

Vince Ahern, 27 Aug 2005

You had to be five year old before you started. I was five year old in November and I started school in the January, that'd be 32.

There was a little old cafe, they used to call it the Millions Club. Old Darkie Williams – a big fat old cook – he retired there. A rather large hut, only one room, and all the derilects they'd all bunk with him. A bloke come to town, shearer say, with a lot of money, they'd look after him. One bloke, Darkie'd give him a quid to go and get some meat; another, go and get some vegetables. It was just a hangout; hangout for all these derilects.

I was born in 27. Done all my schooling in JC, except for three months in Innisfail. I sat for scholarship in JC. Finished school on the Friday and started work in Sallens shop on the Monday. My uncle was my boss, Charlie Ahern. I used to work there during school days, before school, after school, of a Saturday and Sunday, washing bottles and filling up kerosene and methylated spirits and shellite. When I started work there it was a full time job. I wasn't there long; I got a job in the railway. Sat for the exam, passed it, and got a job in the railway. I wasn't there very long either; three or four years.

2.15: Those days Sallens was a grocery shop. AJ Smith, they turned out to be Burrows later on, Ben Burrows, He took over Alex Cameron's shop.

I never left JC until I got married. 49 I left JC. I worked round – ice works, fencing. I think my dad bought the ice works off Jack Jensen, over the road from the Bush Nurse. That's where I was born. The nurse in charge of that place, she signed my birth certificate, Nurse Wuddersford [?] in 1927.

We were still in the ice works when I was playing football in 47 and 48. We were driving trucks for the next few years. Dad and I had the Dalgonally mail run. We went to Nelia for five years then, and after that he went back to the railways. He was in the railways most of his life. Mum and I we got out of the pub and he went back into the railway.

3.50: 49 we married, in JC, St Barnabus C of E.

I was born in the bush, reared in the bush, I wanted to get away from the bush. And I had two girls. No education out there, I couldn't go to high school. There's plenty of schools down here.

We went down to Nambour in 54. Dad got married again. He died down outside Newcastle.

4.30: [Football]: Arse knocked off us in Townsville. We used to play Hughenden, Richmond, CT, Cloncurry, Mt Isa. And we had to come down here and play Herbert River. They beat us, yeah. Only beat us by 12 or 13 points, still a hiding.

Fayers always wore that head gear. Bastard of a thing was mine. I bought it and he pinched it, took it off me. He wore it all the time. It protected his ears. He used to put his head in lots of places where a lot of people wouldn't have put theirs. He'd wear it every game. Headgear and no boots... well, he'd wear'm onto the field cos you weren't allowed to play barefooted, but once he got off the field he'd just throw the boots off. One of the toughest men I've ever seen in my life, that man.

We practised the day before the game. This bloke was a railway worker, this one Australian Estates, this fella a railway worker – you wouldn't know where they were – this bloke worked on a property. They only came to town for a game of football. No training those days. We never had a coach even.

I did play in 48 for a while. Bernie's brother, he was the only one who didn't make the photo, Mike Foster.

Might have an engine and two carriages and a guards van. Footballers used to have to guarantee the railway so much money. Train load of supporters and the team. Days we went to Richmond or Cloncurry, you'd find half the town'd go along just for the day out. This bloke was just a supporter, Frank Byrne.

6.30: [Pub]: 49 to 54. Boxing Day 49 we went there. We bought it off Tunnys. We sold out to Roy Hampton.

[Frank Forde] He come out to JC as a diesel mechanic doing up diesel motors. He done a big job for Eckfords at the picture show, and done a job for old Charlie Byrne the butcher. Ended up sacking his wife and marrying the girl Byrne, Rita Byrne. Frank was dilly-dallying with Rita, and his wife more or less got the big A in JC.

He had the gift of the gab old Frank, he'd talk himself into anything.

End of recording