

Frank Hogan

I was born in Oberon and lived at 80 Oberon Road. I had a brother Phillip and a sister Margaret. My father was Harry Hogan, who was a mailman, and my mother was Margaret, originally part of the Behan family. I spent most of my time going to the Oberon Convent School. When I went to get my first job I was about 13. The bloke that owned the business, Arthur McArthur, was anti-Catholic, or that's what people thought. But Herbie Cunynghame wanted me to go and do this job with him at Arthur McArthur's works, which was a rabbit and chicken industry, skinning rabbits and plucking chooks and all that. And Arthur McArthur said, "If you can bone rabbits, I don't care whether you're a Catholic or a ...". And he was a great bloke, and he'd done a lot for me, and I'd done a lot for him. It's amazing how good people are, and he was one of the best. So, there you go. You get a first job. I would have been 13, 14 and 15 while I was working there, but I still went back there later on when I had my driver's licence. I also worked at Howell Brothers - they were a grocery store. I worked there for three weeks and then I left because I could make more money at McArthur's in a day than I could make at Howell Brothers in a week.



I spent three months in Sydney earlier in my life. Normie Brown and I went down. We were going to get a job and live in Sydney. He stayed a week and he came home because he wanted to be a mechanic and work for Len Williams. But I stayed down there for three months. I got a job as a mechanic but I think they didn't like young people at the time. They thought I'd be able to fix everything that came in and I was too young to do that. I would have been 17, I suppose. Yeah, it's a bit like some things you take up. You think you might do it and it doesn't work out. Most of the things I ended up doing did work out pretty good.

Then I started more or less driving buses and trucks.

One of the first trips in the bus after I got my licence (it was just a licence, not a bus licence) was for Jack Atchell. He used to go to Jenolan Caves every week, through Edith and down the Two Mile Hill, where you used to have to reverse on three of the corners. It was all dirt road down to the Caves at the time. It was interesting because some of the drivers that used to go down the hill didn't know that you had to reverse back on three corners and they'd get stuck. It might take a week to get the road cleared again. And that's what Jack Atchell was telling me when I'd done the first trip: "Don't have an accident." The first time I drove it, I said, "What if somebody runs into me?" He said, "Don't let anybody run into you." He was a terrific bloke, he'd do anything for you. I spent a lot of time driving that type of bus. But nowadays, you would have a job, because you can't even take a bus down there. We would go out there in all weathers, sometimes with snow on the road. It was quite steep and some of the passengers used to get off and walk down around and it might take them half an hour. It's a shame that it's not open still because it's just a beautiful place, the Caves.

I changed jobs, I ended up working for Sandy (John) Williams and they used to contract here, there and everywhere, carting hard gravel to put on roads. In those days it was a nothing sort of

a job. Eventually I decided I'd go into the school buses. Brian Newman was doing the Duckmaloi school bus and he didn't want to do it any longer. He said, "If you want it, you can have it." We didn't have a bus, so I had to go to Sydney. I ended up buying one at Katoomba, a little bus which done the job. So as time went by Joy and I got married and we continued on with the buses. We bought another bus and another bus, and we done Bathurst Road, Duckmaloi, Wisemans Creek. We ended up having seven buses.

We bought a big shed from Cecil King on Albion Street, on the corner, and we concreted all the floors. Most of it was concrete that the trucks that didn't want, so they had to have somewhere to dump it. So we concreted the whole shed, which was a big shed - it would hold seven buses. And it hardly cost anything for the concrete to do the floor. There was a bloke, Bob Burns, who was a mechanic and he had a garage up on the Bathurst Road. But he was sick of it and I said, "You can come down to the shed and take over a part of it and do the mechanical work." He was married to a Bailey girl, Marie. He was the greatest bloke. He had a bit of Chinese ancestry and you wouldn't get a better bloke. He used to help do the floor and everything, like put more concrete down.

As the buses continued to go on and we made a few dollars, I wanted to put just one light on the corner. The council said, "No, no. We can't put a light there." Like it'd be one post. Now, many years later, the whole place is alive with lights and boards. It's just unreal what has happened in 28 years or whatever it was.

Mum and Dad and brother Phillip and sister Margaret all helped me along the way. They used to do mail runs. Dad did mail runs for nearly all his life, although before he was doing the mail run, he had a tip drawn by a draft horse. He used to work on the council and tip dirt here and there. And then he went on to the mail runs. He did Foley's Creek and came back to Bathurst Road. Mum worked for Dr Perkins now and again, but she mostly stayed home. Phillip had mail runs and school runs. My sister Margaret was a lovely person, died young, about 18 or 19, which was sad. When my brother Phillip travelled around the world in boats, we done his mail run and school run while he was away.



Frank with Tony and Maree and the school bus



I met Joy by accident actually when I was still driving trucks for Alan Clayton. We used to drive to Sydney every night, delivering peas and potatoes. I'd known her and I wanted somebody to take out one night, so I rang her up. I don't know whether her mother or father was real happy with it, but eventually we got married in the Catholic Church in Oberon, probably two years after we met. Where did we go for a

honeymoon? My brother Phillip had this old truck, and we had to drive down to Penrith and pick up a caravan. Then we went all down the south coast and back up through Sydney, dropped the caravan off, come back to Oberon and lived happily ever after.

Then we had four children. Tony is the eldest, then Maree, John and Joanne. They were great kids, and they all went to the Catholic school in Oberon, and then Tony went to college at St Stanislaus in Bathurst for a while. Then he went into the bank. Maree ended up being a nurse. She went to Sydney to the Mater Hospital and done her nursing. John was a great footballer and they wanted him to go overseas playing football, but he decided to get married. He ended up staying in Oberon and then went to Bathurst to live. He's living in Bathurst at the moment. Joanne ended up going to Mudgee, but earlier she lived in Oberon. She went to Melbourne and became a hairdresser. She had her own hairdressing shop in West Ryde in Sydney.

We've got seven grandkids, and two great grandkids.



I played a lot of tennis, mainly in Oberon, and mostly night tennis. There was a lot of tennis courts in Oberon at the time. The Catholic school had one, the Methodist people had one, and there was one in the Church of England area. And one down opposite the caravan park, that house there. Tennis was really popular in Oberon at the time, and now they've still got a couple of tennis courts, but all the other old ones are all being closed down, of course. Buildings put on them and that. The only other sport I played was football, and then I only played for Oberon once. Hurt my knee and I got sick of it. But our younger son, John, was man of the match for the year one time. He loved football and was a good player.

While I had the buses, most of the children were just great. Even after we sold out, I still worked for the bloke that brought us out, Murray Fenton, still doing the buses in the summertime. And the children were all still great.

The first bus I had was down to Tarana and coming up Lowes Mount, which was pretty steep. Not like today, where you've got to have a seatbelt and a seat, we had seats up the side of this little bus, and one bit of a wooden seat down the centre. We used to have 14 children. Coming up the hill, we had to lift the big kids off, and they used to walk up, because the bus wouldn't pull the load up the hill. You couldn't do that today. You'd be in jail today if you did that.

They were the best children that you could have. They used to sing, going along in the bus in the evening. One evening we were going home and it snowed, and we pulled up about a kilometre out of Oberon. There was about four inches of snow on the ground, so they all had a snow fight, threw a bit at the bus driver. But nowadays, of course, it's more civilised.

But it was just a beautiful time of my life, driving the school buses. We used to drive buses to Sydney and Canberra and all over the place to take the school children, and go to Bathurst and cart the footballers and everything that you could cart on a bus. Joy used to drive to Bathurst, sometimes twice a week, to take children into TAFE. It's unreal, the work that you can do in a lifetime.

So 31 years ago we bought a little place out of Oberon, Rutters Ridge Road, and we've sort of settled here and done nothing much. Oh, we've travelled, travelled all around Australia a couple of times. We have a little camper van, a little Ford Econovan, and this was the ideal thing for travelling. Used to go mostly about three months a year during the winter. It was too cold in Oberon. That went on for probably 30 years. We've been here at Rutters Ridge for 31 years, and the road out from Oberon to here was all dirt. But since we've been here, they've eventually tarred the road. We used to go to stay mostly at Mudgee or Moree. Just amazing the people that you met and got good friends with, different people at Moree and Mudgee. Our youngest daughter is at Mudgee, but then we haven't been going up there for the last couple of years because we're too old and probably couldn't drive as good to take the caravan up there. So we've been stationary at Oberon. Now we've got to the stage where my brother Phillip has died, and he left us a little unit in town. We're trying to decide whether we go to town to live or stay out at Rutters Ridge.

It's been really good actually, the life we've had in Oberon. All the friends and relatives like Normie Brown and Bruce David and Russell Evans and Brian Newman. And all the other people that have been unbelievably good and helped us along our way.

We were married in 1957, so yeah, we've been married a long time. Coming up to the 68th year in November. We've travelled a lot, done a lot, I suppose, with all our children and friends and our connection with the Catholic Church. It's been good. I've spent a lot of time working at the St Vincent de Paul shop in Oberon. It's just unreal what you've done in your life, and a lot of it you can't even remember now. Everything connected with Oberon has been great. We mostly go to a seniors' thing at the Methodist Church hall, the Combined Churches Lunch. We've been going there for a long time, and you see a lot of people that you've known over the years. There's a variety of people, really great people, and it's well worth being with them for the hour.



(October, 2025)