

Kalamunda & Districts
Historical Society
Oral Histories

a Memoir of

HAZEL
JARVIS
(Nee Hutchens)





People alighting from the train at Kalamunda Station circa 1920

'My parents built a house which the address is now 71 Railway Road, Kalamunda but it didn't have a number then.

That's very close to the railway line and my father was the station master and when I was very young and naughty they used to – what's the word I'm looking for? – 'shunt' the engines down and I used to be the first one running out.

They used to lift me up and I'd get to drive back to the station and then get into trouble from dad for running after it.'

An interview of Hazel Jarvis, (nee Hutchens) was conducted by Gretchen Forrest on 17 June, 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



Stanley Hutchens and Olive Winsor 26 April 1913



Stanley, Olive, Hazel and Dorothy Hutchens, circa 1920

Hazel Hutchens was born on 5 September 1919 to Stanley and Olive Hutchens nee Winsor.

Hazel's maternal grandfather, Thomas Winsor came to Western Australia from England in 1875 and her grandmother arrived from Ireland in 1880.

Thomas worked at Canning Mills as a sleeper cutter. Hazel's grandparents were only married for around a year when Thomas was injured at the mill. Some sleepers on the whim slipped and the load fell onto his leg, breaking it. The Kalamunda community rallied behind the family with the local shop keepers; Brooks' general store, the baker and Nestors the butcher all providing supplies for the 12 months that he was unable to work. The shopkeepers never asked for anything in return but when Thomas returned to work he paid back every penny.

The couple had five children with Hazel's mother, Olive being born in Kalamunda in 1890. They eventually bought land between Lyndhurst and Orange Valley Roads where they established a dairy and an orchard.

Hazel's grandparents owned a horse and sulky but her grandmother was too small to manage the horse. With no other transport available she would put the children in a pram and walk through the bush to Guildford to visit her relatives, the Keelers. This would be an all day outing.

Hazel's father, Stanley Hutchens, was born in Bendigo, Victoria. He came to live in Kalamunda when he was appointed the Station Master at Kalamunda Railway Station.

Upon his arrival he went to live at Mrs Herring's boarding house where he met Olive who was working there. They married and built a house in Railway Road, Kalamunda. They had six children but only three daughters survived as three were stillborn. Hazel, the middle child describes herself as a 'Tom Boy', the son her father never had.

Hazel Hutchens with her sisters.

L-R: Alison, Dorothy and Hazel.

Circa 1928





Kalamunda Railway Station.
Circa 1920



Hazel, fourth row, sixth from the left., sister Alison front row, first on left.
Kalamunda Primary School. Circa 1927

Growing up in Kalamunda

Hazel remembers growing up in Kalamunda, a small village where everybody knew everybody else. It was very safe and she would go skinny dipping in Piesse's Brook, roam through the bush and pick the beautiful wildflowers with the Croxton and Stirk children.

She attended the Kalamunda Primary School where Mr Tom Millar was the Headmaster. Hazel loved school and cried when she had to leave.

Her mother always told her to walk around the Stirk's dairy on the way to school but Hazel always went through it. She recalls how she and the Croxton girls would have dry cow pat fights on the way.

After Hazel's father became the Station Master of the small railway station they built a new one. Hazel recalls her father boasting about his new furniture with room on the desk and a new chair on wheels. On the way home from school Hazel and her friends went to the station to ride on the new chair. She still recalls the thrill of zooming across the floor on the chair and the horrified look on her father's face.

The family ate porridge for breakfast with bread and homemade jam for lunch. The evening meal was usually a stew except on Saturdays when they had roast chicken. Hazel would help her mother pluck the chicken and watch her mother pull the innards out. This job made her mother feel quite ill but Hazel always took interest in the gory process.

On Sunday's she would run from Kalamunda Road to Lyndhurst Road to get cream from Grandma's house to go with their fruit and scones.

As it was only gravel where Hazel lived her father filled a pit with sand. Hazel recalls the McCullagh girls coming regularly to play with her there.

Hazel's father had to take early retirement because he had osteoarthritis. The family moved several times and Hazel attended a variety of schools which she disliked. When they moved to Subiaco she went to Rosalie Secondary School for a year which she loved. She completed her schooling at Claremont Central High School.

The frequent moves proved quite profitable for the family. Her mother would buy houses, renovate them and sell for a profit before starting her next project.





Hazel Jarvis (nee Hutchens) with members of the Red Cross, Circa May 1946

Work and married life

When Hazel's father retired the pension was only four pounds a week. With five people to keep, the children were required to go to work as soon as they were old enough to help the family financially.

Hazel had dreams of being a theatre nurse but when she turned 15 a vacancy arose in the Superior Knitting Mills and her mother told her to apply for the position.

She started work using the button machine to sew on buttons. She recalls how she loathed the boring job that didn't require the use of her brain. Hazel was not one to sit back and do nothing so she asked the owners if she could learn how to use the other machines as well. She worked her way up to the examining table, which was the top job within the factory.

When Hazel discovered that an office job was to become vacant she asked for the job and as she had already proven her value and was prepared to learn to type she got the job.

Hazel worked at the Mill from the age of 15 to 30 until she left to get married.

Earning around 15 shillings a week Hazel would give her wages to her mother who would give her sixpence back to do with what she wanted. Hazel saved enough to buy herself a bike to use for transport.

Hazel also joined the Red Cross at the age of 15. In 1946 she helped escorting war brides to Sydney by train. The brides would then sail to the United States to start their new lives with their husbands. Some already had small babies so it was quite a journey.

After the war Hazel joined a social club in Victoria Park where she met Horace (Horry) Jarvis. They married in a small church in Inglewood in 1950 and had three children, Peter, Kathryn and Ross.

They bought a house in Mt Lawley and later moved to Dianella where their children grew up. When Horry retired they bought a block of land in Lesmurdie, built a house and returned to the hills.



The Jack Healey Centre on Canning Road, Kalamunda.

On the Buses with Hazel

Once the children were old enough Hazel returned to work. Following some retraining in office procedures Hazel got a job with Sadliers Transport Company where she worked for the next 10 years.

Hazel got her driving licence at the age of 17 and had a real love of cars and driving. When she joined the Red Cross they taught her to drive a bus and she got her B Class drivers licence.

At the age of 60 Hazel traded paid work for volunteering at the Jack Healy Centre in Kalamunda. When they discovered that Hazel could drive a bus they were delighted as they needed someone to transport the senior citizens to various places.

She spent the next 20 years driving the bus for the Jack Healy Centre and only stopped because at the age of 80 her children raised concerns about what might happen to her passengers if something went amiss with her.

When the Mundaring Weir started to overflow she was asked to do a few more runs. There was so much excitement about the overflow she remembers shuttling people to and from the Weir doing at least three runs in a day.

In 1986 the following article was placed in the *Reporter* during Senior Citizens Week.

Hazel leads an active life

Hazel Jarvis is typical of the active senior citizens leading the full and productive life which is the theme of Senior Citizens Week.

After retiring she found it impossible to sit down and crochet, and is now involved in community work every day and several nights a week.

Mrs Jarvis worked in a transport office loves vehicles of all sorts.

"I like the challenge of driving different cars, the ambulance the the community bus," she said.

"After all, I was the taxi service for my children for years and it is part of what I love doing."

Once she would have had no hesitation in changing wheels or making minor repairs, but her one concession to her seniority is to call the RAC for help.

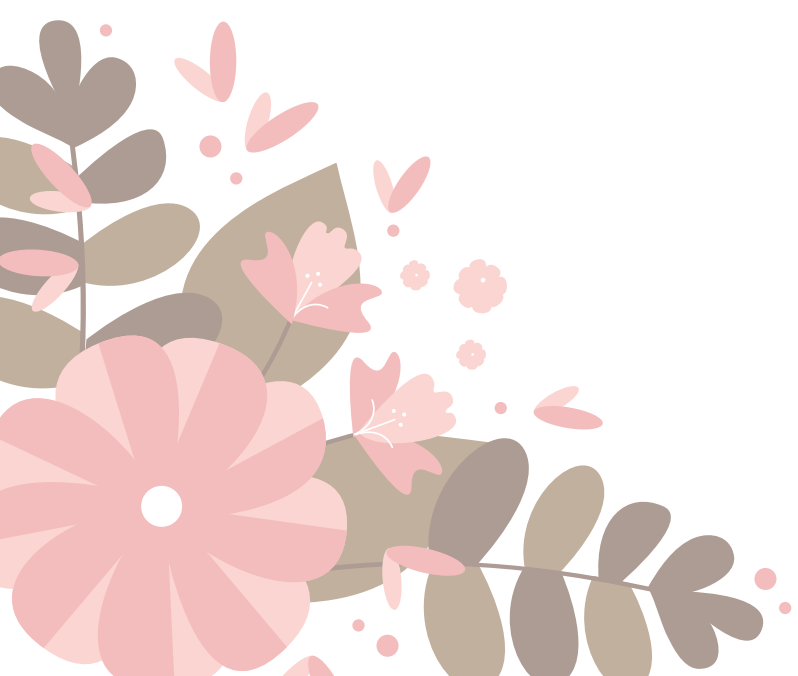
She keeps fit by swimming three times a week, and never knows a idle moment.

She can't just watch television but relaxes by knitting for the family and charity.

When she does take time off, it is to look after her two grandchildren, aged two and four, who she claims are the best children around.

"I dote on them and love taking them for outings each week," Mrs Jarvis said.

Hazel Jarvis, Marjorie Wilson and Mick Hyde in the community bus.



Cover image: Hazel Hutchens aged 9. Circa 1928

The Kalamunda Oral History Series
is proudly presented by the
Bill Shaw Oral History Group

Readers of this memoir should bear in mind
that the information provided is summarised
from a verbatim transcript of the spoken
word.

The Shire of Kalamunda is not responsible
for the factual accuracy of the memoirs or
any views expressed therein.

Copyright ©, 2018

You may save or print text and images in this collection for research and study. If you wish to use it for any other purpose, please contact the Kalamunda and Districts Historical Society.