

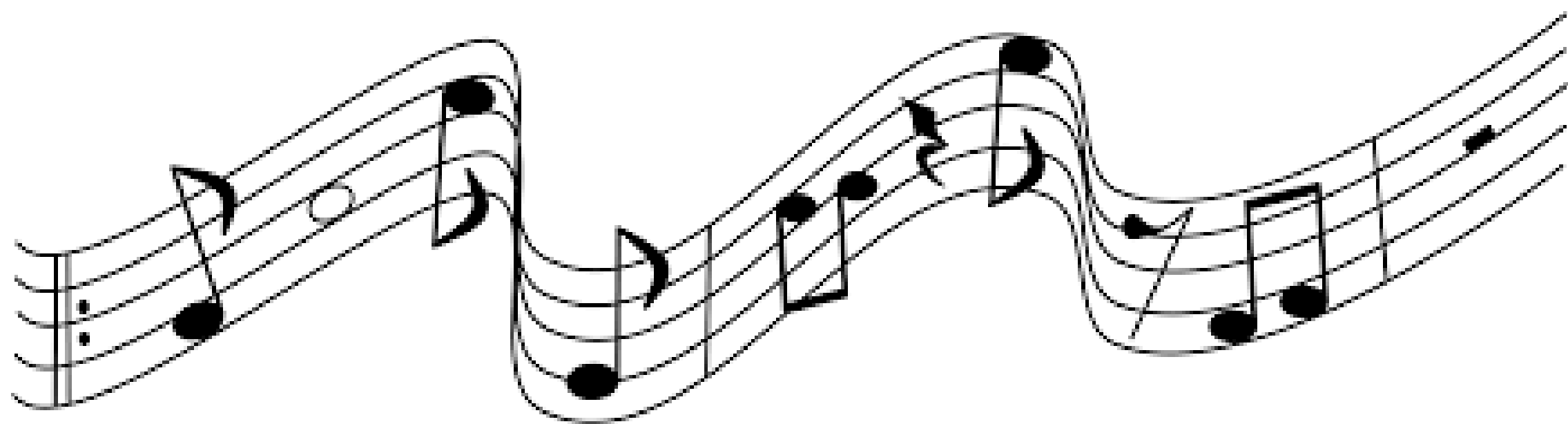
KALAMUNDA & DISTRICTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ORAL HISTORIES

A MEMOIR OF JOHN HOPE





Circa 1933 - John Hope - Circa 2013



"How they managed, I do not know, but my parents somehow or other bought a piano and I used to go out to Mary's Mount after school twice a week to learn to play the piano.

My sister, Betty, followed me to do the same, so there was a bit of time taken up there with practise of the piano. My sister and I used to entertain the family with piano duets, which was something of a family joke. I can't imagine why, you know! Family competition I think, you know, to see who would finish the duet first'

An interview with Mr John Hope was conducted by Alethea Du Boulay, 24 July 2009 on behalf of the Kalamunda and Districts Historical Society.

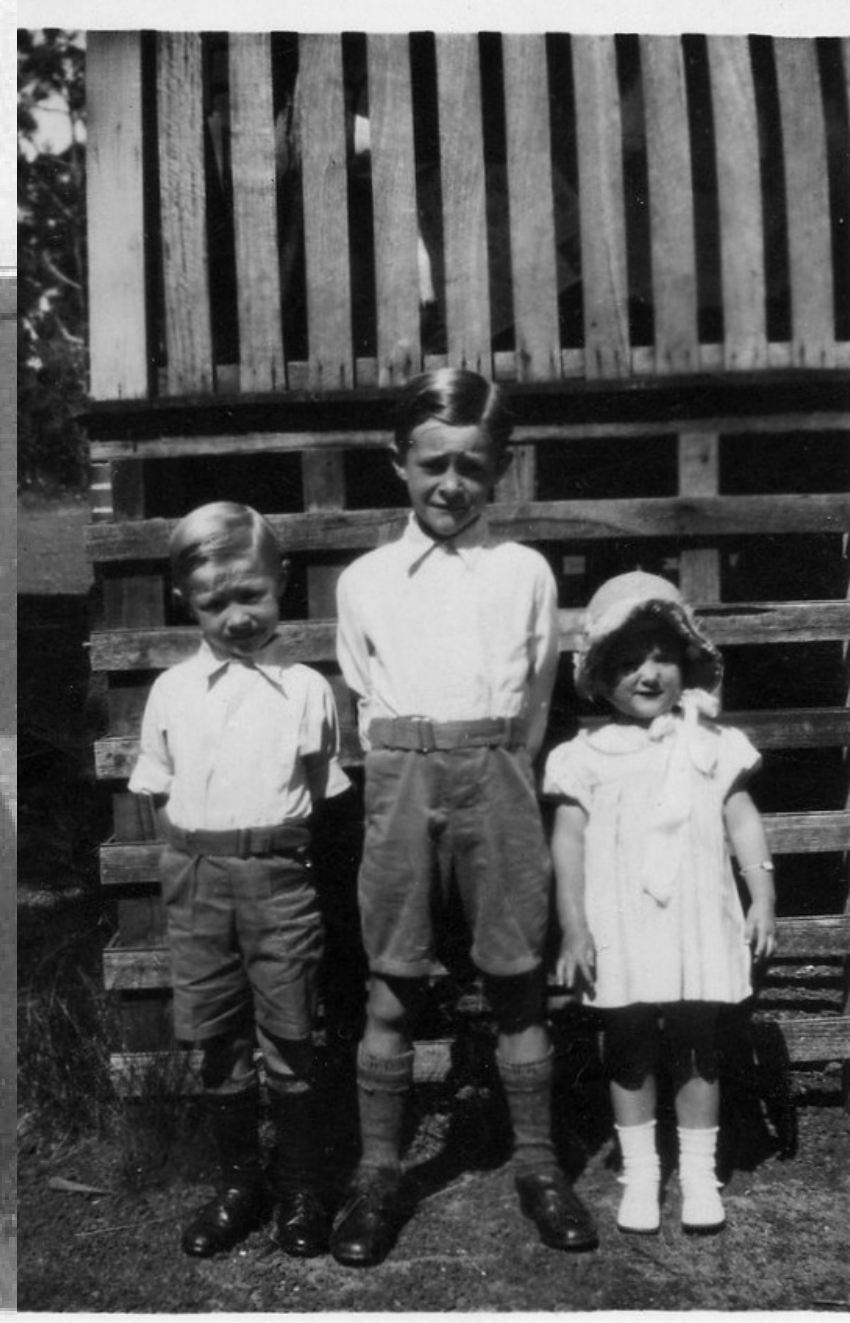
This summary of the original interview was prepared on behalf of the Bill Shaw Oral History Group



Bill, John and Andy Hope. Circa 1933



Andy and Joey Hope Circa 1953



John, Andy and Betty Hope, Circa 1938

John Aidie Hope was born in Guildford, Western Australia on 6 April 1933 to Andy and Joey Hope.

His Scottish parents came from a small coal mining village about six miles out of Edinburgh. Andy, a coal miner, had badly injured his arm in a rock fall so when Bob Nestor arrived for a holiday telling him about how wonderful Australia was he decided the family needed a change.

Bob Nestor, the local Butcher in Kalamunda, sponsored the family and they arrived in Perth in 1928.

They stayed with the Nestors in Central Road for a few weeks until they rented a house of their own in Kalamunda.

Andy worked in the Nestor's butcher's shop and learned the trade before moving on to delivering the meat orders.

His run included Piesse Brook, Carmel, Pickering Brook, Karragullen, Smailes' Mill and Barton's Mill. He became very well known around the district and whilst the lifestyle was very different he delighted in his job. The boys in the family would help him with the meat delivery on Saturday mornings.

John was the third of seven children. His older brother Bill was born in Scotland in 1923 and came to Australia with his parents as a four year old. His brother Andy was born around 1931.

His younger sister Betty was born around 1935, Mary about 1938 and Margaret was born about two years later. Younger brother Ross was born in 1941 and the youngest child Jim, was born in 1943. The children were born over a 20 year period.





John Hope and "Judy" on front porch of house in Central Road, Circa 1943



John Hope, "The Cricketer", In the backyard Circa 1946



Trooper John Hope, 10th WA Light Horse Brigade. Circa 1952.

Early years and schooling in Kalamunda

John lived with his family in a house in Central Road. The Hope children and their friends spent a considerable amount of time picking orchids and investigating what was underneath the rocks in the vacant block next door. The fire station is now located there.

With so many children in the family their house was always full. John remembers keeping pigeons and chooks in the backyard.

John attended the Kalamunda State School in Heath Road. Mr T B Millar, a fairly strict headmaster, was in charge at the time and life was fairly restricted. His teachers included Miss Wickham who became Mrs Farmer, Ron Stephens, Miss Steele and Miss Wells. The school wasn't very large and is the school house that is currently on display in the Kalamunda History Village.

There was another large building around the quadrangle that had asbestos shutters on it. Later another room was added to the western side of the old school house.

John's schooling revolved around sport, he was a very keen cricketer. There was no grass so they played cricket on the gravel making it difficult to anticipate where the ball was going to end up. John recalls one of the few times he managed to hit the ball cleanly and it sailed out of where they were playing and into the quadrangle, bounced and went straight through one of the asbestos shutters. This brought Mr Millar out onto the veranda to see what was happening. Fortunately John didn't get into trouble for the event.

When John passed the examination for entry into Australia Post he left school and started work in 1948 at the age of 15.





Friday nights at Portwines Bakery



Kalamunda Show. Circa 1950

Fun times in Kalamunda

There wasn't a great deal of organised entertainment in those days. John remembers the main excitement of the week was going to the pictures on a Friday night.

The main picture venue was in the Agricultural Hall with outdoor picture shows in Heath Road, behind where IGA is now, and another one on Railway Road.

When they finished the picture show they would stop in at Portwines Bakery and buy pasties or pies. 'The Portwines pasties were beautiful!' he says. 'They'd be pulling them out of the ovens as people arrived from the picture show'.

There was the occasional concert put on at the Agricultural Hall which John and friends would go to but overall he felt that entertainment was limited.

John wasn't interested in dancing, which was a significant part of the Kalamunda community in those days so he didn't attend the various weekend dances.

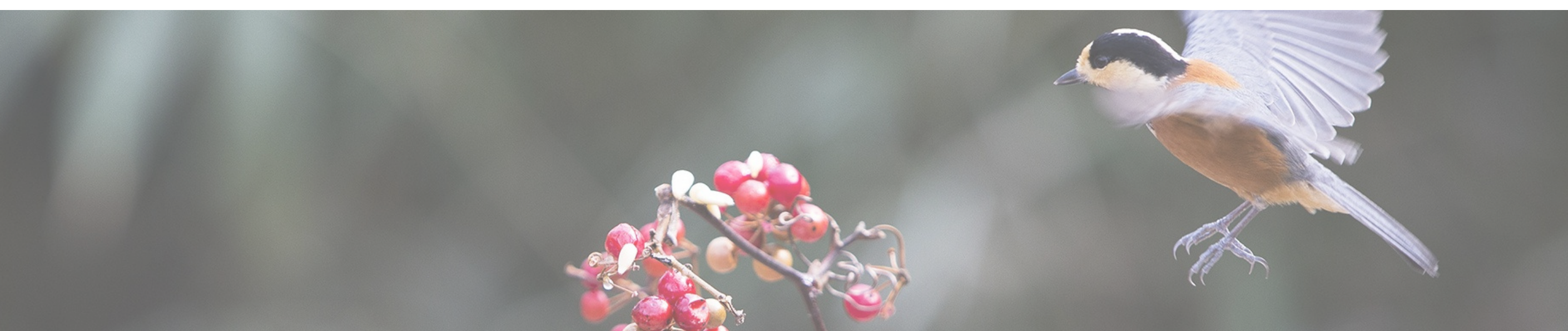
He fondly remembers going to the Kalamunda Show which were exciting times for those attending. Money was always tight in his family with only enough to get into the Show and a small amount to make a purchase.

He would keenly attend and wander around watching the various events taking place on the oval.

Events included horse racing, push bike racing and log chops which he found all very interesting. He would also go to the various exhibitions and displays in the Hall itself.

He travelled to Perth on the zigzag railway a couple of times and also used the bus service occasionally.

In his later teens he would go to the pictures in Perth on a Saturday night which was something of an adventure. He would have to take the last bus home so he had to be sure he didn't miss it or he would be stranded in the city.





Anglican Rectory on Central road



Smailes Mill, Pickering Brook Circa 1930

Housing and work in the 1930s

John's father rented various homes in Kalamunda including one near St Elmo in Central Road where Coles is now. They also lived next to the butcher's shop which is now the bakery on the corner of Mead and Central Roads. They lived in a house in Brooks Street and another in Burt Street, now land occupied by Kalamunda Toyota.

John's early years were spent in the house in Central Road which consisted of a small kitchen, lounge room, bathroom and laundry. Outside his parent's bedroom was a veranda which was enclosed and became a sleepout fitted with bunk beds and a few single beds. Another small bedroom was occupied by the oldest member of the family, whoever that happened to be at the time. Water was obtained from a tank and there was an outdoors dunny (toilet). It was a pretty basic house made of timber boards with asbestos dividing rooms and a tin roof.

The Nestors lived on one side of the house with bush on the other. There were a couple of similar homes directly opposite including the Anglican Rectory.

His father went to work around three or four o'clock on Saturday mornings coming back to pick John up later to help with the Smailes' Mill run. His van was not air-conditioned and meat orders were wrapped and stacked into trays according to the delivery schedule.

He would pick up a variety of other goods for people on his run and delivered them with their meat order. Items included mail or radio batteries. All items were stacked in the trays at the back of the van with the meat.

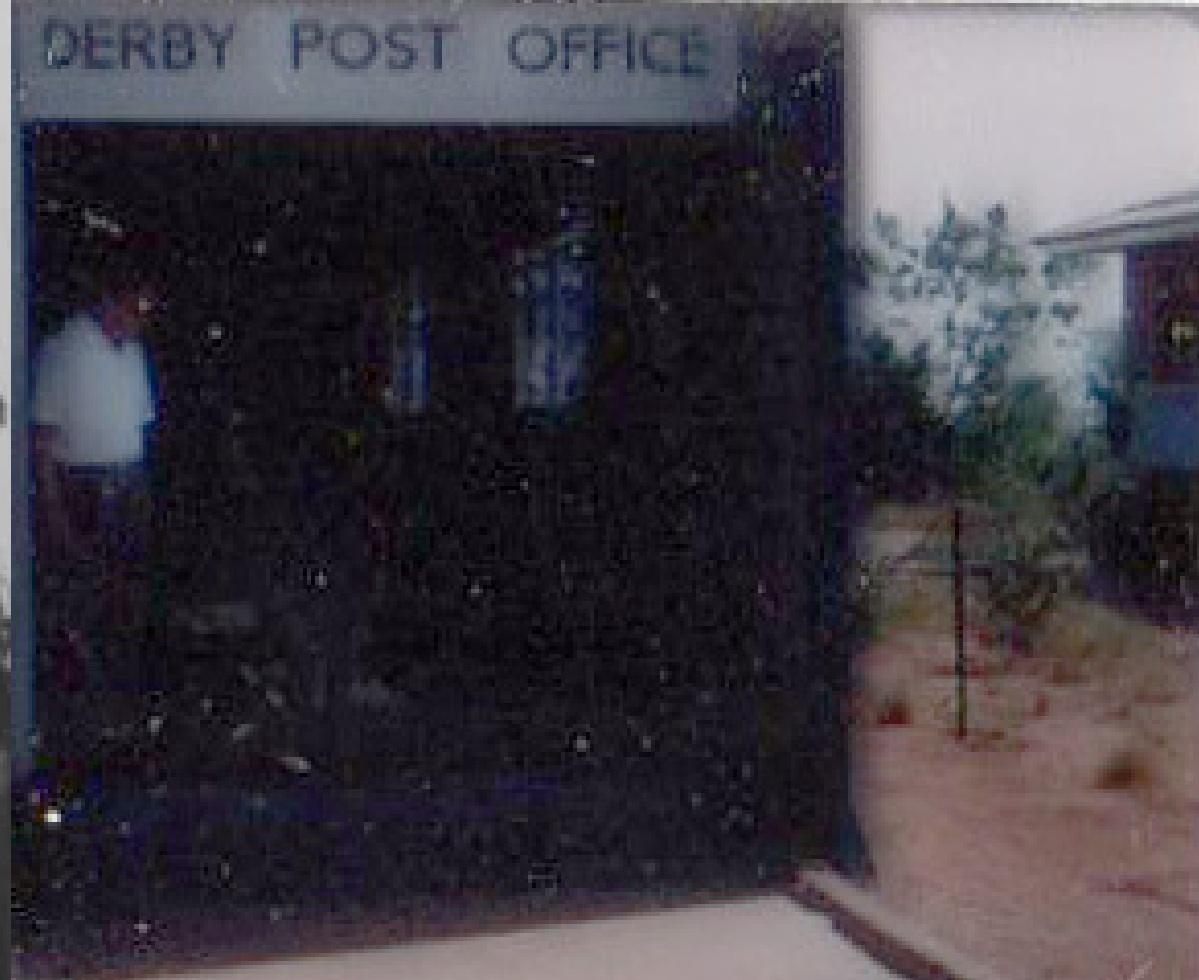
They were never short of fruit in the house and apparently neither were the people of Kalamunda because John's father had permission to pick any fruit that had fallen to the ground at one of the local orchards. He often gave the fruit to friends and customers. A family friend once told John "Oh, if your dad hadn't been there and dropped off fruit, I don't know what we would've had to eat that week."

Andy was essentially an unofficial courier service in Kalamunda.





Kalamunda Post Office Circa 1940



John Hope and the donkey at the Derby Post Office, Circa 1960's

John the Postal worker

John left school at the age of 15 and started work with Australia Post. He worked in the Kalamunda Post Office when it was situated near where Coles is now. The old post office building is now located in the Kalamunda History Village.

He was a Junior Postal Officer, commonly known as the telegram boy. He was supplied with a push bike that wasn't built for riding in the hills and they had to be fit to use them. He delivered telegrams as far as the corner of Canning and Lesmurdie Roads, out to what was known as the Transformer Corner. Occasionally a telegram would arrive for Ben Mason who lived further down Canning Road, almost down towards Grove Road. As Mr Mason was outside the delivery area the telegram boys would deliver after working hours and was rewarded with two shillings and twenty pence.

The telegram boys rode out as far as Gooseberry Hill Road and down as far as Gray Road off Kalamunda Road. it was quite a way down the hill and a really hard push coming back up on the heavy bikes.

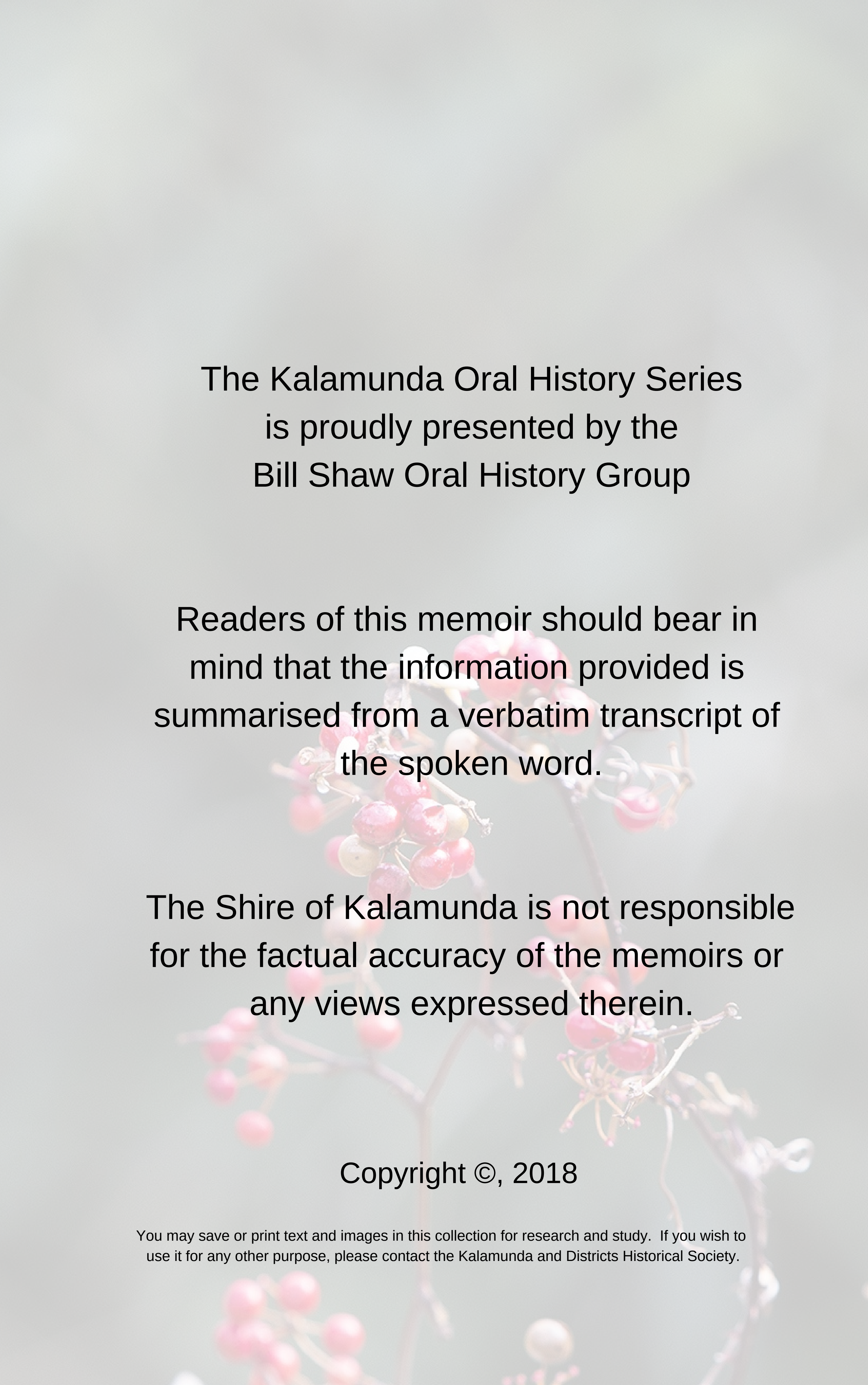
John soon realised that he needed to further his education to increase his chances of promotion so he learned Morse code at night. He attended night school in Perth to study for the postal examination and in 1950 he was accepted into the Postal Training School in the General Post Office in Perth.

After qualifying, at the age of 17, he was sent up to Boulder. It was his first time away from home and he was very homesick. Because he had passed his exam he was considered senior to the person who was acting second-in-charge at the time.

He was relocated to Cunderdin where he worked for five years. During this time he worked for short periods in Koorda and Bencubbin until he was promoted to second-in-charge in Moora. During this time he was sent to Mt Magnet to act as Postmaster and then to Derby.

He was promoted again and sent to Melbourne for the next 20 years returning to live in Kalamunda in 1988.





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