

A Gentleman and a Rascal



Autobiography
by
Brian Buzzard

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CHAPTER 3

My holidays

Front Cover: I wish to thank artist Laura Cole for her kind permission to use the second painting from the triptych **Kimberley Grasses**.

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CHAPTER 3

My holidays

Unlike the mid-year break at New Norcia, at CBC we had two mid term breaks as well as Christmas. I spent time with various relatives and with schoolmates. Several of them invited me to stay with them at their homes. I remember going to Jack McMahon's parents farm at Lake Grace. We left Perth by train and Mr. McMahon picked us up at Wagin and drove us out to the farm in his Ford T car. There was only about one train a week on the spur line, Wagin to Lake Grace. I have vivid memories of going there because I had a crush on his sister Kate whom I never saw again. Jack Hands and his brother Lincoln invited me to their parents home at Bunbury. Jack's father was the Mayor of Bunbury and I can remember Jack and I having a go at the 3%'s at the municipal office when his father was not looking, or he was too busy in another room to see us. Hands Oval at Bunbury was named after his father. His brother Lincoln was killed training to be a pilot in the Empire Air Scheme. He was in a training school in Rhodesia when it happened quite early in the war.

I also went to Northam with George Pavy whose father had an agency business in Northam, which included Dalgety and Co. and HV Mckay machinery. We had a great time going out with him for the day when he canvassed the district for general business. I learnt a lot from him which came in handy when I bought my own agency business at Toodyay. My Uncle Fred also had me up to his farm at Lyons Camp near Miling. I always loved it. My grandparents lived at Queens Park on a ten acre block which my grandfather bought when he left Moora. He sold the farm because his son Jack did not want it. They always had us for part of the Christmas holiday. We were always there for Christmas Day because my mother was able to get there for the day. Uncle Fred Robey and his wife Nora always came down from the farm and all of the other cousins and their families; the Browns from Maylands, the Copes from Greenmount, Babe and Frank McKnight

from Subiaco and later from Gnowangerup, the Sullivans from Victoria Park, their son Jack and at least thirty of us children were all there. Grandfather would have his big moment when he would throw bags of boiled lollies onto the lawn tennis court for all of the grandchildren. He loved to see us all scrambling for the lollies and would only throw out a few at a time to ensure that his and our enjoyment lasted longer.

All the men, including grandfather had more than their share of beer which they had to keep in wet bags, or down the well to keep it cool. They did have an ice chest, but gran insisted that there was no room for beer. She did not drink but she loved to sniff snuff. I thought that it was a ditty habit because it seemed to make her nose drip and I often wondered, when she was making a cake or scones by hand or stirred the pot of soup which was always on the back of the stove, whether we were going to get a drop of the snuff flavour in the cakes or soup. Grandfather also had a habit which I did not like. He used to smoke a pipe every evening after tea, never in the paddock or when he was working. He kept a spittoon by his chair and every now and then, out would come the pipe and he would have a good spit in his tin. That went on every night until he went to bed. He always used plug tobacco which is a very hard block of tobacco. For years he cut it up into pieces with his pocket knife which was always kept razor sharp. One of his daughters gave him a machine to cut it up, a sort of guillotine on a block of wood. He used it every time that daughter came to visit, but still preferred his precious pocket knife at other times. My grandfather died when I was away in New Guinea during the war but his memory will always remain with me. My grandmother sold the Queens Park block and went to live with her daughter, Mary Brown in Leederville. She died quite a few years after the war and I was able to attend her funeral. My father was buried in Moora in 1920 and the local Moora RSL have always attended to his grave, keeping it clean and immaculate with no weeds, not like many others in the country cemeteries whose children still live in the town.

My mother is buried in the Karrakatta cemetery along with my son Patrick and that is where they will put me, because I bought a lawn plot to take three people nearly fifty years ago. It is right near the gates and not far for anyone to walk if they want to come and say goodbye.

During school holidays I spent quite a bit of time with Aunt Nora, my godmother, and Uncle Fred Robey on their farm near Miling which was one hundred and forty miles from Perth. The journey took over ten hours in the train. While holidaying there I learnt to drive their car and truck. Uncle would load the old Chev. truck up with twenty two bags of wheat and I would take it about five miles into the railway siding, Lyons Camp. They both moved to Cottesloe when wheat prices crashed to one shilling and eightpence a bushel.

Aunty Nora was always a bit disorganised. I remember one Christmas when my mother, myself, Marjorie and I think Millar went to her house for Christmas dinner. When we arrived, Aunty Nora was still out in the washhouse plucking a big turkey for our dinner. Somehow she got it cooked in the big wood oven, but it was closer to tea time before we sat down to Christmas dinner. We children had filled ourselves with biscuits and lollies and by the time the turkey was on the table we were too full to eat much of it. She must have put it back in the oven again and had the remainder on Boxing Day. Although Aunty was a bit messy, she had a heart of gold. Her son Fred, who served with me in Catalinas, was in the permanent airforce. He went on to become Air Vice Marshal of the RAAF.