-Wheels program.¹³²

Pat died in 2008, and on 29 August 2008 Jack wrote to me saying, ‘Pat and I shared a long and wonderful life, 61 years married last May. Most of that time we spent here at 67 French St. Lalor, 59 years last Queen’s Birthday Weekend.’¹³³

DUNTON: see KING

EASTHAM, Jeanne and Barney:

Hazel Jean Eastham, nee Webster, was born in 1902 and was married to Barney on 16 September 1933.¹³⁴ Percival Denton (Barney) Eastham was born on 29 August 1899, and had served as a telegraph messenger with the 23rd Reinforcement AIF at Broadmeadows during World War I, (WWI) but did not go overseas. Discharged at the armistice, he had served 161 days. He worked as a meteorological employee with the Department of Meteorology for five years in the early 1920s, later working as a postman. He served in World War II (WWII) doing meteorological work for the RAAF, mostly at Tocumwal NSW, gaining the rank of Warrant Officer. After the war Barney continued in meteorology until he retired in 1955.¹³⁵ He bought the house at Lalor using a WSH loan. Their religion was Church of England. Jeannie often

128. *ibid.*, p. 8.

129. Patricia Wilson, individual war record, *op. cit.*

130. Jack Donnelly, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

131. Brian Donnelly, written memoir, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

132. *ibid.*, p. 2.

133. Jack Donnelly, letter to the author, 29 August 2008.

134. Department of Justice, Victoria. *Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM)*, 1853–1985, available from <<http://online.justice.vic.gov.au/CA2574F700805DE7/page/Historical+Research?OpenDocument&1=60-Historical+Research~&2=~&3=~>>>.

135 I am indebted to John Waghorn from the Whittlesea Historical Society for this detail from the Commonwealth Government Gazette.

played the piano for the parties of the first residents and, as Doss Lawson recalled laughingly, 'Jeanne was the life of the party wherever she was. They used to come around on special occasions and she'd dress up with man's pants on and a big safety pin across the fly.'¹³⁶ Barney suffered considerable ill health and spent long periods in the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital throughout the 1950s. He died in 1958.¹³⁷ The house, registered in Barney's name, transferred into Jeanne's name after his death.¹³⁸ Jeanne later worked at the Crestknit factory in Epping with a number of other Lalor women.¹³⁹

FABRI, Fred:

Fred Fabri was born in Malta on 6 November 1939, just after the outbreak of WWII.¹⁴⁰ He was the son of a policeman and sixth of seven children. Fred was Catholic and studied at the Christian Brothers' school, attaining his leaving certificate at age sixteen. He gained employment as a galley boy for the Merchant Navy and did two trips to England and then worked on a salvage ship in the Suez Canal. He decided to immigrate to Australia, but the ship was full and instead he went to England where he did a variety of dockyard and factory based work. He arrived in Australia on an assisted passage in 1964, 'but after two years I was sick of the place'.¹⁴¹ His sister lived in Keon Park, south of Lalor, and Fred worked in the Fowlers factory in Thomastown and the Bostik factory in Lalor. He went back to England in 1966 but returned to Australia in 1968 and worked for 22 years in the printing section of the *Herald*.¹⁴² Fred met Sandra Lindley in 1968, she was eighteen and they married in 1972. Fred bought a block of land at 11 Page Court, in the eastern part of Lalor, and had A.V. Jennings build a house. They had two children, a boy and a girl. Sandra contracted Hodgkin's Disease and after four years she died at the age of 34. His children were six and eight years old, and after a short time he retired to care for them.¹⁴³

After his children left home, Fred became active in the local Maltese community. In 1989 Fred enlisted the help of Maltese Councillor, Victor Grech, who suggested the Maltese community form a club, which at the time of writing had permanent premises and a membership of 282.¹⁴⁴ There was also a very active Lalor United Bocce Club and the Whittlesea Maltese Senior Citizens' Club.¹⁴⁵ Fred was the Secretary of the Maltese Club and actively lobbied with local, state and federal politicians for services and facilities for the Maltese Community. For Fred, St Luke's Catholic Church also provided a sense of community. Echoing the words of Pauline O'Dea and Gwen Hawkins about St Luke's in the 1970s, Fred described the Church in these words:

136. Dot Lawson, interview with the author, 29 May 2006, p. 10.

137. *Whittlesea Post*, 8 April 1955, p. 8, 9 June 1955, p. 8 & 11 August 1955, p. 8.

138. WSC, 'Rates Book', op. cit., no. 79.

139. Honor Mackie, interview with the author, 1 May 2006, p. 21. Esther Murray, Honor Mackie, Ruby Hughes, Maggie Winterton, Grace Bayne and Jeanne Eastham all worked there.

140. Fred Fabri, interview with the author, 4 March 2009, p. 2; *Whittlesea Post*, 4 April 2000, p. 9.

141. Fred Fabri, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 3.

142. *ibid.*, pp. 1–5.

143. *ibid.*, p. 2.

144. *Whittlesea Leader*, 26 October, p. 8.

145. *ibid.* In the 2001 census there were 2985 residents who had one or both parents born in Malta.

The mass I go to, are Vietnamese, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, a few Australians here and there, you know, Maltese, Polish, Croatian, and it's about community actually.¹⁴⁶

Fred received a Centenary Medal for his contribution to the Maltese community and a Certificate of Appreciation to Australian Volunteers. The Whittlesea Council invited Fred to a meeting in March 2009 with representatives of about 30 clubs reflecting different nationalities.¹⁴⁷ Although many of the clubs have few connections, Fred had established a relationship of mutual support with the Vietnamese Club, so at the time of writing he was hopeful of more inter-cultural collaboration.

FOX, Stephenson:

Stephenson Fox (called Peter), was born in Letchworth, England on 6 January 1912, oldest son of three children of Albert Victor Fox (lawyer, dairy farmer and store owner) and Ethel Fox (nee Chapman). Peter's father died in 1916, in the Battle of the Somme, and his younger brother died of scarlet fever in 1919, a disease that Peter was lucky to survive. Fox's major contributions were his role as one of the original committeemen of the PLC and as an advocate both for full employment and the creation of international institutions to administer peace and disarmament. Much of the information about Fox comes from his own writings.¹⁴⁸

In 1920 Fox's mother brought Peter and his sister, Peggy, to Western Australia, settling in Albany where her brother and parents had already bought land. Peter attended Albany Primary School and initially commenced at Albany High School, but when offered a place at Perth Modern School, the family moved to Perth where one teacher who had an impact on his education was H.C. (Nugget) Coombs. He was forced by financial circumstances to leave school at age 15 after completing his Junior Certificate, after which he joined the National Bank of Australasia. It was through the bank that he was able to gain a Diploma of Commerce at the University of Western Australia, which he later converted to a Degree at the University of Queensland in 1954. When he was 21 he became a Vestryman at St Andrews Church of England in Subiaco, and during the early 1930s he became Secretary of the Subiaco branch of the National Party. In 1934 he won the Men's Baritone Solo in Western Australian Eisteddfod. In 1936 he returned to England with National Bank of Australasia.

Immediately prior to the outbreak of war, Fox actively promoted the ideals of the Federal Union movement, which advocated the creation of a powerful organisation for world governance. Its aim was for this new federal union of democratic nation states, to take control of all armaments and some economic matters, particularly policies that would lead to full employment.¹⁴⁹ On returning to Melbourne in 1944 he established a Melbourne outpost of the Federal Union and he joined the League of Nations Union.¹⁵⁰

146. *ibid.*, p. 15.

147. Fred Fabri, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

148. Peter Fox, *Stephenson Called Peter: A Life*, edited by James Sinclair. Bathurst, NSW, 1995; Stephenson Fox, *Golden Pyramid: Gateway to a Golden Age through Full Employment*, Queanbeyan, 1985.

149. These ideas were based on the work of American, Clarence Streit, who in March 1939 published his book, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Leading Democracies*. Streit, the *New York Times* representative at the League of Nations, resigned in 1939 to pursue his ambition for the formation of a federal union of western democracies to form a world governance body for peace and full employment. See Streit Council for a Union of Democracies, website, <<http://streitcouncil.org/>>.

150. Peter Fox, *Stephenson Called Peter*, *op. cit.*, pp. 187–188. Fox also claimed to have been the convener of a Commission of Post War Reconstruction which produced what he considered to be a credible report. He believed he convinced the then Leader of the Opposition, R.G. Menzies to take seriously the need to properly plan for strong international governance as part of the post-war settlement. Fox also thought that the Minister for External Affairs at the time, H.V. Evatt, relied on this report when in negotiations on the structure for the new United Nations Organisation. This could be the subject of further research.

Fox enlisted in the Australian Army on 1 July 1940 in the UK, and was attached to the AA Pay Corps. Between July 1940 and August 1942 he served in the UK, the Middle East and Ceylon, returning to Australia in August 1942, commissioned as captain and with the title Chief Paymaster. From 7 December 1944 he was assigned to AA Pay Corps Southern Command.¹⁵¹ In 1944 he married Patricia Dorothy Holland and was posted for a short time to the USA. He was not discharged until December 1946 by which time they had two of their five children. Patricia Fox shared her husband's views about the need for strong international disarmament agreements in order to preserve the peace. She had an article published in *New Idea* in January 1945 entitled, 'What I Would Do With The World?'.¹⁵²

Fox was on the original committee of the PLC, serving as Treasurer from December 1946 until he took over as General Manager in early 1949. He stated, 'I subsequently found that I had been invited to join the society because the boys reckoned I was the most reasonable Liberal they knew'.¹⁵³ His own account of this time is tantalisingly short, but it contains significant errors. Nonetheless, when he took over as general manager of the PLC from Greenwood in March 1949, his memoir recorded that, 'its financial affairs were in crisis'.¹⁵⁴ He failed to mention, however, that he had been Treasurer since its inception in 1946 and had chaired the Finance Committee. Fox was the driving force behind the co-operative's broader social and economic employment objective. He was slow to realise that the labour market programs he initiated were not necessary in times of labour shortages, thus placing an additional burden on the co-operative's already stretched financial and management resources. However, throughout his time at the co-operative, he explored the possibilities for co-operative industries that might provide a broader economic foundation for their venture. For example, on 1 April 1949, Fox and Purcell attended a meeting with the NSW Co-operative Society at which 'Fox outlined the... co-operative's... policy on employment, and asked [the NSW co-operative]... if [it] ... could advise on the lines that could be manufactured at Lalor with advantage to the co-operative movement'.¹⁵⁵ Nothing further came from these discussions.

Fox only served a few months in the role as General Manager; on the 30 August 1949 he suddenly moved to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to take up a post as sub-accountant in the Treasury Department. In 1951 he went into partnership with an accountant called Jimmy James and in 1962 opened his own practice in Goroke in the highlands of PNG. He finally retired to Binda, NSW in the 1980s. He published at least two volumes of poems, and two books: *The Golden Pyramid: Gateway to a Golden Age through Full Employment* was published in 1985 and his memoirs, *Stephenson, Called Peter: A Life*, was published in 1995.

There remained an undercurrent of suspicion about Fox from those Lalorites who remembered him. Perhaps this was a hangover of a contemporary suspicion of his university education and status as captain, combined with his sudden departure and these have played on people's memories over the intervening sixty years. His only comment upon his departure to PNG was, '[i]nvariably, my relationship with the board of directors deteriorated', suggesting his role had become untenable though it is not clear why.¹⁵⁶ Certainly his ignorance of the

151. Stephenson Fox, individual war record, NAA, series B883, UKX5.

152. *New Idea*, 10 January 1945, p. 1, reproduced in Peter Fox, *Stephenson Called Peter*, op. cit., p. 48.

153. *ibid.*, p. 51.

154. *ibid.*, p. 55.

155. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 1 April 1949.

156. Fox, Peter. *Stephenson Called Peter*: op. cit., p. 55.

society's finances was unforgivable given his accounting qualifications and formal role as Treasurer.

GORDON AND McVICAR FAMILIES:

Douglas Charles Gordon was born in Forbes, NSW on 30 January 1920. He grew up in Clunes Victoria with his younger sister Peg, born on 22 September 1928.¹⁵⁷ They were Church of England. Doug was working in Melbourne before the war, then after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he enlisted in the RAAF reaching the rank of Flying Officer.¹⁵⁸ Peg and her widowed mother, who was a teacher, were burnt out during the 1944 bushfires in Clunes and lost the house they had believed they were buying, through rental offsets. When Doug was discharged in January 1946, Peg and her mother moved into a divided house with Doug in Melbourne where they lived until 18 June 1948, when their Peter Lalor built home was ready for occupation.¹⁵⁹ They were amongst the first ten families. The house was at 1 Gratwick Street, and was a six room home of brick veneer.¹⁶⁰ Doug became an active member of the Epping Branch of the RSL, becoming Treasurer from 1955 to 1957 when his work took him from Lalor. He married in 1952 or 53 and he and his wife (name unknown) had at least one daughter when they left Lalor.

Peg Gordon went to ninth grade a school in Clunes and then worked in a clothing mill. It was here that she met her future husband, Jim McVicar. They became engaged, and when Peg moved to Melbourne Jim followed her, and finally to Lalor. James Allan (Jim) McVicar was born in Underbool, Victoria on 4 March 1924. His father had been given a soldier settlement block at Carworp but it proved to be unprofitable because of drought. He went to school in Underbool and moved to Clunes at age ten. His father drove a transport truck between Clunes and Melbourne twice weekly. Jim left school at 14 and joined the clothing mill. He saw active service in the Pacific theatre as a gunner. After the war, he suffered from malaria and from a gun blast he had received to his ear. Although he returned to the mill briefly at war's end, 'it was driving me mad so I went to the doctor and he advised me to get out'.¹⁶¹ Jim paid for a rehabilitation course in carpentry and was apprenticed to the PLC. 'I was here a week and they went broke'.¹⁶² The Repatriation Department intervened and placed him with a building firm in Reservoir where he completed his apprenticeship and stayed for nine years.

Jim built a home for himself and Peg at 8 Middleton Street in a syndicate with Jim Charters who built at 384 Station Street. They had a WSH Loan. Although they had already bought a block from Peter Lalor, they then had to pay a further £98 to WSHD which had taken over the land. They were repaid by the PLHBCSL by free access to windows made in the Stockade. Jim and Peg were married in 1951 and lived for a while in a 'temporary' on their land. Peg's mother died and they moved in with Doug. They eventually moved into their own home six weeks after the birth of their first of two boys in 1953. At the time of writing they were both still living in the home they built in Lalor.

157. Peg McVicar, interview with the author, 20 February 2008, p. 2.

158. Douglas Charles Gordon, individual war record, NAA, series A9301, 410542.

159. Much of the information in this biography came from two interviews: Peg McVicar, interview with Ruth Ford, 23 November 1998, pp. 405-461; and Peg and Jim McVicar, interview with the author, 20 February 2008, pp. 1-26.

160. WSC, 'Rates Book', op. cit., no. 59.

161. Jim McVicar, interview with the author, 20 February 2008, pp. 2-3.

162. *ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

GREENWOOD, Arthur Alton:

Arthur Alton Greenwood (called Alf), was born in Ringwood, Victoria on 8 December 1908, youngest of four children of Arthur Vavan Greenwood and Henrietta Greenwood (nee Carr).¹⁶³ Greenwood's major contribution was as an originator and manager of the PLC (1946–1949) and as Tasmanian Chief Valuer (1963–1974).¹⁶⁴

Greenwood went to Box Hill Grammar School and Bradshaw Business College, finally completing his schooling at Wesley College which he attended as a day student between January 1923 and July 1924. He was an average academic achiever and was in the 'lower 5th and 6th grades'.¹⁶⁵ On leaving school Alf joined his father's business where he worked for the next four years as a salesman and clerk, and learnt bookkeeping. The Greenwood family had significant land holdings in Ringwood; several streets are named after them. Alf's father owned a business in Melbourne CBD, Greenwood Pty Ltd 'Specialists in Infants' Children's and Ladies' Apparel: Drapery & Manchester Piece Good: Indentors: Warehousemen and Manufacturers'.¹⁶⁶ Alf's mother was Secretary of the Victorian Musical Society.¹⁶⁷ Alf was reared within a strictly Methodist religious tradition. The Methodist Minister from the parsonage in Ringwood wrote that Alf 'belonged to a most highly respected family in this town'.¹⁶⁸ Alf's grandfather, Henry Greenwood, was a Methodist Minister. His uncle Edmund W. Greenwood, between 1917 and 1929, was a Member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly (nominally as a Nationalist), and an advocate of the temperance movement, including holding official positions with the Australian Prohibition Council and the Strength of Empire Movement.¹⁶⁹ He was also a businessman, whose business failed in 1927. Alf's father's business also failed attempting to help Edmund.¹⁷⁰ The civil rights campaigner, politician and lawyer Maurice Blackburn later wrote saying, 'I have known his [Alf's] family for about thirty years and can testify to the excellence of the reputation born by its members.'¹⁷¹

Upon the failure of his father's business, Alf Greenwood went to Perth where he stayed between 1929 and 1931, returning to Melbourne with an unspecified illness and remained unemployed for two years. Between 1933 and 1940 Greenwood worked for firms of advertisers, accountants and auditors.¹⁷² By 1935 he had 'passed the Junior Public Examination and the Intermediate accountancy examination'.¹⁷³ Alf joined the AA Pay Corps in March 1940 serving in the Middle East and Pacific Islands.¹⁷⁴ In 1944, having been

163. Department of Justice, Victoria, Death notices, *Register of BDM*, 1949 & 1955.

164. Arthur Alton Greenwood, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX10665 & V124214; Norma Greenwood and John Mills, interview with the author, 17 April 2007. I am indebted to Norma Greenwood for providing access to the many references for Alf Greenwood in A.A. Greenwood, papers, held in the 'camphor chest' which in 2007, were still held at her home in Hobart.

165. I am indebted to Margot Vaughan of the Archives at Wesley College for this information.

166. A. Greenwood, reference, 14 February 1929. This reference was written on Greenwood letterhead by Alf's father. A.A. Greenwood's papers, op. cit.

167. *ibid.*, p. 28.

168. Methodist Minister, reference, 8 February 1929. The signature on the reference cannot be deciphered. A.A. Greenwood's papers, op. cit.

169. Edmund is listed in the Victorian Parliamentary register as Nationalist, but he never sought party endorsement.

170. Norma Greenwood, interview with the author, 17 April 2007, p. 5.

171. Maurice Blackburn, reference, 4 June 1940, A.A. Greenwood's papers, op. cit.

172. James McEwen Advertising, reference, 23 October 1935. The signature on the reference cannot be deciphered. A.A. Greenwood's papers, op. cit.

173. W. Maloney, reference, 25 November 1935. A.A. Greenwood's papers, op. cit.

174. Arthur Alton Greenwood, individual war record, op. cit.

commissioned a lieutenant, Greenwood was Paymaster at the prisoner-of-war camp at Murchison, Victoria, where he met Norma Isobel Simpson, (born 4 November 1918), also a member of the AA Pay Corps.¹⁷⁵ Norma worked on the bookkeeping machines. They were married in Melbourne on 7 April 1945.¹⁷⁶ By this time Alf was no longer strictly attending the Methodist church and he had discarded the temperance aspects of his upbringing and was a heavy smoker.¹⁷⁷

Greenwood made a major contribution to the PLC. He, along with Purcell, was one of its originators and had perhaps the most impact on its administration between 1947 and early 1949. He was a member of the Ex-Servicemen's Committee of the Central Executive of the Victorian Labor Party and Chairman of the PLC from December 1946 to March 1947 when he took over as Manager/Secretary and later the General Manager. He established, and was first Chairman of, the PL Nos 1 & 2 Co-operative Housing Societies.¹⁷⁸ He had excellent relationships with many of the bureaucracies with which he dealt. He left the Society in April 1949 becoming a real estate agent in Mansfield. In 1960 he became a valuer in the Australian Taxation Office, Melbourne, becoming Tasmanian Chief Valuer in 1963 where he stayed until his retirement.¹⁷⁹ He carried some of his Peter Lalor experience with him to Tasmania where he was influential in the formation of the Tasmanian Commonwealth Public Service Co-operative Credit Union in the 1960s.¹⁸⁰ Alf and Norma had one adopted son, Rowden.¹⁸¹ Desmond Purcell recalled, Alf 'was just a very pleasant, very nice man. But, I don't think Dad could have done it without him'.¹⁸² John Mills who worked for Alf as a valuer recalled that 'what you saw was Alf. There was never anything hidden back there. He was a marvellous friend, boss, he really was.'¹⁸³ Alf died of an aneurism at home on 22 September 1976.¹⁸⁴

GRIFFITHS, Norm and Kath:

Norman Lee Griffiths, called Norm, was born on 12 March 1924 and grew up in Essendon, the son of a sea captain who was never around. Norm was a scholarship boy who trained as an industrial chemist and worked at the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories making Penicillin. It was a protected industry, hence he did not enlist.¹⁸⁵ His wife, Kath, was born on 13 September 1925. She was one of four children. Her father worked for a glass factory. Kath went to Essendon High School where she was dux of the school. She had been able to remain at school through a scholarship, and a subsequent scholarship saw her through a Physical

175. Norma Isobel Greenwood (nee Simpson) individual war record, NAA, series B884, VF398012.

176. Norma Greenwood, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 3.

177. *ibid.*, pp. 5 & 13.

178. Victorian Labor Party, Central Executive, 'Minutes,' SLV, MSF 10389 (DLP records), item 6, folios 14 & 15, 24 August 1945; PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', December 1946 to April 1949.

179. John Mills, interview with the author, 17 April 2007, pp. 22–23. John Mills succeeded Alf Greenwood as Tasmanian Chief Valuer. See also *Commonwealth Seniority List*, 1960, held at the NAA, Canberra.

180. John Mills, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 16.

181. Norma Greenwood, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 4.

182. Desmond Purcell, op. cit., p. 16.

183. John Mills, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 9.

184. Norma Greenwood, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 17.

185. Kath Griffiths, interview with the author, 20 October 2006, and written memoir 20 October 2006. While I did interview Kath, who was at the time physically fit, she was having some memory problems. Norm had been dead for some years.

Education Diploma at Melbourne University. She was the most highly educated women in the Lalor community in those first few years.¹⁸⁶

They bought their block and partially completed cement sheet home at 55 Vasey Avenue, on 16 December 1949 from James and Elsie Boyd who had been successful in the February ballot and wanted to sell.¹⁸⁷ They paid £980, suggesting the house was quite well advanced. Norm had been drawn in the July ballot.¹⁸⁸ Kath recalled that Norm rode his bike every weekend from their rented place in Essendon to Lalor and camped in the 'temporary' which had been erected for the use by his group.¹⁸⁹ There is, however, no information about which group Norm was in. They probably moved into Lalor in late 1950 or early 1951.¹⁹⁰ They had four children, two boys and two girls.

They immediately absorbed themselves in community activities. They were a lively and charismatic couple who were very popular in Lalor. By October 1951 Kath had been elected onto the Committee of LCCS.¹⁹¹ Within a month she was elected Chairman, gaining further re-election at year's end.¹⁹² Norm was elected to the main PLC at its AGM on 18 February 1952, at the same meeting that Vic Michael first appeared as Vice Chairman.¹⁹³ On 4 March 1952, the Lalor Branch of the ALP was formed, with Norm as Secretary, a position he held until he took over as President in 1955, returning to the role of Secretary shortly afterwards.¹⁹⁴ He was Leo Purcell's campaign manager for his tilt at council election in 1953, until he withdrew from the race. Norm and Kath were both involved in the Youth Club, Kath was on the LWSC, Norm helped with the building of the 'kinderhall', and in 1954 Kath was elected on to the new Kindergarten Committee.¹⁹⁵ In a contest for ALP pre-selection for Council in 1954, only one vote separated the two popular candidates, Vic Michael and Norm Griffiths with Norm the loser. The basis of the clash is obscure. In November 1958, Norm Griffiths ran as the 'sacrificial lamb' for the ALP in the safe Liberal seat of Deakin in Melbourne's east. In 1964 the Griffiths family left Lalor to move onto acreage at South Morang where their home was later completely destroyed by fire.

GUNTON, Eric:

Eric Gunton was born on 8 September 1920 in Carlton and had a tragic life.¹⁹⁶ He was reared in St Augustine's Christian Brothers' orphanage in Geelong. He never knew his father, and knew little about his mother. He said, 'I don't know if she was sick or whatever happened, but she couldn't keep me so I was in an orphanage... until I was about 16'. He described the abuse he suffered from being 'belted' and from having to wear shoes which had been mended so

186. *ibid.*

187. WSC, Rates Book, *op. cit.*, no. 66; PLHBCSL, ballot lists, *op. cit.*

188. *ibid.*

189. Kath Griffiths, written memoir, *op. cit.*

190. WSC, Rates Book, *op. cit.*, no. 66.

191. Registrar of Industrial and Provident Societies, *Register*, Melbourne, PROV, VPRS 8277/0001, 1500V Labor Consumers Co-operative Society Ltd; *Whittlesea Post*, 3 October 1952, p. 1.

192. *Whittlesea Post*, 7 November 1951, p.12 & 8 October 1952, p. 1.

193. *ibid.*, 20 February 1952, p. 8.

194. *ibid.*, 18 March 1953, p. 8 & 10 February 1952, p. 2.

195. *ibid.*, 17 March 1954, p. 1, 14 July 1954, p. 1, 19 August 1954, p. 8 & 23 February 1955, p. 8.

196. Eric Gunton, interview with the author, 30 May 2006, p. 7.

many times, the nails were coming through the soles.¹⁹⁷ He gained little education during this time. Eric met the Burgess boys, Dave and Doug, at a Brotherhood of St Lawrence home for homeless youths in Fitzroy, run by a man called Wilson. 'He was a good man... a social worker.' At about this time, Eric had been hit by a car in a terrible accident. 'I went up in the air and came down about 15 feet, landed on his bonnet, [and] rolled off onto the ground.' With both his legs in plaster he was employed by the hostel to set the tables for the young boys. Shortly afterwards, Eric got another job, but put weight on his legs too quickly and, as he put it, his 'legs and both feet collapsed'. He was readmitted to hospital, wore plaster on both legs for a further six months and had four years in leg irons.¹⁹⁸ Thereafter his walk resembled a shuffle.

After the war, Dave and Chub Burgess had one room in a rooming house, and Doug Burgess and Eric Gunton shared a room across the corridor. Doug knew about the proposed housing co-operative through his Trades Hall contacts and invited Eric to the first meeting at the Trades Hall between a few ex-servicemen. Eric also attended the second, larger meeting at the Assembly Hall. As the Stockade production factory began to purchase supplies in the second half of 1947, the society realised it would be necessary to have a night watchman to guard the timber it had bought. Doug Burgess knew about the job and suggested that Eric apply. He was successful, and moved out to the new site on the Peter Lalor Estate, probably six months or more before the first residents arrived. Eric recalled, 'I got there and it's an old army hut and it's just partitioned off a little bit. Half the roof was off.'¹⁹⁹ He had three dogs and the horse and cart to care for. The first 200 blocks were all numbered with pegs in the ground, and at the weekends, Eric showed prospective land owners to their blocks of land. Through the ballot process, Eric gained a block of land at 6 Mackey Street and although the PLC did not build his home, he was able to use Stockade materials to build a 'temporary' on his block. It is not clear why Eric lost his job as caretaker, but Alf Greenwood gave him permission to stay in the Stockade until his temporary home was finished. In the meantime, probably in 1949, George Mackenzie, who ran the hardware store, took over as caretaker, living in different quarters within the Stockade compound with his wife Peg and their daughter Pam.

Eric, who saw the development from its earliest days recalled,

Oh, those first days were hectic, you know. But oh it's a wonderful thing. Because to see something created out of almost nothing—I actually saw a suburb come into being, as it were. It's marvellous, you know, to see something created like that.²⁰⁰

Eric was living in the same building within the Stockade as the administrative area where the Committee of Management meetings were held: separated only by a partition. He held Alf Greenwood in high regard, and considered him to be an effective manager. Eric believed the Committee of Management did a good job at the start, 'they loved the ideas of a co-operative society and all that, but... later on they seemed to be disagreeing with one another'. As Eric reflected more than sixty years later, '[o]nce the administration starts fighting one another, and disagreeing with one another, that's the end of the thing'.²⁰¹

197. *ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

198. *ibid.*, p. 7.

199. *ibid.*, p. 2.

200. *ibid.*, p.16.

201. *ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

In 1954 Eric's temporary house was burnt to the ground. He had gone out and had left some chickens on some straw in front of the fire. He was absolutely astonished at the generosity of the Lalor community when they organised for his home to be almost completely rebuilt. The Fidelity Club and the Lalor branch of the ALP, led by Jim and Bill O'Connor, Jack Harvey and Norm Griffiths among others, organised the fund-raising and the building. During this time Eric lived with Dave and Chub Burgess. In 1962 he married Peggy at the Unitarian Church in the City. She was nine years his junior. Doug Burgess had held an engagement party for the pair in Lalor.²⁰² They had no children. Eric loved to compose music and play the piano. For a time he attended adult education classes to learn more about music though his skills were never of a very high order. Eric struggled with manual work because of his considerable physical disability following his accident. Nonetheless, he worked for Fowlers Pottery in Thomastown for a while and struggled to gain white-collar work in other areas of employment, but lacked the education. He and Peggy spent their final days in their little place in Lalor, living a reclusive life. Peggy died in May 2008 and Eric died in November.²⁰³

HANNAH FAMILY:

The Hannah family has found a place in this set of biographies because they were amongst the first residents, gained a Peter Lalor built home cheaply, and left soon afterwards. They did very well out of their association with the PLC. Born on 22 February 1922 in Melbourne, John Hannah served in the CMF prior to transferring to the AIF as a signaller in New Guinea with the Air Warning Wireless.²⁰⁴ He was allocated number 2 Gratwick Street and the 5 room brick veneer home cost £1411. When the family sold the house in October 1950, they benefited from the cheap price they paid for their home, and increased value of Lalor properties. They made a profit of £889.²⁰⁵ John's wife was not listed in the rates books and no marriage record is available. She remains a nameless wife in the written record.

HARVEY, Jack and Lorraine:

John Richard Harvey (Lorraine called him John, the co-operative called him Jack. Some called him 'blue' because of his red hair.) He was born in Carlton on 20 November 1914 and was Methodist, though not church-going. He was a middle child of three boys and a girl. His father, William, a labourer, was partially blind.²⁰⁶ He attended Lee Street school in Carlton, he completed high school to the standard of the merit certificate and played rugby. He trained as a carpenter and when he tried to enlist, the Army organised for him to use his carpentry skills instead. He almost certainly met the PLC, AA Pay Corp group in Queensland, where he was contracted to build soldiers huts.²⁰⁷ Jack's main contribution was his role as a committeeman on the PLC Committee of Management from its first meeting. Records are incomplete but he may have remained on the Committee with Bill King as Chair, until its liquidation in 1954. His name is never mentioned as one of the originators of the scheme, but his building expertise gave the group confidence. In July 1947, Harvey was made Chair of the Co-operative's

202. *ibid.*, p.6.

203. Barbara Breaks, email, 19 November 2008.

204. John Hannah, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX127780.

205. WSC, 'Rates Books', nos. 59 & 66.

206. The biographical information comes from an interview with Lorraine Harvey, 21 February 2008. Jack Harvey also kept almost all the 'Minutes' of the meetings of the Committee of Management on which he served from 1946–1949. They were kept by Lorraine and passed on her son, Neil, who kindly made them available for this history. They have been a vital resource.

207. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Building Research Committee, tasked with investigating solutions to building problems.²⁰⁸ According to Johns he also acted as a foreman on the site, probably in 1948, though the timing is unclear.²⁰⁹ He built his own and his younger brother Arthur's home in Lalor, and he helped with others such as Alby Dixon's home (a relative by marriage).²¹⁰ His influence was also important as he sided with Bill King against Purcell and Greenwood as the committee split into factions in 1948. In many respects he appeared to play a similar role to King once the co-operative was underway.²¹¹

He married Daphne Lorraine Treloar (called Lorraine) from Glen Huntly who was born on 24 January 1919. Her father was a railway worker and was killed in a road accident. Her mother remarried. After her father died, she was Christened Church of England. She met Jack at a dance in 1944 when he was in Melbourne on leave. They were married in 1945. Lorraine, who worked as a machinist before the war, transferred into wartime aircraft production, 'testing parts of planes and reading plans'. After the war, Lorraine returned to sewing machinist work, saving her wage to put towards their house, until their eldest son Neil was born in 1947.²¹²

At war's end, Jack was employed using his carpentry skills on boats. He later started a business with a friend doing parquet flooring, and then went into business alone. Lorraine believed he joined the co-operative because 'he was a person that was interested in people and doing things to help people'.²¹³ He became close friends with Bill King, though not with Purcell. They built their home at 20 Vasey Avenue of weatherboard and cement-rendered wire, and from a Lalor house plan. They moved in at Christmas 1952 and by then they also had a daughter. They took a loan from a PL Co-operative Housing Society borrowing £1028.²¹⁴ Lorraine believed that John did not borrow much because 'he didn't believe in borrowing a lot of money. He was a person who didn't like to go into debt...that's why it took him a while to build'.²¹⁵ Jack and his brother were both Masons, joining prior to their move to Lalor, and were formative members of the Lalor Fidelity Club which met in the Mechanic's Institute Hall in Thomastown.²¹⁶ Jack played a leading role in rebuilding Eric Gunton's house when it burnt to the ground in 1954. Lorraine was on the School Committee and the LWSC. When the primary school first opened in 1954, Lorraine was one of the women who 'heated up the food' at Muriel Cooper's (see above) house and took it across to the school at lunch time.²¹⁷ Jack died on 27 April 1984. At the time of writing Lorraine was still living independently, though she had moved to be closer to her family in Ascot Vale.

208. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 4 July 1947.

209. Gary Johns, 'Building a Suburb: the Peter Lalor Home Building Co-Operative Society', *Occasional Papers*, vol. 1, no. 2, Melbourne State College, December 1978, p. 18.

210. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 12.

211. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 1946–1949.

212. *ibid.*, pp. 5–8.

213. *ibid.*, p. 8.

214. Paul Ormonde, 'Love, Sweat and Tears', *Herald*, 27 February, 1978, p. 7.

215. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 15.

216. No record of their Lodge membership was found, however, Lorraine believed they belonged to a Lodge in the City prior to moving to Lalor. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 14.

217. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 18.

HEWITT, Daphne Mabel, and Bondarenko family:

Daphne Mabel Hewitt was the only war widow named amongst the first five families.²¹⁸ Her occupation was tram conductress.²¹⁹ This suggests a connection with Purcell (see below) who was also with Melbourne Tramways before the war. Daphne owned a four room brick veneer home at 394 Station Street. Using a WSH loan, she paid £1400 for the house. In 1951 she transferred ownership into the name of Bondarenko, the surname of her newly married daughter, Valerie, who also lived at 394 Station Street with her husband.²²⁰

Daphne Hewitt's son-in-law, Oleg Konstantin Bondarenko (called Olly), had a very different background from the main cohort of Lalor residents.²²¹ Of Russian nationality, born in China in 1908, he had been working 'doing piracy duty' with the Marine Police Guard at Shanghai in China, but was evacuated on a British ship, which then dropped him at the port of Fremantle in Western Australia. Bondarenko sought to join the RAAF and was accepted into training as a flight mechanic. At the time of his enlistment in March 1942, he was described as of the Russian Orthodox religion and was fluent in Russian, Polish, French, and Chinese (both Mandarin and Shanghai dialects). He had graduated from the Russian Military School in 1925 and was transferred to China with the rank of sub-lieutenant. He was part way through a Russian Aviation School qualification when evacuated. The RAAF assessed him as a 'good type, neat gentlemanly manner and obviously well educated and intelligent'. He was then in good health. Bondarenko was discharged eighteen months later, in October 1943 as 'medically unfit for further service'. With no explanation in his war record about the nature of the condition, he was moved from an Air Force hospital into the rehabilitation section of the Perth General Hospital. He gained a service pension and in 1951 applied for naturalisation, probably associated with his marriage to Pauline Hewitt. By March 1953 he had died. He was 45. Legacy applied to the Whittlesea Council to have the outstanding rates of £20/4/6 waved for Valerie Bondarenko, but it refused. The council did agree to waive half the amount on the condition that Legacy paid the balance.²²²

HODGSON, see THOMPSON

HUNT, Fred and Gwen:

Fred and Gwen Hunt were amongst the first residents of Lalor and played a major role in community development in Lalor. Fred managed the Co-operative Store. Fred Hunt was born in Swan Hill, Victoria on 17 October 1919; Gwen (nee Abbott) was born in Melbourne on 12 July 1921. They were Church of England. Gwen reached merit certificate at school and afterwards helped care for her father, an invalid from WWI. Gwen's mother, Eva, did paid housework. Gwen was the younger of two girls. Fred was a signalman in the 17th Australian Infantry Brigade Signals Section during WWII. He served in the Middle East and New Guinea, taking a few days out in 1943 to marry Gwen, who served as a private with the Australian

218. Untitled and press clipping in the City of Whittlesea history file, probably dated Monday 5 April 1948 stated 'This month five families, including a war widow, are moving into the first houses completed through an ex-servicemen's co-operative housing scheme in Victoria.'

219. WSC, 'Rates Book', op.cit., no. 59.

220. PLHBCSL, ballot lists, op. cit.; WSC, 'Rates Books', op. cit., nos. 59 & 66.

221. All of the information about Bondarenko comes from his war file: Oleg Konstantin Bondarenko, individual war record, NAA, series A9301, 46665.

222. WSC, 'Minutes of Meetings', 9 July 1953, p. 212.

Women's Army Service (AWAS), working in stores as a Group III Clerk.²²³ Prior to the war Fred had been a shop assistant (grocer) and he continued in this line of work after the war. He and Gwen were living in Richmond prior to Lalor, but he was employed quite some distance away in Crofts' store in West Preston/Thornbury. He rode a bike. He was in the store when Purcell (see below), who owned the nearby newsagency, told him about the co-operative.²²⁴

According to Gwen Hunt, the Spencers (see below) who drew the first ballot, were not first to move in.²²⁵ Spencers waited for their first baby to be born before they moved.²²⁶ Gwen claims that her family was the first to move in. Fred thought they were third. Gwen said, referring to her pregnancy with her third child, 'I didn't care when mine was going to be born, I was shifting in'.²²⁷ Fred had been drawn number five in the ballot and was allocated 390 Station Street.²²⁸ It was in Fred's name as the sole owner and he held a WSH loan.²²⁹

The couple were central mainstays of the community.²³⁰ Fred became the manager of the LCCS store from the time it opened in the Stockade in 1949. Even before this, Fred would take grocery orders from the families newly arriving in Lalor and would return with groceries on the handlebars of his push bike.²³¹ Fred explained that eventually he had found the co-operative store too much. He used to source vegetables and fruit from the Victoria Markets. He had about three staff working there part-time as well as a number of volunteers. Fred recalled that the PLC head office took all the profit and spent it on buying too many door knobs and the like.²³² Gwen said of Fred, 'he wanted everything to work for the co-operative, he really did.' When I asked her where this ideal came from, she explained a bit about his family background. It is worth reproducing an edited version of the transcript of this small excerpt of our conversation, as it illustrates the kinds of circumstances shaping the characters of some of our subjects:

MS: Where do you think that belief came from in him?

GH: Well I think it came from when he was younger. 'Cause see he raised his mother's family. She had seventeen children.

MS: Was he the oldest?

GH: No. His oldest sister died last Friday. She'd be a hundred next September. No he was the youngest of the first lot and then she married again and then there was more: seventeen all together. Well see he had to raise those.

223. Frederick Oscar Leonard Hunt, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX54405 & V72922; Gwen Hunt, individual war record, NAA, series B884, VF395587.

224. Fred & Gwen Hunt, interview with Ruth Ford, 21 November 1998, p. 323.

225. PLHBCSL, ballot lists, op. cit.

226. Gwen Hunt, interview with the author, 1 May 2006, p. 3.

227. *ibid.*

228. PLHBCSL, 'ballot lists', op. cit., annotated with numbers by Jack Harvey.

229. WSC, 'Rates Book', op. cit.

230. Fred & Gwen Hunt, interview with Ruth Ford, p. 322. It was not just their own testimony to accord them this status. Their contribution is referenced in many of the interviews.

231. *ibid.*, pp. 326–27.

232. *ibid.*, pp. 332–33.

MS: Why? Did his father die?

GH: Well Fred's own father died two months before he was born. Fred was the father figure to the kids. They wouldn't do anything—course they called him Jackie. 'While Jackie's around, you got to do as Jackie says, you know. Jackie's the boss.' And he was the boss too.

MS: I wonder why they called him Jackie?

GH: Well he was always known as Jackie. Because when they lived at Swan Hill the black fellas brought him up... And that's what they used to say. Fred's over with the Jacks. And he got the name of Jackie. It was them that taught him to swim and taught him to cook and he did everything... Then the chap that his mother married was a !!! [gestures implying horrible man] Used to give Fred hell, you know and the kids hell. So Fred took over looking after them.²³³

When the co-operative store was closed in 1954,²³⁴ Fred and Gwen were the first to build a shop on Station Street, now the main, vibrant, multicultural centre of Lalor. They opened a newsagency in 1955, and lived upstairs. Three years later they swapped their shop and the house with the Strachan family, who owned 30 Vasey Avenue.

Fred worked for a while for Dave Burgess's Plaster Factory (see above). Fred and Gwen were active in the Lalor Football Club, Youth Club and Fred with the bowling club. They were both members of the RSL; Gwen worked for Legacy. Fred joined the Masons when in Lalor, and was a member of the Fidelity Club. He helped build the kindergarten and was a member of the Lalor Branch of the ALP. Ironically, for all his service to the community he has often been remembered for his role in the Mock Wedding held in Lalor in 1951 to raise money for the LWSC.²³⁵ On the other hand, that event was typical of many of the values that they sought to promote. Fred served on the Primary School Committee in 1954. They had five children and twelve grandchildren. Fred was a TPI pensioner and suffered considerable illness before his death in 1999.²³⁶ The Hunts lived at 30 Vasey Avenue until Fred's death. At the time of writing, Gwen still lived in a nursing home not far from Lalor.

KING, William Thomas, and Ada Dunton:

William Thomas King (called Bill) was born in Malvern, Melbourne on 14 April 1907. As no BDM information has been located for him or his wife, his biographical details are reliant on his war record and oral testimony. He was born into a working-class Catholic family and left school at the age of 14 after attaining the merit certificate. In 1929 he married Lillian Valerie (maiden name unknown) and they had two girls. King's major contribution was as one of the original group who formed the PLC and he remained to see the venture through to the mid 1970s and almost to the closure of the PL Nos 1 & 2 Co-operative Housing Societies in 1977.²³⁷

233. Gwen Hunt, interview with the author, op. cit., pp. 20–21. The initials 'MS' refer to Moira Scollay and 'GW' refer to Gwen Hunt.

234. The store closed when the PLHBCSL went into liquidation. There was support to keep it going, and for some time it did, though the Hunts moved to their newly built newsagency in Station St.

235. Fred & Gwen Hunt, interview with Ruth Ford, op. cit.; Gwen Hunt, interview with the author, op. cit.; *Whittlesea Post*, 11 June 1951, p. 1 & 14 July 1954, p. 8.

236. Gwen Hunt, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 19.

237. These societies had been re-named Northern Nos 1 & 2. See, John. Lahey, 'Pioneers Recall the Lalor Frontier', *The Age*, 2 December 1977, p. 2.

After King left school he worked in grocery shops and at the time of his enlistment he was a commercial traveller. He enlisted in 1942, and was attached to the AA Pay Corps, Southern Command, 3rd District Accounts. At the time he was living in Walker Street in Balwyn, where his family stayed throughout the war. King remained in Melbourne during the war and was promoted to sergeant in January 1944. He decided to continue in the Army as a volunteer for a further two years at the end of the war. He was discharged in June 1947 when he resumed his work as a commercial traveller.²³⁸

He was almost certainly a member of the Ex-Servicemen's Committee of the Central Executive of the Victorian Labor Party, and was President of the Hawthorn Branch of the Victorian Labor Party in 1947.²³⁹ In 1949, from the Balwyn Branch, he unsuccessfully stood for ALP pre-selection for the Federal seat of Yarra.²⁴⁰

From December 1946 he was Assistant Treasurer of the PLC, taking over as Vice Chairman in March 1947 when Purcell acceded to the Chair. When Purcell resigned that role in 1949, King became Chairman, serving until the society's voluntary liquidation in March 1954. He was also a Director of the PL Nos 1 & 2 Co-operative Housing Societies until the mid 1970s. King was successful in the June ballot for a Peter Lalor home, but he never built in Lalor, nor did he live there. King separated from his wife, possibly after the war, and spent the rest of his life with Ada Dunton, (called Belle) the very effective administrative secretary of the society. She had been widowed some years earlier and had one son, Tom.²⁴¹ Bill and Belle retired together to Paradise Point in Queensland in the early to mid 1970s. King was found dead in his home late in the 1970s. Belle had died a couple of years earlier.²⁴²

KYLE, Peter and Marla:

Charles Peter Kyle (called Peter) was born in Brisbane on 11 January 1917.²⁴³ He was second oldest of three sons of John and Ada Kyle. His father died in 1921 from injuries sustained in WWI, and Peter was a Legacy ward.²⁴⁴ Marla Lucy Kyle was born in Tempy, Victoria in 1919. She was one of ten children: four boys, four girls and two step sisters. Her father had two children from his first wife who died. She went to school for a short time when five years old. Then upon the death of her mother she went for a holiday to stay with an aunt, who tried to keep her from returning to her family. 'Eventually Dad got the police on to it and they got a court order and took me back,' but this delayed Marla attending school until she was seven, 'so I was behind all the others.'²⁴⁵ She left school after the merit certificate and followed an older sister to Melbourne. Her sisters were all domestic servants, but she considered herself lucky to gain an apprenticeship with a soft furnishing firm opposite Middle Park station.²⁴⁶ Her brother-in-law, a policeman, saw the advertisement and made enquiries on Marla's behalf. The training was all on-the-job. During the war she worked building aircraft, working

238. William Thomas King, individual war record, NAA, series B884, V275378.

239. Victorian Labor Party, Executive Officers, 'Minutes of Meeting' op. cit., 15 October 1947, folio 120–21.

240. *Labor Call*, 25 March 1949, p. 7.

241. Pat Tuttle, interview with the author, 25 September 2006, p. 44.

242. Lorraine Harvey, interview with the author, 21 February 2008, p. 1. No BDM records could be located for Ada Dunton. So little is known about her that a separate biography has not been possible.

243. Charles Peter Kyle, individual war record, NAA, series 9301, 128408; Marla Kyle, interview with the author, 19 October 2006, p. 4.

244. I am indebted to Marla and Barry Kyle (son) for providing me with a copy of the eulogy from Peter's funeral service.

245. Marla Kyle, interview with the author, op. cit., pp. 10–11.

246. *ibid.*, p. 12.

twelve hour shifts. She was classed as an assembler, working on the aileron, alternately using 'the Dolly' to hold the back of rivets or using the airgun to push the rivet in.²⁴⁷ Peter had trained as a book-binder, and had operated book-binding machinery for five years, then spent two and a half years with the Merchant Navy. Early in the war, he was sent from Brisbane to work as an Aircraft Assembler building Beaufort Torpedo Bombers in the same factory as Marla, which is where they met. They were married in 1943. By the end of 1943 Peter had joined the RAAF reaching the rank of Leading Aircraftsman.²⁴⁸ Although he had served overseas with the Merchant Navy, he did not serve overseas with the RAAF, and as Marla bitterly explained, this meant that his war service was not recognised by Veteran's Affairs until after his death.²⁴⁹ Peter was, however, entitled to a WSH loan.²⁵⁰

After the war, Peter wanted to train as a mechanic, but was told that as he already had a trade, he must do that. He got a job as a printing operator first at the Kodak factory in Coburg, then by December 1948 at the Herald and Weekly Times as 'bookbinder, guillotine operator and paper rule'.²⁵¹ He remained there until he retired from ill health in 1978. Marla returned to soft furnishings where she worked until the children arrived: Barry in 1954, Annette in 1957.²⁵² Peter's name was drawn in the February ballot and he and Marla moved into their Peter Lalor built home on 1 June 1949.²⁵³ The painting was not completed, and the bath was cracked and needed replacing, but otherwise it was finished by the Peter Lalor builders. Although the house was in Peter's name, Marla insisted that it be changed to joint ownership in 1956. She believed herself to be vulnerable without this recognition of property rights, once she had responsibility for children. Reflecting her distrust of the authorities she recalled saying to Peter, '[w]ell if anything happens to you, I'm out, you know. ... I want it in both names'.²⁵⁴

Peter made two major contributions in Lalor. He worked tirelessly with a group of other Catholics in Lalor to establish St Luke's Catholic school and church, including the St Luke's credit union.²⁵⁵ Also, through his printing role at the *Herald*, he organised printing for most events in Lalor, from 'how to vote' cards for the ALP, through to wedding invitations. Doss Lawson recalled, '[h]e was a beautiful man for all the printing he got done for everybody... he was just a sincere man....and I never saw Peter do anything that was offensive to anybody and he did so much'.²⁵⁶ Marla was a member of the LWSC and was involved in fund raising. Peter died on 16 January 1993.²⁵⁷ Marla died in 2009 after providing invaluable assistance to this thesis.

247. *ibid.*, p. 13.

248. Charles Peter Kyle, individual war record, *op. cit.*

249. Marla Kyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

250. WSC, Rates Book, *op. cit.*, no. 59.

251. Marla & Barry Kyle (son) interview with the author, 19 October 2006, p. 23.

252. Marla Kyle, *ibid.*, p. 8.

253. PLHBCSL, ballot lists, *op. cit.*; WSC, Rates Books, *op. cit.*, nos. 59, 66 & 79.

254. Marla Kyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

255. Marla & Barry Kyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 36; short memoirs from Marla and Barry Kyle hand written for this project in 2006.

256. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p. 20–21.

257. Marla Kyle, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

LAWSON, Doss and Clive:

Dorothy May Lawson (Doss), nee Christie, was born on 13 October 1915 in Swan Hill. Her father Jack Christie was a hostler at the Commercial Hotel (in charge of the horses when the coach arrived). Doss's mother Bertha (nee Green) waitressed at the same hotel. After WWI they built a one room home on scrub land in the Mallee and struggled with wheat farming there. Doss was the oldest of three girls. At age six, Doss attended a one room school, later moving with the family to Woorinen, to a school with two rooms; 'Oh very grand'.²⁵⁸ However, her father decided to return to the Mallee. Doss believed, 'It was the worst thing that he could ever have done,' as it denied the girls access to Swan Hill High School. Doss spent time in hospital in Swan Hill with appendicitis and while recuperating she sat for and won a scholarship to Ballarat Church of England Girls Grammar School, but her entry to that school was dependent on her staying with an aunt who did not co-operate. Doss eventually did a couple of years at Ballarat High School, staying with another aunt. Girls' education was simply not a priority.²⁵⁹

When Doss was in fifth and sixth grade at Woorinen School, she met her future husband, Clive Alexander Lock Lawson. He had been born in Rokewood on 17 October 1914.²⁶⁰ He was the oldest of six children, four boys and two girls. They met at a dance. 'Yeah, so that was the start of a lovely, lovely—a really wonderful happy marriage.'²⁶¹ They were married on 10 July 1937, and their daughter Nola was born in 1938. Clive was a truck driver before, during and after the war. He enlisted in August 1942 and was attached to the 118 Australian General Transport Company. He remained within Australia, spending two years in and around Darwin between 1943 and 1945.²⁶² Before the war, Doss worked picking fruit, and then worked as a live-in cleaner and maid for the matron at the Swan Hill hospital. During the war, Doss worked in a war industry in Melbourne, on trench mortars. On the assembly line, some women worked on the cap of the crusader plate and Doss burred out the centre with a drill. Nola was in a crèche and Doss was able to save £600, which paid the deposit on their home in Lalor.²⁶³

Clive was employed as a driver for the PLC and was part of the first syndicate. Clive and Doss moved into their cream weatherboard home at 59 Vasey Avenue in April 1949 and their co-operative attitude set the tone for many who followed. They were part of the first Peter Lalor syndicate.²⁶⁴ By the time they moved to Lalor, they had another child, Rodney, born in 1946 when they were sharing rooms in Kew. Doss recalled, '[a]fter living in rooms and Clive being away it was heaven [to move to Lalor].... they [the men] were home and it was—you know....we were able to go dancing again'.²⁶⁵ By April 1949 there was already a small community in Lalor, and Doss recalled that there were a lot of people living in temporaries in

258. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p. 11.

259. All this biographical information came from an interview with Doss. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p. 11.

260. Clive Alexander Loch Lawson, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX104640.

261. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p.12.

262. Clive Alexander Loch Lawson, individual war record, op. cit.

263. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 8 December 2005, p. 5.

264. PLHBCSL, 'Syndicate Agreement', Melbourne 1948, in the personal papers of Doss Lawson, North Fitzroy, 2005; WSC, 'Rates Books', op. cit., no. 66.

265. Doss Lawson, interview with the author, 12 December 2005, p. 17.

Derrick Street. Every weekend, people came out to build. ‘They just came out in hoards—off the motor train in hoards’.²⁶⁶

Both Doss and Clive played a central role in the co-operative community. Doss worked in the store helping Fred Hunt and ‘did the books’.²⁶⁷ She also worked in the kindergarten, helping Lil Nelson, and later Mrs Gage. Doss was a central figure in the LWSC lobbying for both a kindergarten and a school for Lalor.²⁶⁸ Clive was invited into the Masonic Lodge by Jim O’Connor and by 1961 he became a Grand Master and both Clive and Doss were active in social and philanthropic network the Fidelity Club.²⁶⁹ Clive was a Director of the PL No. 1 Co-operative Housing Society, through which he had taken out a housing loan and he lobbied for facilities for Lalor on behalf of the Lalor Branch of the ALP.²⁷⁰ Clive’s truck was always in use, collecting ‘rents’ to be taken into the Trades Hall each Saturday, collecting fruit and vegetables from the Victoria Markets for the Lalor Co-operative Store, supporting fund-raising fetes and gymkhanas and building the kinderhall—all this aside from his formal role as driver for the PLC, and later a driver for other companies as a day job.²⁷¹ Clive died of a heart attack on 31 October 1972. He was 58.²⁷² Doss sold their home in Vasey Avenue in 1984 and moved into the Old Colonists Home in Rushall Crescent, North Fitzroy, just down the train line from Lalor. Several other Lalor women were there too.²⁷³ She died on 25 February 2009 and her large funeral, uniting many original Lalor co-operators, was on 2 March.²⁷⁴

MACKIE, Honor and Allan:

Allan Edward Mackie was born on 30 July 1922 at Newport near Williamstown. He gained the merit certificate and trained as a metal polisher. He enlisted in January 1942, and was a driver throughout the war, never serving overseas.²⁷⁵ He returned to metal polishing after the war. Honor Mackie, nee Burton, was born in Seddon in Victoria in 1930. She was one of eight children, with seven brothers, four of whom served in the war. After completing ninth grade at school, Honor worked in a textile factory. She was married at seventeen, and the couple lived with Allan’s parents. The house in Gratwick Street was still being painted when they moved in, on 16 October 1948. She was pregnant with their first boy, Barry who was born in March 1949, the first boy born at Lalor.²⁷⁶ Their second boy, Phillip, was born eighteen months later.²⁷⁷ Allan was a foundation member of the Lalor cricket team in 1950, serving on the committee and was a member of the Masonic Lodge at Whittlesea. He was part of many working bees of Lalor men, helping with drains, roads and kindergarten construction.²⁷⁸

266. *ibid.*, p. 18.

267. Fred Hunt, interview with Ruth Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

268. *Whittlesea Post*, 22 August 1951, front page, & p. 8.

269. ‘Masonic Lodge Registration Book’, Epping Lodge number 804, book number 16, registered the transfer of Clive Lawson from Eros Lodge number 416 to Epping Lodge, but there is no date.

270. *Whittlesea Post*, 7 July 1954, p. 1.

271. *ibid.*, 27 February 1952, p. 6, & 22 April 1953, p. 8.

272. *Whittlesea Post*, 1 November 1972, p. 19, & 8 November 1972, p. 26.

273. Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 99.

274. Barbara Breaks, email, 25 February 2009; Peg Mackenzie, interview with the author, 2 March 2009, pp. 1–2.

275. Allan Edward Mackie, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX71079.

276. Honor Mackie, interview with Ruth Ford, 23 November 1998, p. 414; Honor Mackie, interview with the author, 1 May 2006, p. 48.

277. Honor Mackie, interview with Ruth Ford *op. cit.*, pp. 424; *Whittlesea Leader*, 18 May 2004, p. 8.

278. *Whittlesea Post*, 26 September 1951, p. 8; Honor Mackie, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

Honor came from a very poor family. She reminisced about her mother who ‘died at 94 and she still didn’t own her own home. Her family lost their few possessions in the depression’. She said, ‘[w]e had, not in our wildest stretch of our imagination ever [been] thinking we’d have a house.’²⁷⁹ When she and Allan married, they had a honeymoon for one week in Marysville. They caught a tram and a train.²⁸⁰ Honor described how a friend from Bentley, Sylvia Robinson (who later moved into Vasey Avenue, Lalor) used to travel by train to visit Honor in Lalor and she would bring the lunch. ‘She used to bring a few Salada Biscuits and that’s all we’d have for lunch. I mean, you didn’t have nice sandwiches or anything. We just didn’t have the money.’²⁸¹ Honor did beading work at night to earn extra money. When the boys reached school age, she began working at the Crestknit factory at Epping, where she worked for twenty-one years.²⁸² She and Allan separated in 1973. Allan died of cancer in 1994.²⁸³ At the time of writing Honor still lived in her home in Gratwick Street.

Honor was a shy person, and mainly kept to herself in the early days at Lalor.²⁸⁴ Ruth Ford asked Honor about how she felt when she first came to Lalor, as a teenage mother soon to have two small boys:

Oh, I thought it was the end of the earth. I really did, and I thought—I didn’t know how I can live out here, but you settle down, you know, and I did have a neighbour, I did have a very good neighbour—two good neighbours actually, and they made it so much easier, you know because they were slightly more established and they were a great help actually.²⁸⁵ [Dot Thompson (see below) was one of those neighbours, living next door]

Despite the best efforts of the Lalor community to protect women from social isolation, their efforts were not always successful. However, in 2004, Honor was the very active Secretary of the Lalor Thomastown Combined Pensioners’ Association and had long ago lost her reticence.²⁸⁶

McVICAR, see GORDON

MICHAEL, Vic and Rea, and O’Brien family:

Victor Richard Michael, called Vic, was born in Williamstown on 16 February 1919.²⁸⁷ Youngest of five children from a Catholic family, Vic’s father died in the influenza epidemic in 1919 when Vic was only three months old. The older children were placed for a time in orphanages, and Vic was reared by an aunt. Eventually their grandfather reunited the children under his care, though when he died, the children cared for each other.²⁸⁸ Eventually the

279. Honor Mackie, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 37.

280. Honor Mackie, interview with Ruth Ford, op. cit., p. 438.

281. Honor Mackie, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 24.

282. *ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

283. *ibid.*, p. 27.

284. Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, 8 December 2005, p. 7.

285. Honor Mackie, interview with Ruth Ford, op. cit., p. 417.

286. ‘Flowers, friends and fun’, *Whittlesea Leader*, 7 December 2004, p. 1.

287. Victor Richard Michael, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX141684 & V50517.

288. Kathleen Jones (nee Michael) interview with the author, 19 April 2007, p. 4.

older children dispersed and Vic 'was left with nowhere to go'.²⁸⁹ His best friend's family took him in. He left school at age 13, in about grade six. After some grocery delivery work, his employment involved filling four gallon drums at the Shell Refinery.²⁹⁰ Nora Merea Michael, called Rea, (sometimes Rene) was born in 1922 in Bendigo. She was the older of two children, but her younger brother died just before he turned one. Her family moved to Williamstown shortly afterwards. Her father was a carpenter at the Williamstown dockyards. Rea went to Williamstown primary school and was Church of England.²⁹¹ She attended the School of Domestic Arts in Williamstown and did her merit certificate. She believed her parents protected her from the worst effects of the depression, and, with hindsight at least, she placed a positive interpretation on her childhood

Good times they were. I can remember Mum and Dad didn't have enough money to buy a house and they used to rent a house and we lived in so many houses. We seemed to be no sooner in one than we were out of that because it was too expensive [so] into a cheaper one.²⁹²

After school Rea worked for several years in a factory in Fitzroy making Christmas bon bons; a non-essential industry that closed in the early stages of the war, so Rea, after a couple of other short jobs, switched to doing beading work in the City. She later transferred to a wartime job, 'polishing air force buckles (laughter)' and at night sold tickets at Williamstown Theatre.²⁹³

Vic enlisted in the CMF in July 1940 and transferred to the AIF in June 1943. He was not discharged until May 1946. He served a total effective period of 2137 days, all within northern Australia with anti-aircraft installations. He was promoted to sergeant in 1943.²⁹⁴ Rea had met Vic through relatives when she was only fourteen. He took leave to be married on 2 June 1942 and their oldest daughter, Carol, was born in March 1945. Kathleen was born in 22 November 1947. At war's end Vic worked for Vesta Batteries.²⁹⁵

Rea spotted the advertisement for the co-operative in the *Argus*,²⁹⁶ Vic attended the first meeting and they were drawn number 98 in the first February ballot in 1947.²⁹⁷ They became a leading couple in Lalor: Rea described herself as being in the background, but this greatly understated her contribution, while her husband Vic was the public face of Lalor and soon, the Whittlesea Shire. Although he could be incredibly tough and brooked no opposition, Michael was a relentless advocate for Lalor and the residents loved him for it.

Vic first appeared in the documents of the co-operative when, upon the completion of their home and their arrival in Lalor in December 1951, he was elected to the role of Vice Chairman of the Committee of Management for the PLC at its annual meeting in February 1952.²⁹⁸ By 4

289. *ibid.*, p. 4.

290. *ibid.*, p. 5.

291. *ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

292. Rea Michael, interview with the author, 25 July 2007, p. 5.

293. *ibid.*, p. 9.

294. Victor Richard Michael, individual war record, *op. cit.*

295. Kathleen Jones, interview with the author, 19 April 2007, p. 7.

296. Vic Michael, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 October 1998, p. 148.

297. *ibid.*, PLHBCSL, ballot list, February 1947.

298. *Whittlesea Post*, 20 February 1952, p. 8, 12 March 1952, p. 12.

March the formative meeting of the Lalor Branch of the ALP had been called by Purcell (see below), at which Purcell was elected President, and Vic was elected Vice President. Vic acceded to the President's position in 1953.²⁹⁹ He remained on the Lalor branch executive for decades until his death on 23 January 2003.³⁰⁰ He was made a life member. He joined the Whittlesea Council in September 1954 and served for more than thirty years, with five separate terms as Shire President between 1958 and 1980.³⁰¹ He was a JP. He was on boards and committees for nearly all the schools: Lalor Kindergarten Committee,³⁰² Lalor primary and high schools, and Merrilands and Keon Park high schools.³⁰³ He was instrumental in the formation of the formal Lalor Youth Club. He was President of the Promote Thomastown Committee for eight years from 1958.³⁰⁴ 'His slogan, 'Ten little miles from town' printed on the back of Melbourne's tram tickets is still remembered by many.'³⁰⁵ He served as a Commissioner of the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) from 1962 for 22 years, including time on the Planning and Highways Committee which influenced the Northern Corridor Plan for Melbourne, later transferring as Commissioner, in the mid 1980s, to the Area Commission of the MMBW.³⁰⁶ The organisation which was perhaps closest to his heart was the Helping Hand Association for Mentally Retarded Children. The first meeting was held in 1967, and Vic subsequently became President, and as *Outlook* reported, 'he is joined in a family endeavour by his wife Rene, who is president of the Ladies' group.'³⁰⁷ They both organised funding—Rea's morning coffees brought in tens of thousands of dollars over the years—and donations resulted in significant facilities being built in the Whittlesea Shire for people with intellectual disabilities.³⁰⁸ Vic was awarded the MBE (C) in 1980 for services to local government, and a similar Centenary Medal in 2001, together with numerous business and community awards. He told Ruth Ford in 1998, that he was just 'a little bloke' from Williamstown, 'who used to get his backside kicked off the wharf'. He offered this without 'boasting' about 'the fact that, if you put your foot firmly on an ideal in life, it can turn you around. Not much money in it, but a lot of fun'.³⁰⁹

Both daughters became school teachers, with Kathleen returning to Lalor primary school to teach. The older daughter, Carol, died of cancer in 2001. Vic died in 2003.³¹⁰ At the time of writing Rea still lived in their original home in Lalor. Rea and Vic had been married for 60 years.

299. *ibid.*, 12 March 1952, p. 12 & 18 March 1953, p. 8.

300. Kathleen Jones, interview with the author, 19 April 2007, p. 26.

301. A biography of Vic was prepared by the Whittlesea Shire Council (WSC) to support a nomination for the BHP Pursuit of Excellence Award, 1987, which he won. It is held in the private papers of Rea Michael. As this represented a consolidated history of his life, it has been used for some of this biography. See p. 4.

302. *Whittlesea Post*, 19 August 1954, p. 8.

303. Vic Michael, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 October 1998, pp. 173–4.

304. *Whittlesea Post*, 31 July 1958 p. 1; WSC, nomination for Victor Michael for the BHP Pursuit of Excellence Award, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

305. 'Know Your Councillors', *Outlook*, June 1971, p. 4; (*Outlook* was a local newspaper produced by a co-operative).

306. *Whittlesea Post*, 22 February 1962, p. 1; 'Know Your Councillors', *Outlook*, June 1971, p. 4; WSC, nomination for Victor Michael for the BHP Pursuit of Excellence Award, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

307. 'Know Your Councillors', *Outlook*, June 1971, p. 4.

308. WSC, nomination for Victor Michael for the BHP Pursuit of Excellence Award, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Vic Michael, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 October 1998, p. 175.

309. Vic Michael, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 October 1998, p. 174.

310. Kathleen Jones, interview with the author, 19 April 2007, p. 35.

Vic Michael's sister, Gladys, married Ernest O'Brien, and they too lived in Lalor, creating further family connections in this small settlement. They had been involved from the beginning and, as son James (Jim) O'Brien recalled, Vic and Rea came to visit 'and discussed the land at Lalor for sale. Both men rode bikes that day to see the land. Most of the land was swamp!'³¹¹ Ernie built in a syndicate group with Bert Watson, boot-maker and Bernie Keys, printer.³¹² Ernie's and Gladys' daughter, Margaret O'Brien later married Luba Stambanis's youngest brother who was only one and a half when he arrived in Australia in 1939. Luba's biography is found below.

MINNITI, Rino and Josie:

At the time of writing, Rino had, for more than 40 years, been the hairdresser in Lalor and as such he straddled the different cultures as they have evolved within Lalor. Rino's own words aptly described his origins:

My name is Nazzareno Minniti and I was born in a little town called Ciano, Gerocarne, which is in the province of Catanzaro, in Italy of course. I was the youngest son of four boys and I was born on first of October 1946. I grew up in a farm, a mixed farm: olive groves and wheat and chicken and donkeys and whatever. I grew up and we were making a living—quite good out of it. ... One of my brothers was already here, Dominic, and well he wrote back and said, 'if you want a good opportunity come to Australia'.³¹³

Rino, then aged 18, trained as a barber and hairdresser and migrated to Australia five days after his twentieth birthday. By that time two of his brothers were in Australia, living in Reservoir, south of Lalor. Rino worked in several factory jobs and learnt English at night school so he could start work as a hairdresser. He worked three jobs at times and within three years he had the opportunity to open a hairdressing shop in Lalor, which he did in 1969, renting a shop front at 286 Station Street. After more than 40 years he can say, 'I still love the job'. However, he laughed about the different pronunciations of 'Lalor' and compared them with the pronunciation of his own name:

One emigrant thing, bad thing was, we had to shorten our name because Nazzareno was too hard for them to pronounce. So what do I call myself? I call myself Rino. So everybody in 'Laylor' or 'Lawler' whatever you want to say, they call me Rino. So I'm still there.³¹⁴

Josie Minniti (nee Cicconi) was born in a little town called Dasa about five kilometres from the town where Rino was born. Josie was born in 1948 after her father returned (injured) from thirteen years at war. She had a brother thirteen years her senior and a younger brother was born in 1950. Her father Francesco Cicconi migrated to Australia in 1952 and was sent initially to the migrant camp at Bonegilla, but was soon boarding in Geelong. He brought the family to Australia in 1953. Her father's poor health and mother's lack of English meant they worked in poorly paid jobs and were heavily reliant on the older son for income. They nearly

311. James O'Brien, written memoir, 22 November 2006. I am indebted to Jim for providing a range of materials including the only copy of the 'Progress and Promise' brochure which advertised the PLC, and a full set of the Stanley Frew house plans.

312. Another group member, George Wells, butcher, withdrew after his foundations were dug and poured, leaving the three. Building proceeded according to age, so Bert was first, Ernie second and Bernie last. There was considerable resentment that when Bert's house was finished he did not help with the others. See Moya Keys, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 November 1998, pp. 215 & 222. See also Attachment B for a list of Peter Lalor syndicate groups.

313. Rino Minniti, interview with the author, 4 March 2009, p. 2.

314. *ibid.*, p. 3.

starved.³¹⁵ Josie recalled how the nuns at St Joseph's in Northcote noticed that she never had lunch, and intervened with assistance. Josie stayed at Northcote until her merit certificate and started working at aged thirteen and a half. She worked in a sewing factory in Westgarth, she worked weekends in a take-away shop in Northcote, cleaned the school toilets and did a secretarial course at night.³¹⁶ In 1961 the family moved into 45 Vasey Avenue in Lalor.³¹⁷ Josie began working in the typing pool for the insurer, Mercantile Mutual, and worked her way up to become secretary to the Managing Director.

Josie's sister-in-law opened a dress-making shop in Lalor next door to Rino's hair salon, and that is how Rino and Josie met. They married in 1972 and the first of four daughters was born in 1973. In 1974 the landlords increased the rent on the shop in Station Street, so Rino and Josie bought a block in May Road, (from the Catholic Church) and Rino built a new salon, with some sub-contractors, which still stands today. Their first home was in Tambor Court in Lalor. After the children went to pre-school and school, Josie became Secretary and President of Lalor Park Preschool committee and then was invited to help in the classrooms for several schools including St Monica's and St Luke's.

Rino was the overall winner for the *Leader* newspaper business award for the northern suburbs three years in a row and was awarded the title of the best hairdresser in the northern suburbs for five consecutive years, an award voted by the customers. In 2008 the City of Whittlesea awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Rino for being the longest serving shop-keeper in Lalor. However, the couple are best known for their charity work, particularly Josie.³¹⁸ At the time of interview Josie (with help from Rino) had already raised \$155,000 for their private charity, towards their goal to refurbish an entire hospital ward for cancer sufferers. In recognition of her efforts she was awarded the Australian Citizen of the Year Award in 2005 by the City of Whittlesea. In 2006 Josie was selected to run with the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay. She ran down the main street of Whittlesea and was able to highlight her cancer treatment charity work.³¹⁹

NELSON families:

Brothers Bill and Maurie Nelson were part of a syndicate building group with Bill's friend Ken Lonne. They are interesting because they joined the co-operative after it was no longer building any new houses. They knew that they would be building the homes themselves, with the help of Stockade products, supervisory builders and the Lalor working bees. In some respects therefore, they were similar to the large number of other Australians who were owner-builders in the post-war period. But although they struggled, they had much more well organised support through the co-operative, than the average owner-builder.³²⁰ It showed in the speed with which they were able to complete three homes. Part of the reason for their speed of building was that Bill's wife, Lil Nelson, worked tirelessly through the day, using the co-operative's horse and cart, to deliver materials onto the house sites in readiness for the next building effort. She also did some of the building work herself.

315. Josie Minniti, interview with the author, 4 March 2009, pp. 4–5.

316. *ibid.*, p. 6.

317. According to the WSC, Rates Book, *op. cit.*, no. 95, they did not purchase the house until 1963. Josie explained that there was a problem with the purchase. Also, it was only vacant land, and they had to build a house.

318. 'A star fundraiser', *Whittlesea Leader*, 12 October 2004, p. 17.

319. Rino and Josie Minniti, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25.

320. Tony Dingle, 'Self-Help Housing and Co-Operation in Post-War Australia', *Housing Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1999, pp. 341–54.

William Frederick Nelson (called Bill) was born in Clunes on 16 December 1914.³²¹ His father was a road contractor. Prior to the depression he worked a team of Clydesdale horses at the mines. Bill was apprenticed to the local printer in Clunes. His wife Lillian Agnes was born on 18 November 1912 and came from Western Victoria. Lil was employed doing domestic work on farms around Woorndoo (near Lake Bolac).³²² She was one of eleven children. Before the war they had two daughters, Maureen born in 1933 and Barbara born in 1936 in Ballarat. The family then moved into the Melbourne suburb of Kensington, where the girls went to school. They were Methodists. After a range of jobs, Bill became a compositor with the Government Printing Office, working on *Hansard*. Bill played the cornet with the Kensington Brass Band.³²³ He enlisted in the CMF on 12 July 1943 but was discharged only nine days later because of duodenal ulcers.³²⁴ From his role as compositor, he read the *Hansard* before they went to print, later taking on a formal role as proof-reader, working night shift.³²⁵ Another daughter, Judith, was born in 1945. Bill had a formal role with the Electoral Office as a returning officer, working in that role over many years in local, state and federal elections. In April 1949 they were told of the PLC. By mid 1950 they had moved into their home at 23 Vasey Avenue, Lalor.

Bill served on the Committee of Management of the PLC, and the building committee for the kinderhall. In fact, both Bill and Lil were vital in the creation of the kindergarten in Lalor.³²⁶ Lil started the first kindergarten in the Stockade in 1952, and from the enrolment books it would appear that she had as many as 34 children of Lalor families enrolled each year.³²⁷ There was a roster of Mums to help.³²⁸ She was not a qualified kindergarten teacher, so she studied material which was lent to her by a kindergarten teacher friend, and provided a range of educational activities each day for the children. She fulfilled this role until 1955 when the formal kindergarten was opened in Lalor. Through this time, Lil was an active participant in the LWSC, lobbying and fund-raising, both for the 'kinderhall', and for a primary school for Lalor. Barbara stated that, 'they worked, fund-raising for the community. Mum was very good at doing "Knees Up Mother Brown" at things, skirts flashing'.³²⁹ According to Barbara, Bill was 'Labor through and through, but he always was impartial and never got involved in politics,' because of his role with the Electoral Office.³³⁰ Bill and Lil retired to Bonnie Doon. Lil died in 1990, Bill died in 1999.³³¹

Both Maureen and Barbara Nelson settled in Lalor after they were married. Maureen was sixteen when the family moved to Lalor.³³² She had left school at 14 and joined Noyes Brothers engineering firm, and went to night school to learn typing and shorthand, later working on the accounting machine. She said, I 'loved the switchboard and used to fill in when

321. Barbara Breaks (nee Nelson) interview with the author, 8 December 2005, p. 21.

322. *ibid.*, p. 22.

323. Maureen Adams (nee Nelson) wrote her memories of Lalor from a series of diaries she had kept during this time, September 2009.

324. Australian Military Forces, Certificate of Discharge, 4 December 1947. I am grateful to Barbara Breaks for providing this certificate.

325. Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, 8 December 2005, pp. 22–23.

326. *Whittlesea Post*, 5 September 1951, p. 8 & 27 Feb 1952, p. 6.

327. I am indebted to Lil's daughter Maureen Adams for providing the kindergarten enrolment lists.

328. The kindergarten enrolment lists, cited above, contain the roster of mothers who were helpers.

329. Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

330. *ibid.*

331. *ibid.*, p. 24.

332. Maureen Adams, memories of Lalor, *op. cit.*

people went on holidays'. She also learned dress-making at night. She married Joseph Henry Adams (called Joe), who was born 25 March 1929. He was man from a local farming family from the German settlement at Westgarthtown, just to the east of Lalor. Three young women travelled by train together each day into the city to work. Maureen Nelson, Pat Murray—both from Lalor—and Alma Lethlean from Epping. They married three Adams brothers: Joe, Carl and Francis. Joe later became a plasterer with Dave Burgess's plaster factory and was a mainstay of the Lalor Cricket team.³³³ He purchased a block of land in French Street Lalor, in August 1953 from WSHD and paid £125. Joe was an owner builder.³³⁴ Joe and Maureen married in March 1955 and they had three children in three years, between 1956 and 1958, and three more children between 1960 and 1975.³³⁵

Barbara Nelson was thirteen when she moved to Lalor and she went to Reservoir State School until she turned 14 thereafter working in the community, for much of the time as a volunteer. She helped in the co-operative store, weighing out potatoes after school. It was at this age that she met Reginald Peter Breaks (called Reg), born 15 May 1932 in Epping. Together, they watched the weekly football matches, following the Epping Football Club (prior to the establishment of the Lalor Football Club in 1955) and toured around the Diamond Valley competition in an old furniture van. Reg worked for the Epping Bakery, doing deliveries around Lalor.

In 1954 they bought a block almost next door to Bill and Lil, and at the time of writing, they still live at 19 Vasey Avenue. They bought the block for £100 from an ex-serviceman, Bill Farnell. He had been part of the syndicate with Frank Hawkins, but he was not prepared to wait.³³⁶ Reg and Barbara were married on 28 July 1956 and lived with Bill and Lil while they built their home. Barbara was working as a driver. Through Bill's influence, Reg eventually gained employment doing monotype casting at the Government Printing Office, from which he later suffered industrial deafness.³³⁷ They moved into 19 Vasey Avenue in 1957 and their son Tom was born in March 1958; Jenny Lou was born in 1961.³³⁸ Barbara's contribution to the Lalor community has been celebrated by many awards, the most recent of which was in March 2007 when the City of Whittlesea presented her with the International Women's Day Award. She received the award because, in the tradition of the PLC, at age 70, she had dedicated most of her life to volunteering. She had worked with the Cubs and Guides in Lalor, serving as President when the Guides received their loan to build the hall.³³⁹ She worked on primary and secondary school committees and the Netball Association for 25 years. For 16 years Barbara was a volunteer for the Helping Hand Association for people with Disabilities, 'driving buses and offering respite care for disabled children'.³⁴⁰ 'Without women, there wouldn't be any volunteering', Barbara stated. She shared the celebration with other women saying that they are 'all special because they're about helping the community and that's what

333. *Whittlesea Post*, weekly sports reports for several years from 1950 contained the names of Joe and Carl Adams.

334. WSC, Rates Books, op. cit., 66 & 79.

335. Maureen Adams, memories of Lalor, op. cit.

336. Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, op. cit., p.25; William Henry Farnell, 'individual war record', NAA, series B833, VX120473 (V54083); WSC, Rates Books, op. cit., nos. 66 & 79. The block was in the name of William and Mary Farnell by 3 August 1949. By 2 July 1953, it was transferred to Reg Breaks. Bill Farnell had died by 1958.

337. Barbara reported that after Reg's hearing difficulties, 'they checked everybody, and everybody in the room all had hearing defects and they started giving them ear muffs...but too late.' Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 29.

338. Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 30.

339. *The Star*, 13 March 2007; *Whittlesea Post*, 13 March 2007.

340. *ibid.*

it's all about'.³⁴¹ Barbara, a long-term Labor supporter, has taken over from Doss Lawson the role as 'matriarch' of Lalor, becoming keeper of the Lalor memory. She has maintained contact with many of the families of the original Lalor settlers and her grapevine works with remarkable speed across as many as a hundred families. She has played an invaluable role on the Reference Committee for this project.

Bill's younger brother, Maurice Stanley Nelson, called Maurie, was born in Clunes on 18 September 1919.³⁴² He went to school in Clunes, leaving after the merit certificate at the age of 14. He took a job working for the local council in the gasworks and also for the 'big torch', the local gas company. He was supposed to do an apprenticeship, but 'it was all mucked up. I'm not sure what happened there'.³⁴³ When he was 18 he moved to Melbourne and after several part time jobs, got a job at the munitions factory in Footscray in 1938. He left his girlfriend, Juanita Milgate (called Nita), back in Clunes as a post office receptionist. She was a year younger than him and of Catholic faith. They were married in 1946 at the end of the war. Maurie was in a protected industry and was prevented from enlisting until 1942 when he became a Group II armourer with the Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (AEME), working first in Victoria, then Queensland, then Morotai 'looking after machine guns and maintaining weapons'.³⁴⁴ After the war he returned to the munitions factory and from there joined the Bureau of Mineral Resources, and finished his working days with the Department of Transport in their lighthouse section as a stores inspector.³⁴⁵

Maurie and Nita bought their block at 3 Vasey Avenue for £35 on 3 October 1950. It appears that they moved into their home on 26 July 1951, but it was not finished.³⁴⁶ Maurie and Nita moved to Lalor with their first daughter, Pam, and rented Doug Russell's house in Vasey Avenue.³⁴⁷ The Archibald family shared the house too, as they were building in Paschke Crescent.³⁴⁸ Maurie borrowed £1510 to build the house using the PL No. 1 Co-operative Housing Society. Maurie described how, once a member, he attended co-operative meetings at the Police Institute in the city that were run by Purcell, King and Mrs Dunton.³⁴⁹ He said that they were well attended, with perhaps fifty or sixty people present. Throughout the 1950s Maurie and Nita had three more girls and a boy.

Both Maurie and Nita were also involved in community activities. Nita played a role in the LWSC though joined in the early to mid-1950s. By 1955 she was Treasurer, a position she retained at least until 1958.³⁵⁰ She was also on the Pre-school Committee and Maurie was President.³⁵¹ Later Nita was involved in Cubs and Guides. Maurie was in the Men's Club which

341. Barbara Breaks, email, 17 June 2007.

342. Maurice Stanley Nelson, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX120055.

343. Maurie Nelson, interview with the author, 4 April 2006, p. 3.

344. *ibid.*, p. 5.

345. *ibid.*, p. 6.

346. WSC, Rates Books, *op. cit.*, nos. 66 & 79.

347. The Russell family only stayed in their house for about six months before Doug took the family and he went mining gyprock in Nowingi in the Mallee. Doug's wife Betty wore callipers as an aftermath of polio. The unmade roads in Lalor were totally unsuitable for her level of disability. They kept the house and their son John was still living there at the time of writing. John Russell, telephone conversation with the author, February 2010.

348. Mary Archibald was George Mackenzie's sister.

349. Maurie Nelson, interview with the author, p. 15. Leo Purcell's brother, Frank, was the Secretary of Police Association until his untimely death in 1949, but undoubtedly this was the connection.

350. *Whittlesea Post* 23 February 1955, p. 8 & 13 March 1958, p. 7.

351. *ibid.*, 3 November 1955, p. 5 & 13 March 1958, p. 7.

drank in the Rec Hut in the Stockade on Friday nights. For a time he was the President of the Lalor Junior Football Club. He also helped build the kindergarten.³⁵² He was a member of the RSL and helped organise the fund-raising gymkhanas, he was in the Lalor branch of the ALP, and was a formative member of the bowling club. He was also a member of the very lively Lalor fishing club, which toured Victoria on fishing trips. He believed he was the only member of that club who was not a Mason.³⁵³ Nita died in 1996 and at the time of writing Maurie was living in Pambula with his son, Raymond. At the end of our interview in 2006, Maurie stated, 'If my wife was alive,—she used to always come with me to all the meetings and that—she'd be able to tell you a lot more than I could.'³⁵⁴

O'CONNOR, Jim and Bill, and their families:

Jim and Bill O'Connor were brothers, among eleven surviving children from a very large Catholic family in Fitzroy.³⁵⁵ Nine years apart in age, both men were carpenter/builders employed by the PLC to work in the Stockade factory. According to Les Casbolt, they also sub-contracted to build houses for the co-operative. For instance, Jim built Les's home.³⁵⁶ Not only were they responsible for the production of pre-fabricated house frames, doors, windows and the like, they also 'supervised' the syndicate building system, through which they also taught men to build. They were the 'ghost' builders for each syndicate house, so the syndicate building novices could claim their housing loans.³⁵⁷ They were members of the first building syndicate, and together with their syndicate group, they built six houses in two years after work and at weekends.³⁵⁸ Both moved with their families to live in Lalor. They were important players in the physical and social building of Lalor.

Austin James O'Connor (called Jim), was the older brother, born on 6 May 1907.³⁵⁹ His wife was Florence Ellen, nee Copeland (called Flo), who was born on 31 August 1915. They were married in 1938, with Yvonne born in March 1939, and twins, Allan and Robert born in May 1942.³⁶⁰ Jim trained as a carpenter and enlisted in January 1942 becoming part of the Royal Australian Engineers. He served in New Guinea, the Dutch East Indies and Milne Bay. He reached the rank of corporal and on discharge was a member of the 2/48th A1 Battalion (Australian Engineers Store Base Depot RAE).³⁶¹ Jim and Flo and the family moved into their unpainted new home at 14 Vasey Avenue on 1 January 1950.³⁶² Sadly, one twin, Allan, had died before they moved.³⁶³

352. *ibid.*, 14 July 1954, p. 1.

353. Maurie Nelson, interview with the author, pp. 25–26; *Whittlesea Post*, 24 January 1957, p. 7.

354. Maurie Nelson, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

355. Yvonne O'Connor, telephone conversation with the author, 28 October 2006.

356. Les Casbolt, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 40.

357. See, for example, Vic Michael, interview with Ruth Ford, 30 October 1998, pp. 157–58. Vic said that Bill was 'our ghost builder' to satisfy the WSHD rules. The group was Vic Michael, Percy Murray and Bert Ansell.

358. PLHBCSL, 'Syndicate Agreement', Melbourne 1948, in the personal papers of Doss Lawson, North Fitzroy, 2005.

359. Austin James O'Connor, (Jim) individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX71312. His war record shows his place of birth as Geelong. His daughter says his family was always in Fitzroy; Yvonne O'Connor, telephone conversation with the author, *op. cit.*

360. Yvonne O'Connor, telephone conversation with the author, *op. cit.*

361. Austin James O'Connor, (Jim) individual war record, *op. cit.*

362. WSC, 'Rates Books', *op. cit.*, nos. 59 & 66.

363. Yvonne O'Connor, telephone conversation with the author, *op. cit.*

Jim was a very quiet man, but he immediately became involved in community activity, for instance, he helped build a garage to house the new fire engine for the Epping and Lalor Fire Station.³⁶⁴ In 1950 he unsuccessfully sought a seat on the Whittlesea Shire Council and outlined his background. He stated that that he had spent 20 years in Swan Hill where he 'was engaged in building, road construction and farming activities.' By 1950 he was on the newly formed Lalor and District Progress Association, the Epping Fire Brigade and was Vice Chairman of the PLC.³⁶⁵ By March 1953, Jim was elected Vice-President of the Epping Junior Football Club.³⁶⁶ Another major contribution by the O'Connor couple, was their dedication to a fruit and vegetable store for Lalor. Jim built a small wooden shed on the side of the LCCS store, through which the entrepreneurial and gregarious Flo, ran a fruit and vegetable shop. She was a larger than life woman. When the store closed in 1954, Jim and Flo sold their home in Vasey Avenue, lived in a temporary close by and built a shop with a home above on Station Street. They lived there for years, and Flo ran a fruit and vegetable shop and a grocer's store for a while, near the Hunt's newsagency and a butcher. Although a Catholic, Jim belonged to a Masonic Lodge in Melbourne and when he arrived in Lalor was part of the group who established the Fidelity Club which met in Thomastown Mechanics Institute hall.³⁶⁷ The Fidelity Club was instrumental in the building the Masonic Aged Care Centre on the Nepean highway, of which Jim was made a Life Governor. Jim died in February 1973, aged 65. Flo remarried Ern Tailby and they later retired to the Rushall Crescent Retirement Village with Doss Lawson and others.³⁶⁸

Allan Murray O'Connor (called Bill), was born on 1 August 1916 at Chillingollah, in Victoria. He trained as a carpenter. He was single when he enlisted in June 1940 at 23 years of age, and like a group of other Lalor men, Bill brought to civilian life a range of issues from the war, including ongoing and severe bouts of malaria.³⁶⁹ He served 1194 days overseas, initially in the Middle East for thirteen months from February 1941. He returned to Australia when the war in the Pacific began, and he served in New Guinea for a year, returning briefly to Australia to marry Mary Theresa (maiden name unknown) on 20 May 1944, and returned to the South West Pacific for another year. He served in Morotai, Lae and Borneo. His unit was the 2/2nd Australian Heavy A/A Regiment and his rank was listed as lance bombardier. During 1945 he was hospitalised for relapses of Malaria.³⁷⁰ Bill O'Connor was the last in the first syndicate to complete a home in Lalor. It would appear that he bought his block of land, at 18 Vasey Avenue, in October 1949. He bought it from ex-serviceman Allan Reide Garlick, who had been drawn in the June ballot and had done nothing with the land. Allan was working as a policeman and was transferred to Colac. As Bill was drawn in the March ballot it is likely he swapped another block for the Vasey Avenue one, to be near his brother. The home was completed by the syndicate in 1950 when Bill and Mary appear to move in on 23 October.³⁷¹

364. *Whittlesea Post*, 19 July 1950, p. 1, 'New Fire Truck for Epping Equipped to Handle Any Emergency'. The photograph was captioned 'Working Bee for Epping Fire Brigade'. 'Pictured above are members of Epping and Lalor Fire Brigades at a working bee to erect a garage for the new fire engine recently issued to Epping Brigade.'

365. *ibid.*, 23 August 1950, front page.

366. *ibid.*, 18 March 1953, p. 1.

367. 'Masonic Lodge Registration Books', Book 9, Eros Lodge, no. 416, p. 343, Austin James (Jim) O'Connor joined at age 38, carpenter, 2/12/46 made application—admitted 12/2/47.

368. Doss Lawson, survey form, completed for the Ruth Ford interviews, City of Whittlesea files.

369. Allan Murray O'Connor (Bill) individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX31508.

370. *ibid.*

371. WSC, Rates Book, *op. cit.*, no. 66.

They had two boys, the youngest, Barry, was born in Lalor.³⁷² Bill was also a Mason and involved with the Fidelity Club.³⁷³

Bill was immediately active in the RSL. By January 1951 he had been elected one of three Vice-Presidents of the Epping sub-branch of the RSL.³⁷⁴ The RSL had bought land for new club rooms, but building could not begin until £4000 to £5000 had been raised, a task which fell in large part to the little Lalor community to organise. A year later the *Post* could report that the 'energetic vice-president, Mr Bill O'Connor, has spent many hours making the clubroom possible by organising, supervising and working throughout the erection of the building. Although much work has been done, much remains to complete the building'.³⁷⁵ With Bill O'Connor as the driving force, a new club room was opened at a 'Gala Night', on 3 November 1952.³⁷⁶ It was a small 'weatherboard structure 24X36, lined with hardboard', and it was planned that it would later become a supper room when the main hall was constructed. Bill O'Connor epitomised the renewed energy brought to the Epping RSL by the influx of ex-servicemen from Lalor. As League Councillor, Mr E. Barker stated on this night of celebration:

The new Diggers of the Second World War were carrying on the traditions formed by the old Diggers, and were shouldering the burden of caring for their less-fortunate comrades.³⁷⁷

By 1953 Bill O'Connor was elected Treasurer of the Epping Junior Football Club.³⁷⁸ However, he continued to work on the new main hall of the RSL, which opened with a new Baby Health Centre in August 1956.³⁷⁹ As Doss Lawson later described the efforts of Bill O'Connor, Harry Fielding (President) and Harry Turner, 'they worked and worked and worked and worked...they were the three that, to my mind, worked very, very hard for the RSL'.³⁸⁰ Bill's role in the physical building, but also the building of social capital, which arose from the building and the subsequent social outlet, cannot be underestimated.

O'BRIEN, see MICHAEL

PURCELL, Richard Leo:

Richard Leo Purcell (called Leo) was born in Warragul, Victoria, on 2 May 1904, sixth of seven children of Richard Peter Purcell (auctioneer, land agent), and Mary Emily Purcell (nee O'Donnell).³⁸¹ Purcell's major contributions were: as radio broadcaster (1946 to 1955), hosting a popular program called 'Servicemen's Question Box', on the ALP's radio station 3KZ,

372. Yvonne O'Connor, telephone conversation with the author, op. cit.; Barbara Breaks, interview with the author, 8 December 2005, p. 8.

373. 'Masonic Lodge Registration Books', Book 9, Eros Lodge, no. 416, p. 343, Allan Murray (Bill) O'Connor joined aged 30, carpenter, made application on 7/2/49—accepted, 4/4/49.

374. The Epping sub-branch of the RSL at that stage was still part of the Preston sub-branch of the RSL, becoming the Epping-sub-Branch in on 30 June 1951.

375. *Whittlesea Post*, 30 January 1952, p. 8.

376. *ibid.*, 5 November 1952, p. 1.

377. *ibid.*

378. *ibid.*, 18 March 1953, p. 1.

379. *ibid.*, 2 August 1956, p. 1.

380. Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 86.

381. Leo Purcell, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX108203 & V4378; Marie Purcell, 'Dozens of Cousins: A Story of the O'Donnell and Purcell Families 1841–1991', October 1991, p. 75 (an unpublished family history).

which addressed servicemen's problems; and his role as initiator of the PLC (1946 to 1954).³⁸²

His Catholic education was frequently disrupted as his family moved throughout Victoria before settling in Northcote. He left school at about 13 to work as messenger-boy at Myers, as a labourer, and road worker.³⁸³ A fine athlete, Purcell played for the Collingwood Football Club seconds and trained runners for the Stawell and other foot races. He also raced dogs, and dodged the law as a SP bookmaker. He finally secured a job with Melbourne Tramways, becoming active in the Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Union. On 31 May 1930 Leo and Anne Margaret Mussett (born Castlemaine, Victoria) were married with Catholic rites, in Thornbury.³⁸⁴ He remained a depot starter/inspector until enlisting in 1940.³⁸⁵ He served with the Australian Army Pay Corps until 1945, having been commissioned a lieutenant in April 1942.³⁸⁶ After demobbing, Purcell chanced his future as a postmaster/shopkeeper in West Thornbury, between 1946 and 1949.³⁸⁷ It was 'an unofficial post office and sub-newsagency, lolly shop etc'.³⁸⁸ By 1949 he was employed by the PLC on wages, probably until 1951. At this time also he started a business buying and selling timber. 'I was part-time in business then but I was not fully; I was working on commission for a good deal of the time.'³⁸⁹ It was this business which was declared bankrupt in 1960. The bankruptcy hearing makes for sad reading, as Purcell struggled with lack of capital, poor business decisions, bad weather and accidents.³⁹⁰ This was a tough decade for the Purcell family, though as Frank recalled, 'Dad struggled on and eventually got on his feet and had a bit of fun with a horse now and again.'³⁹¹

Purcell was an ALP grass roots activist, with connections that spread like tentacles across Victorian working-class society. He held formal roles as ALP Branch President, first in Thornbury (c.1930), then Lalor (1952).³⁹² In 1937 Purcell contested the Northcote City Council elections as the selected Labor candidate for the North Ward. Labor identities such as John Cain (State MLA for Northcote), Pat Kennelly, Frank Brennan, A.C. Bird and W.H. Turner, all attended campaign meetings to support Purcell.³⁹³ The sitting member retained his seat with 1,191 votes. Purcell attracted 920 votes, but attained the highest vote for a Labor candidate in the North Ward. Only two members of the 15 member council represented Labor.³⁹⁴ To coincide with his tilt at local government representation, Purcell launched a free

382. Doss Lawson, transcript of interview with the author, 12 December 2005; *Labor Call*, 2 May 1946, p. 6; Ted & Leonie Purcell & Ann Wirth, interview with the author, 17 November 2006. Initially called 'Servicemen's Question Box', by 1948 it was known as 'Ex-Servicemen's Question Box'. See *Labor Call*, 16 April 1948, p. 7.

383. Marie Purcell, op. cit., p. 89; See also Frank Purcell, interview with the author, 20 April 2007.

384. Marie Purcell, op. cit., p. 89.

385. *ibid.*

386. Leo Purcell, individual war record, op. cit.

387. Frank Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit.

388. Richard Leo Purcell, bankruptcy record, NAA B160/0,152/1960 Creditors Petition No. 137/60, sequestration order number 152/60.

389. *ibid.* Frank Purcell stated that 'I thought Dad began working for the co-operative full time in 1949.' See email 3 December 2009. Also in the papers of Ernie O'Brien, there is a record of Ernie buying 2X1 tile battens from Purcell for a cost of £25 in 1951.

390. Richard Leo Purcell, bankruptcy record, op. cit.

391. Frank Purcell, email, op. cit.

392. *The [Northcote] Leader*, 7 July 1938 (no page numbers); *Whittlesea Post*, 12 March 1952, p. 12.

393. *The Leader*, 15 July 1937 (this page is incorrectly labelled 8 July). There are no page numbers; *The Leader*, 19 August 1937.

394. *The Leader*, 2 September 1937.

weekly newspaper called the *Northern Echo* which was later bought by *The Leader*.³⁹⁵ In 1938 Purcell ran again for the North Ward seat on the Northcote City Council as the endorsed Labor candidate. Cain and Brennan again supported the Purcell candidature, but Purcell lost for a second time.³⁹⁶ In 1939, Purcell's Tramways colleague Mr T.A. (Thos) Mercovich, now Secretary of the Thornbury Branch of the ALP, was the endorsed Labor candidate and Purcell was his campaign secretary.³⁹⁷

In 1945 he became Secretary of the Ex-Servicemen's Committee of the Central Executive of the Victorian Branch of the ALP³⁹⁸ and was active in the RSL especially on housing issues.³⁹⁹ On Anzac Day 1948 Purcell delivered the Anzac Day Oration on radio 3KZ. A stirring orator, he spoke his mind and could be divisive, thereby making some political enemies.⁴⁰⁰ In 1949 Purcell ran unsuccessfully for pre-selection for the ALP senate ticket in Victoria. He gained more than 12,600 votes, but came fifth in a large field, behind the four candidates who were preselected.⁴⁰¹ In February 1952 he contested ALP pre-selection for the state seat of Northcote against his friend John Cain (Snr). Some believe Purcell ran as a 'Grouper', but his dispute was over a land development.⁴⁰² Not surprisingly Purcell lost many friends in the Victorian ALP over this contest, particularly as this was the pre-selection year during which Cain's great friend and supporter, Pat Kennelly, lost his pre-selection to the Movement.⁴⁰³ Purcell was probably aligned with those in the party who actively supported the Industrial Groups, for it was Assistant Secretary, Dinny Lovegrove, who led the Groups and who announced that Leo was to be the endorsed Labor candidate for the Whittlesea Shire Council elections between 1951 and 1953. Leo was the inaugural President of the Lalor Branch of the ALP, which he founded in 1952. Though part of the Catholic right, he never joined the DLP, and according to his family, was unpopular around the Catholic Church in Thornbury because of it. Rather, he and his family were all allied with YCW, which never supported Santamaria's brand of anti-communism. As his son, Frank, reflected, 'my father really had no time for Santamaria at all.'⁴⁰⁴ There are some with long memories in the ALP assumed he had joined the DLP.⁴⁰⁵ These memories still harbour considerable bitterness.⁴⁰⁶

Strongly influenced by the 'distributist school of social Catholicism', Purcell was the central figure in creating the PLC.⁴⁰⁷ The family believes Purcell even sold his store, in part to

395. Frank Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit. This information has not been independently verified, however he recalls delivering the paper into letterboxes and his testimony has proved reliable on all other issues.

396. *The Leader*, 7 July 1938 & 28 July 1938.

397. *ibid.*, 24 August 1939.

398. Victorian Labor Party, Central Executive, 'Minutes,' op. cit., item 6, folios 14 & 15, 24 August 1945, & folios 56 & 57, 12 June 1946.

399. Frank Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit. Leo was in the Preston Branch of the RSL and on the Anzac House Committee on Housing. See *Whittlesea Post*, 8 August 1951, pp. 1 & 8.

400. *Whittlesea Post*, 8 August 1951, p. 8.

401. *Labor Call*, 6 May 1949, p. 1, 2 September 1949, p. 1.

402. Frank Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit.; Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties*. Melbourne, 1970, p. 40.

403. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor 1917-1957*, Marrackville, 1982, pp. 144-146.

404. Desmond Purcell, interview with the author, 22 January 2007, p. 7.

405. I had telephone conversations with two, long-serving Victorian ALP activists who did not want to be quoted.

406. Robert Corcoran, 'The Labor Split Revisited: Old Memories and New Evidence', Paper presented at *The Past is Before Us: Ninth National Labour History Conference*, Sydney, 2005.

407. Race Mathews, 'Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism', *Labour History*, no. 92, May 2007, p. 89.

support the co-operative, losing everything when it failed financially in the early 1950s.⁴⁰⁸ Certainly, he did work for the co-operative between 1949 and 1951, initially on wages and then on commission and possibly in a role sourcing and selling timber.⁴⁰⁹ The family had moved into their home in Lalor by late 1949, but abruptly sold up and moved to live with Annie's parents in Thornbury in late 1953. By this time he was financially crippled and his political aspirations were finished.

Purcell keenly felt his lack of education and was hungry to read, talk and learn.⁴¹⁰ When the Tramways Union closed its library and distributed its holdings, Purcell brought home every Ion Idriess book he could find and read them all.⁴¹¹ According to Idriess's biographer, he 'had a belief in the heroic [and with this] went a belief in the social and economic development of Australia, a vision which matched the aspirations of the governments of the 1940s and '50s'.⁴¹² It is possible to see how Purcell might have fallen under this spell. Purcell also lived opposite the Frank Brennan family in Thornbury, and Frank's son the author Niall Brennan, was a regular visitor to their home. He discussed with Purcell the plays he was writing, a few of which in the 1940s aired on Purcell's program on 3KZ. Brennan also taught elocution to Purcell to help with his radio broadcasts.⁴¹³

Purcell worked as a timber merchant until old age.⁴¹⁴ He died at home in Ringwood on 31 August 1984 with an estate of little value and is buried in the cemetery at Doncaster/Templestowe.⁴¹⁵ He was survived by Annie and their five children.⁴¹⁶

RETTIG: see WINTERTON

RUSSELL-CLARKE, Eric Jas Graham Granville Newsome:

Eric Jas Graham Granville Newsome Russell-Clarke (known to the co-operative as Peter Russell) was from a middle-class family, the second son of teacher, 'sent to the colonies' in the 1920s to join the clergy.⁴¹⁷ His major contribution was as a housing commentator and journalist in print and on radio after the war. He was the first Secretary of the PLC and provided the impetus for its commencement. By 1949 he owned a business selling 'Russell Prefabricated Homes'.⁴¹⁸

He had trained as a carpenter in England. He settled in Ballarat where he studied theology and became a reader in the Church of England, conducting services as a Priest. However, he was

408. Ted & Leonie Purcell & Anne Wirth, interview with the author, op. cit.

409. Richard Leo Purcell, bankruptcy record, op. cit.; Frank Purcell, email, op. cit.

410. Desmond Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 13, Desmond stated, 'And sometimes the frustration was because I think he felt he wasn't educated and that was why he surrounded himself with people'.

411. *ibid.*

412. Julian Croft, 'Idriess, Ion Llewellyn (1889–1979)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, Melbourne, 1983, p. 426.

413. Desmond Purcell, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 3.

414. Ted Purcell, email to the author, 10 July 2008.

415. Leo Purcell, individual war record, op. cit.; Ted Purcell, email, op. cit.

416. Leo Purcell, 'Will and Probate', VPRS, series 7591/P/0011, unit 54 956/760.

417. Peter Russell-Clarke, (son) telephone conversation with the author, 16 July 2007.

418. Peter Russell, 'The Key to Your Home'. This is a pamphlet advertising the 'Russell Pre-fabricated Home', Melbourne, 1949, in the private collection of Peter Russell-Clark. I am grateful to Peter Russell-Clarke for making this brochure available.

‘defrocked’ because his views were too liberal.⁴¹⁹ In 1932, at age 21 he was an advertising representative and he married Mavis Augusta Wren, a seamstress of Ballarat. She was 24, having been born in 1907 to Edward and Isabella McArthur.⁴²⁰ She was adopted by the Wrens and after her marriage changed her name to Wendy Russell-Clarke. Eric changed his name to Peter and two sons were born to this marriage before Peter left for another relationship.⁴²¹ Peter held a management role with Civil Construction Corps during the War.⁴²² After the war he was retained by the *Argus* to write a weekly column called ‘Practical Homes Bureau’. He wrote under the name of Peter Russell in the *Argus* and the *Australasian Post* and had a radio program with June Jago called ‘This Man’s Castle’ on which housing issues were aired. He also wrote in the *Argus* as Eric Clarke and perhaps other names as well.

Russell was deeply concerned about poor urban design which led to the creation of slums and promoted many of the concepts from the ‘garden city’ movement without naming them as such. He praised good design and provided an architect designed home each week in the newspaper for use by home builders. He was convinced about the need for the building industry to modernise its practices and strongly supported the government’s exhortations for experimentation with pre-fabricated houses, and insisted that private enterprise could deliver the solution. Urban historian Seamus O’Hanlon believed Russell to be a modernist architect in company with Roy Grounds and Robin Boyd.⁴²³ He was not, however, a trained architect. Nevertheless, he ‘instructed registered architects’ and called himself a ‘practical homes expert’ in association with ‘leading builders’.⁴²⁴ He influenced the PLC both in terms of its urban design and architect designed homes, as well as its insistence on the use of pre-fabrication techniques. The co-operative was poorer for this loss of expertise after his early departure from the venture in January 1947.

The prefabricated homes he sold after he left the *Argus* in 1949 were cleverly designed and manufactured in his factory in Flemington, to be transported anywhere in Victoria by truck. They were ‘stand alone’ buildings of two rooms, and were designed to be the nucleus of a home, with later modules to be added as finances and materials permitted. The advertising brochure was pitched at young families and encouraged people with very modest budgets to make a start on owning their own home.

It is not clear when he joined the group from the AA Pay Corp who were planning the co-operative, but he remained for only a couple of months after its first public meeting. He nonetheless had significant impact. I have not traced his biography past this immediate post-war period, but this interesting man could be a fine subject for further investigation by scholars of urban history.

SPENCER, Stanley Russell and Margaret:

Stan and Margaret Spencer, with their new baby daughter Lyndall, occupied the first home in Lalor at number 400 Station Street.

419. Peter Russell-Clarke, telephone conversation with the author, op. cit.

420. Department of Justice, Victoria, Mavis Augusta Wren, *Register of BDM*, Melbourne, 1932.

421. I am grateful for this information from his son, Peter Russell-Clarke. According to Peter, the boys were placed in care in the NSW highlands. They were later reunited with their mother and returned to Melbourne.

422. Peter Russell-Clarke, telephone conversation with the author, op. cit.

423. Seamus O’Hanlon, ‘Modernism and Prefabrication in Postwar Melbourne’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 57, 1998, p. 109.

424. *Argus*, 20 February 1947, p. 12.

Stanley Russell Spencer was born in Ararat, Victoria, on 28 February 1919, and was christened a Methodist, but his religion is recorded later as Church of England.⁴²⁵ His occupation prior to the war was listed as 'manager', though the rates books described him as 'salesman'.⁴²⁶ He served first in the Militia and then with the Royal Australian Engineers, in Australia and the Pacific Islands reaching the rank of corporal. After serving 578 days overseas he returned to Camp Pell in Melbourne where he qualified to become an Orderly Room Sergeant. His war record reported:

A very good type of NCO, who takes pride in his work. Keen and interested, he demonstrated his ability to absorb instruction and is capable of handling administrative work. Neat and tidy in appearance and has a soldierly bearing. Typing speed is 28 wpm but capable of improving to 40 wpm with practise and experience. Conduct during the course was excellent.⁴²⁷

He married Margaret Alice (maiden name unknown) in April 1946, two days after his discharge.⁴²⁸ Like many young men of his time, he had moved into Melbourne by war's end. He was living in Burwood. Although eligible, it would appear that he did not take up a WSH loan, almost certainly buying the house through a PL Co-operative Housing Society loan.⁴²⁹ Lyndall was born on 6 April 1948 and they moved into their new home at Lalor immediately she came home from hospital. They subsequently had another daughter, Allison.⁴³⁰ Stan was the postman in the co-operative at Lalor and a popular, affable man who for a few years, played a leading role in the Epping sub-branch of the RSL, serving as Treasurer between 1950 and 1953.⁴³¹ In 1951, Stan starred as the groomsman in a 'Mock Wedding' performed in Lalor to raise money for the LWSC.⁴³² Spencer's work took him away from Lalor in 1953. Little is known about Margaret except the information contained in Stan's war record. We know she was the mother of two small children.

STAMBANIS, Luba and Chris:

Luba and Chris Stambanis are particularly interesting for this study, as they and their two children arrived in Lalor in the early 1950s and their location on the edge of the Peter Lalor Estate meant they actively straddled two communities: the PLC community and the rapidly forming Macedonian one. Luba was born in the northern Macedonian Greek village of Upper Kalenik. She was the third child of the large Klapche family, and was born in 1924. After five children had been born, and before the depression, Luba's father worked on farms in Australia, but returned to Kalenik in 1930. He fathered four more children before returning to Australia in 1937. In 1938 the oldest son joined his father in Gippsland and the rest of the family arrived in December 1939. Luba was quickly employed plaiting basket shoes in a factory in Fitzroy with a Macedonian boss.⁴³³

425. Stanley Russell Spencer, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX59222 & 329890.

426. Ibid. See also WSC, 'Rates Books', op. cit., nos. 59 & 66.

427. Stanley Russell Spencer, individual war record, op. cit.

428. Ibid.

429. WSC, 'Rate Book', op. cit., no. 59.

430. *Whittlesea Post*, 23 March 1955, p. 8.

431. Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 86; *Whittlesea Post*, 24 January 1951, p. 1, 23 March 1955, p. 8 & 25 November 1953, p. 9.

432. *Whittlesea Post*, 11 June 1951, p. 1.

433. Luba Stambanis, interview with the author, 17 November 2009, pp. 1–3.

Chris (Risto) Stambanis was born close by in the northern Macedonian Greek village of Lower Kalenik in 1920. He arrived in Australia in 1940 in what Luba believed to be the last boat out of northern Greece before WWII stopped such shipping. Chris and Luba met when he arrived into the Macedonian community in Melbourne. Luba's parents then had a tenth child, this one born in Australia.

Chris was part of the Australian Labor Corps during the war.⁴³⁴ The couple were married in 1945 and both worked in a fish and chip shop until Luba returned to the basket shoe factory. Her first child Alexandra was born in 1947, and a son, Fote, was born in 1950. They saved hard and bought a tiny place in Fitzroy, but it was too small with two young children. So in 1952 Chris paid £120 for a block of land from Bill Mann as part of the Bella Vista housing estate at Lalor. It was at 15 David Street. Chris bought a ready-made plan and had the house built to lock-up stage, when he took over and completed the job himself.⁴³⁵

Chris and Luba nonetheless surrounded themselves with family. Luba's younger sister Tina had by then married a Serb and was living in Thomastown in a house built by her husband. Luba recalled:

No, no I was happy where my husband wanted to go. I wasn't refusing. Not because of my sister, but we went out because we were all together. Mamma and Pappa were next door...They bought, then brother this side. We all bought block of lands together, the three, but we were the first ones here. Then sister [moved] opposite.⁴³⁶

Luba's youngest brother later married Ernie and Gladys O'Brien's daughter, Margaret, (see Michael, above), who lived inside the Peter Lalor Estate in Chowne Street. Chris came from a family of five boys and two girls and, except for one of the boys, the other siblings migrated to join Chris in Melbourne. His mother later joined them in Melbourne. Chris's father died after the war, but never returned home, as Luba described it, having been caught on the wrong side of the border.⁴³⁷

When Chris and Luba first arrived they used a water connection from Hugh and Beth Indian of Derrick Street, until they were able to get a water connection on their land and Luba used the Gratwick Street co-operative store for groceries. Luba was also involved in fundraising activities for the 'kinderhall'. When the children went to school, Luba went back to factory work, eventually working with Chris at Raymond's factory in Collingwood, until she retired in 1970. Chris died of lung cancer in 1979, aged 59. Although a smoker, Luba attributed the disease to the dust from years of precision skiving work.

Luba straddled the Australian and Macedonian worlds. For years she and Chris worshipped at the Macedonian Church in Fitzroy, and went to dances, picnics and celebrations in the Macedonian hub around Gertrude and Exhibition Streets in Fitzroy.⁴³⁸ Chris played with the Macedonian Soccer team.⁴³⁹ However, after Chris's death Luba found the distance too great to worship in Fitzroy, so she went with her Australian friends to the local Church of England

434. Peter Hill, *The Macedonians in Australia*, Carlisle WA, 1989, p. 37.

435. Luba Stambanis, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 6.

436. *ibid.*, p. 8.

437. *ibid.*, p. 11.

438. Peter M. Hill, 'Macedonians', *eMelbourne: The City Past and Present*, <www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00879b.htm>.

439. Peter Hill, *The Macedonians in Australia*, op. cit., p. 100.

until a new Macedonian Church was consecrated in Epping in 1995.⁴⁴⁰ By the 1980s Luba had founded a Macedonian Women's Group of which she was President. Twelve of the women decided to form a singing and dancing troupe, which dressed in traditional costume and performed to great acclaim throughout the northern suburbs. Luba said that they performed for an audience of 700 at the Northcote Town Hall and helped at a charity event for boat people at the Collingwood Town Hall.⁴⁴¹ She was also Vice-President of the Macedonian Pensioners' Association and produced and directed several plays with and for this group. In 2002 Luba was co-winner of Whittlesea Council's International Women's Day award for her work organising Macedonian singing, dancing, drama and teaching groups.⁴⁴² At the time of writing Luba was still living independently in their home in David Street.

TESTAGROSSA, Connie:

Connie Testagrossa came to Australia from Messina, Sicily, with her mother, brother and sister in 1954.⁴⁴³ Like many families, her father had made the journey two years earlier, in this instance, attracted by exaggerated stories of the opportunities on offer, told by his brother-in-law. He was part of a process of chain migration. Despite the promises, there was no work for him in his vocation as a barber, and he was unemployed for six months, feeling desperate as he had intended sending money home to his wife and three children. Eventually he gained work cutting cane, crushingly heavy work for which he was totally unsuited.⁴⁴⁴ Six months after his family had joined him in Queensland, the family moved to North Melbourne to live with others who had migrated from their village. By 1955 Connie's mother 'who was an adventurous person' took the family out to Lalor to look at blocks of land in Messmate Street. Connie recalled that when they arrived by train at Thomastown 'there was nothing—just a milk bar on the corner'. The family asked directions, 'just walk a bit. There's another milk bar there, but that's it. There's nothing there.' When I asked if she knew about the PLC just to the north of Messmate Street, Connie stated, 'I don't remember that. But I wouldn't go that far.' Her mother bought number 21 Messmate Street, Connie's future husband, Carl, bought number 23. Carl had also been cane cutting in Queensland. They bought from Italians and paid £310 for each block. Connie was married in 1957 and her husband started building their home in 1959. By then a few others were building and a few had just moved in. Connie's grandparents migrated to join the family in 1957 and moved with Connie to her new home in Messmate Street in 1961 taking care of Carl and Connie's two year old boy while they both worked. Connie parents later moved to join them on the block next door. Several other family members then moved to Messmate Street.

Connie's world for a long time revolved around the St Luke's Catholic Church.

There were enough Italians for a separate group to begin fund raising efforts for the Church. According to Connie, they mostly lived in Messmate Street, French Street and David Street. They held dances at the Epping Memorial Hall with 'Miss Lalor' and other charity events.⁴⁴⁵

440. Peter Hill, 'Macedonian Churches in Australia', James Jupp, (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 492–501.

441. Luba Stambanis, personal papers, Lalor, 2009. There are many press clippings in this collection.

442. *Whittlesea Leader*, 16 March 2004, p. 7.

443. This biography is created from an interview between Connie Testagrossa and the author, 5 March 2009.

444. As Templeton reports, prior to WWII there was a strong presence of Italian workers in the timber and cane cutting industries of Western Australia and Queensland. Men often stayed for long periods, sending money home. In 1925 a royal commission investigated this issue in Queensland. See, Jacqueline Templeton, 'Here, There or Nowhere? Italian Sojourners Write Home', *The Australian Immigrant in the 20th Century: Searching Neglected Sources*, edited by Eric Richards & Jacqueline Templeton, Canberra, 1998, pp. 76–77.

445. Connie Testagrossa, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 11.

Connie's early memories of Lalor were filled with the busy life of a young mother until the untimely death of her son in the early 1970s which sent her into depression for several years. Over the past twelve years though, she has been the President of an Italian pensioners' association, but St Lukes' is still the centre of her world—along with the North Melbourne Football Club. Carl died in 2009.

THOMPSON, Geoff and Dot, and Skeeter Hodgson:

Geoffrey James Thompson was born in the suburb of Elsternwick in Melbourne on 12 September 1916.⁴⁴⁶ His father was in the Navy and his family belonged to the Church of England. He grew up around Elsternwick and left school at 14 having reached the eighth grade.⁴⁴⁷ When he enlisted in the Army in June 1940, his occupation was recorded as a factory hand and he was attached to the 2/2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion. He served in the Middle East from March 1941 until he suffered a shoulder injury a year later and was hospitalised, returning to Australia in April 1942. Although he entered the war with his health assessed as 'Class 1', by August 1943 he was having eyesight problems with his right eye and his health was downgraded to 'Class 2b'. He was transferred to the AA Pay Corps in Melbourne though he was in and out of hospital.⁴⁴⁸ Circumstantially, Thompson could have had some input to the co-operative ideas that were circulating in the AA Pay Corps in Melbourne; however, there is no evidence to suggest that he had any involvement in the initial formation of the PLC.

On his return to Australia Geoff had met Dorothy May Wigmore, born on 2 September 1922 in Snake Valley in rural Victoria. Her parents worked on a property there. She had two brothers and two sisters, though two of her siblings died, leaving her with one brother. She went to school in Skipton, reaching eighth grade. She was Church of England.⁴⁴⁹ Dot was also in the armed services as a driver and wireless operator for the 2nd Signals Training Battalion.⁴⁵⁰ Dot and Geoff married in 1943 and had a son, Wayne, in 1944.

Dorothy, in talking about Purcell said, 'He used to be on (3KZ) on a Sunday afternoon. We used always to listen to him. He was a dinky die Labor man and he was all for this Peter Lalor thing. Geoff had a lot of time for him'.⁴⁵¹ Geoff was quite prepared to 'gamble' his one or two pounds as a down payment on the deposit on this co-operative home building ideal, though none of them knew whether or not the proposal would work. Dot thought, 'oh Jingoos, what if we lose two pounds!'.⁴⁵² Geoff Thompson was a member of the ALP and was a member of the Robbie Burns Masonic Lodge. After his discharge from the Army in February 1946, he worked as an accountant for the Commonwealth Department of the Navy, another example of someone who improved their occupational status through wartime training.

Geoff, Dot and Wayne (now also called Geoff) were the eleventh family to move into Lalor; 14 Gratwick Street on 5 October 1948. Their house was built out of conite, a product made of steel structures like bird cages, rendered with cement. They were offered this kind of

446. Geoffrey James Thompson, individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX21150.

447. Dot Thompson, interview with the author, 1 May 2006, pp. 59–60.

448. Geoffrey James Thompson, individual war record, op. cit.

449. *ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

450. Dorothy May Thompson, individual war record, NAA, series B884, VF389672.

451. Dot Thompson, interview with the author, op. cit., p. 37.

452. *ibid.*, pp. 36–38.

structure as the co-operative could not access plaster.⁴⁵³ Once in Lalor, Geoff joined the Epping Branch of the RSL and he, with other Masons living in Lalor, established a Fidelity Club to help families in need.⁴⁵⁴ Geoff was also involved in the formation of the LCCS and the opening of the co-operative general store in Lalor in 1950, where Dot worked as a volunteer alongside Fred Hunt as grocer, and with Stan Spencer as postman. She played an important role introducing new residents to each other through the co-operative store.⁴⁵⁵ Geoff tragically died of a war related brain tumour on 31 August 1950, aged 33, leaving behind a twenty-seven year old widow and a six year old son. After Geoff's death Dot earned a wage in the store, later working in Coles at Preston, then Rockmans' stores.⁴⁵⁶ She was for a time the Secretary of the Epping RSL.⁴⁵⁷ Fifteen years later Dot married again, taking the name of Varcoe. Many years after her second husband died from cancer, she married her neighbour, from 18 Gratwick Street, Skeeter Hodgson in 1981. At the time of writing, Dot still lived in her original home in Lalor.

Morley Thomas Hodgson (called Skeeter) was born on 15 July 1911 in Cranbourne and was a Tobruk Rat, serving in the 2/9th Australian Infantry Battalion.⁴⁵⁸ After he moved into Lalor, in December 1948, he left to work gypsum in the Mallee for a couple of years and paid off the house.⁴⁵⁹ Later he was a forklift driver at the Bostik factory in Thomastown. He had a daughter Margaret by his first marriage. He died at the age of 92 in 2003.⁴⁶⁰

WINTERTON, Bill and Maggie, and Rettig Family:

William Ernest Winterton (called Bill or 'Pop') was born in northern NSW, (probably Lismore) in 1898. He came from a farming family and served in WWI including two periods overseas with the 2nd Light Horse Regiment in the Middle East.⁴⁶¹ Maggie Grace Winterton (nee Singleton) was born in 1903.⁴⁶² They lived in Preston prior to Lalor and then lived for a while with their daughter's family (the Rettigs) in Gratwick Street until their house was completed in Middleton Street. Bill claimed that together with the Rettigs they were the second family to live in Lalor.⁴⁶³ Bill became a high profile Lalor resident. He played an invaluable role producing a weekly newsletter on behalf of the little community in Lalor.⁴⁶⁴ He managed a hotel in the city and was active in the Epping sub-Branch of the RSL.⁴⁶⁵ A very large man, old 'Pop' Winterton pumped out political messages through a megaphone at the railway stations at Thomastown and Reservoir and was reputed to have been a member of the Communist

453. *ibid.*, pp. 48, 60–61.

454. *Whittlesea Post*, 'Obituary', 6 Sept 1950, p. 1.

455. Doss Lawson, interview with Ruth Ford, 24 October 1998, p. 77.

456. Dot Thompson, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

457. *ibid.*, p. 35.

458. Morley Thomas Hodgson (called Skeeter) individual war record, NAA, series B883, VX46585.

459. Dot Thompson, interview with the author, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

460. Dot Thompson, telephone conversation with the author, 3 April 2006.

461. William Ernest Winterton, WWI Nominal Roll and Embarkation Roll.

462. Department of Justice, Victoria, *Register of BDM*, *op. cit.*

463. *Whittlesea Post*, 8 August 1951, p. 8.

464. There are very scant holdings available, however, it probably commenced in mid to late 1948 as 'Weekly News', no. 18 was dated 29 January 1949.

465. *Whittlesea Post*, 8 August 1951, p. 8.

Party.⁴⁶⁶ In an unlikely association, Bill teamed with Arch Adams (a Liberal voter) and they enclosed two vacant lots. As Pauline O'Day described it:

Very early in the piece Dad (Arch Adams) and Old Bill (as we used to call him) pulled up the paddock next to his place and they made a complete vegetable garden. And they'd be out there and the whole paddock was filled with cabbages and silver-beet etc, you know.⁴⁶⁷

Whether or not he was a communist, he was certainly 'political' and made it his business to push the interests of Lalor residents at every opportunity with the local council. In the early 1950s, supported by his gardening friend, Arch Adams, he ran for election to the council, initially against Leo Purcell his neighbour in Middleton Street. Purcell was the 'endorsed Labor candidate'. For a while that battle was very bitter.⁴⁶⁸ Maggie Grace Winterton died in 1956 aged 53, and Bill spent time in hospital.⁴⁶⁹ Bill sold up and moved to Kew. He died two years later in 1958, aged 61.⁴⁷⁰

Bill and Maggie's daughter, Maggie Jean Adele Winterton was born in 1923.⁴⁷¹ She married Harold Stanislaw Rettig who was born in 1917 in Western Australia. Unusually, the ballot was in Maggie's name. The purchase price of their home in Gratwick Street was £1490 and they paid the £25 deposit required. However, in May 1947 the PLC received a letter from them pleading extreme hardship so the society resolved that, 'in view of the fact that Mr Rettig was pledging his Gratuity of £97.10.0 against the building of his wife's home, the amount of £25 ... be refunded to Mrs. Rettig, but that she be informed that this action was taken in view of the very special circumstances and would not be regarded as a precedent'.⁴⁷² Rettig served in the Army between 1939 and 1944,⁴⁷³ later working for the co-operative as Assistant Procurement Officer until he reportedly alienated too many suppliers.⁴⁷⁴ The Rettigs moved into their home ahead of time because they were evicted from their rented dwelling and were quite literally homeless. Soon afterwards, they were joined by Bill and Maggie Winterton. The *Post* reported in 1952 that the Rettig's eldest daughter, Wendy, suffered severe burns to her back from spilling boiling water and spent time in the Children's Hospital.⁴⁷⁵ Within two months of this accident, the Rettigs had sold their home and left Lalor.⁴⁷⁶

466. Several of the people interviewed, now in their sixties, made this reference, but all wanted it deleted from the transcripts so it was not attributed to them. That in itself indicates a hangover from the time when there were serious consequences from being labelled 'a Communist'. See Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement 1920–1955*, Canberra, 1975, pp. 276–77; Stuart Macintyre, 'Obituary: Robin Gollan (1917–2007)', *Labour History*, vol. 94, May 2008, pp. 7–10.

467. Pauline O'Day (nee Adams) interview with the author, 25 September 2006, p. 17.

468. *Whittlesea Post*, 29 August 1951, p. 1; Ted Purcell, interview with the author, 17 November 2006, p. 30.

469. *Whittlesea Post*, 7 February 1957, p. 7. Bill Winterton was reported as being home from a spell in hospital; *ibid.*, 28 February 1957, p. 8, Bill Winterton was in hospital again.

470. Department of Justice, Victoria, *Register of BDM*, op. cit.

471. *ibid.*

472. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 23 May 1947.

473. Harold Stanislaw Rettig, individual war record, 'WWII Nominal Roll', W235059 & WX2849.

474. PLHBCSL, Committee of Management, 'Minutes', 29 August 1947, Rettig was employed, and in 'Minutes', 21 November 1947 he was dismissed.

475. *Whittlesea Post*, 9 January 1952, p. 1.

476. WSC, 'Rates Book', op. cit. no. 66.