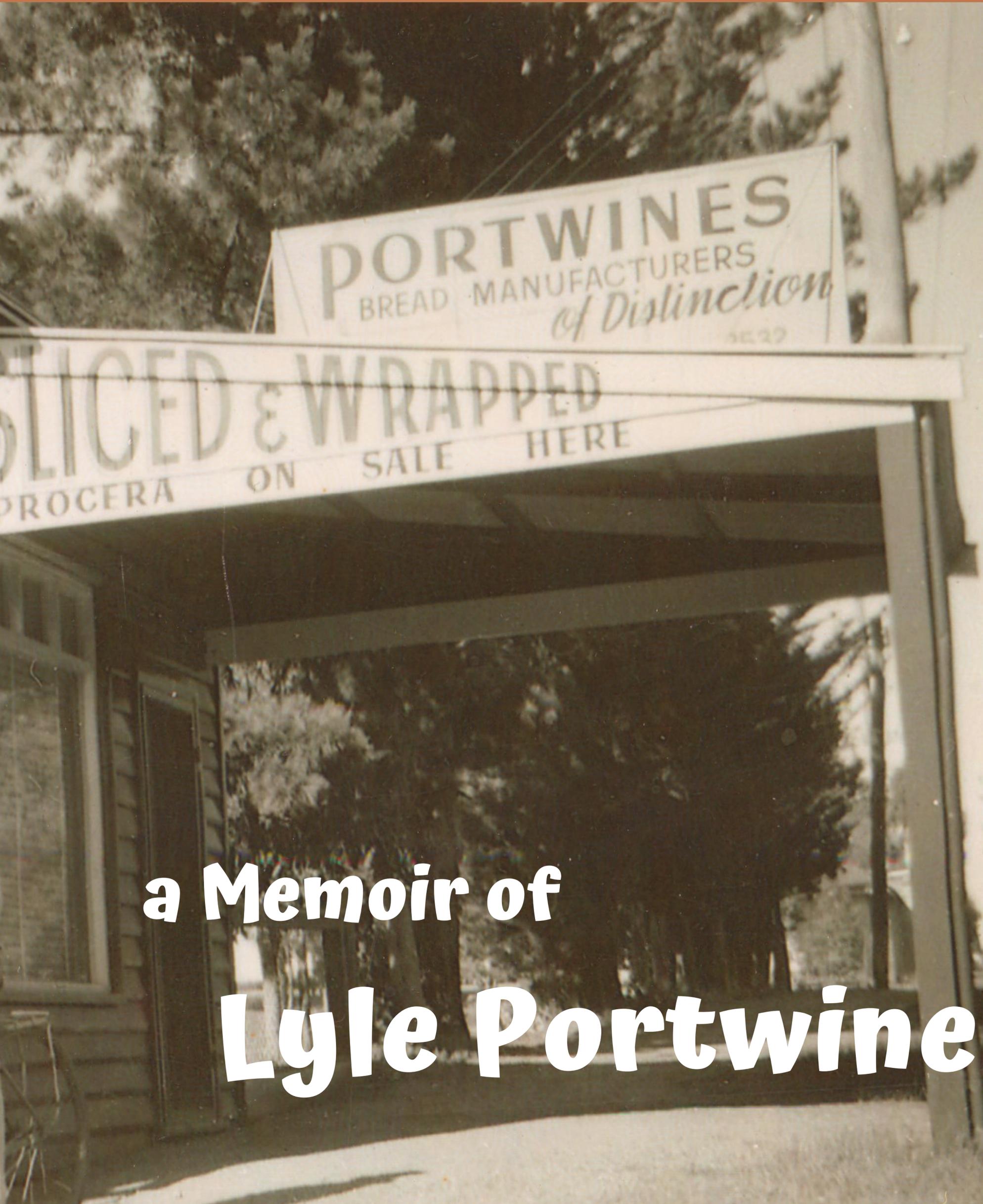
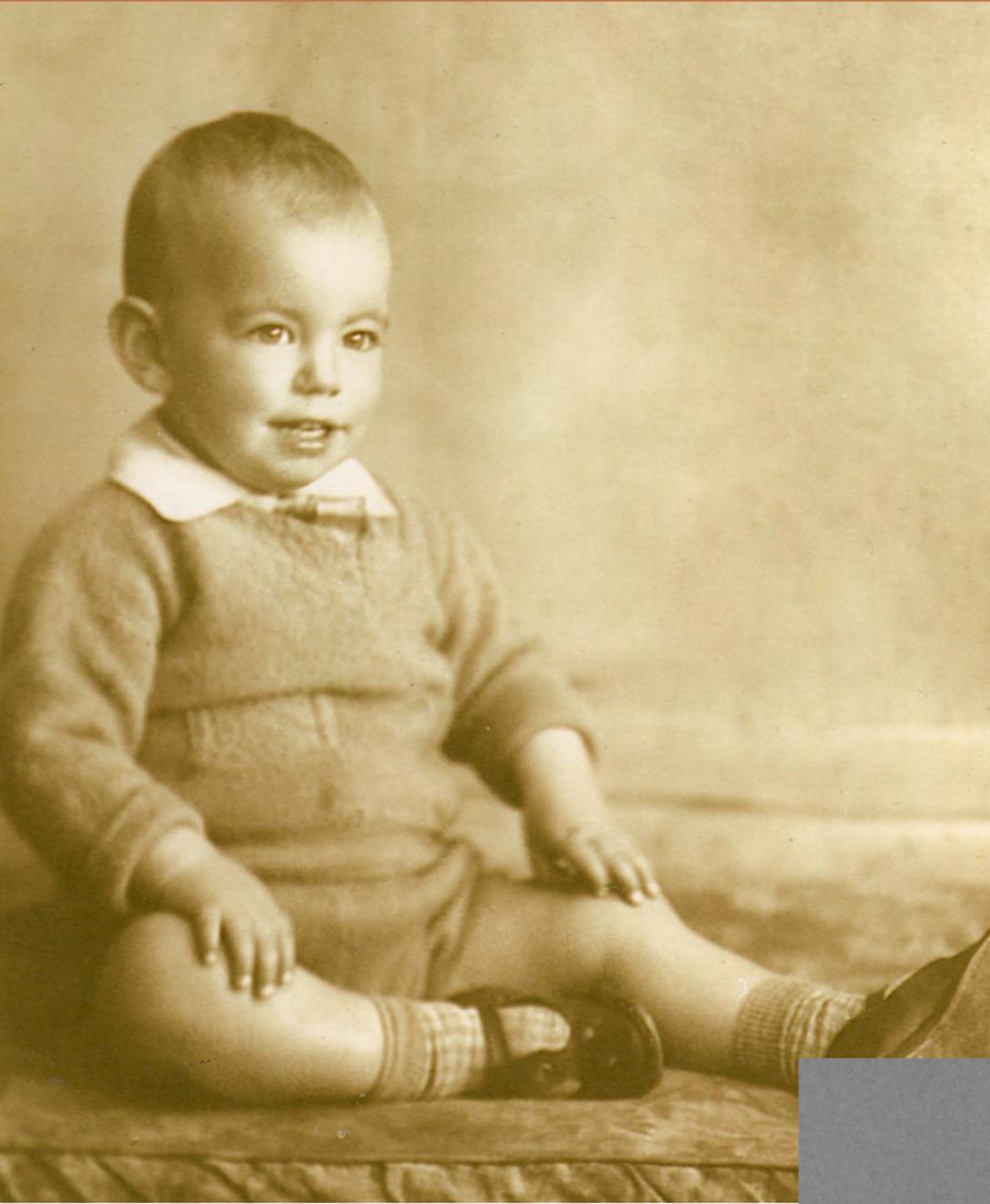


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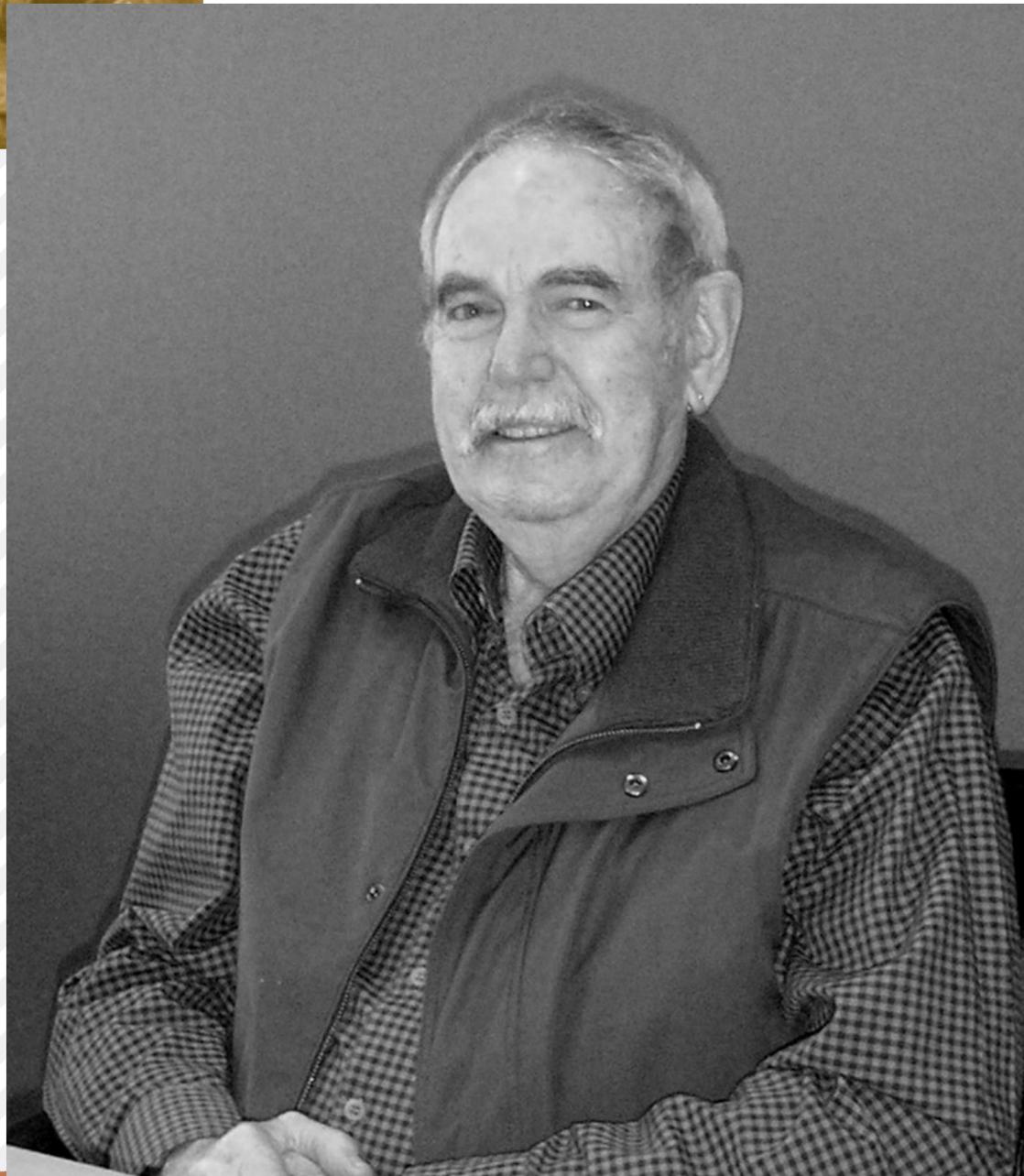
**a Memoir of  
Lyle Portwine**



# Robert Lyle Portwine

Lyle Portwine 2012

Lyle Portwine 1939



An interview of Mr Lyle Portwine was conducted by Gigi Hesterman, 2 May 2012

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

## Puddlers, Bakers and Hoteliers

The earliest Portwines were puddlers in Melbourne in the 1800s. Puddlers made wrought iron fencing for houses and balconies.

Lyle Portwine's grandfather, George Edwin Portwine, settled in Western Australia and had bakeries in many different towns. At one stage he was in partnership with the Lovelocks on the Great Eastern Highway in Belmont.

His maternal grandparents, George and Martha Beard (nee Brown), were hoteliers. They lived in a little cottage down the end of Heath Road, Kalamunda where they had magnificent views of the city.

When Lyle was born on 15 August 1937 his family was running a bakery at 15 Canning Road, Kalamunda (now Barberry Square).

Lyle was one of four children, his siblings were James Elliot, Doreen Allison and Gillian. His mother, Veronica, was an accountant. His father, Robert, died when Lyle was 11 and his brother Jim, was like a father figure to him during his teenage years.

Lyle did the daily bread run using a horse and cart, which took him around three hours, as long as he didn't stop to talk. He would go out as far as the service station on the corner of Lesmurdie and Canning Roads in Lesmurdie which was the boundary for the horse and cart.

The Portwine bakery was the last business to use horses in Kalamunda and were only able to keep them in the town until the 1950s because they were linked with the business.



Lyle Portwine, Portwine Bakery, Canning Road Kalamunda, circa 1937



Lyle Portwine at Portwine Bakery  
circa 1949/50

## DELIVERING BREAD BY HORSE AND RED CART

Bird Street Kalamunda  
Lyle | aged 16 years



## Lyle's Younger Years

In the 1940s Kalamunda was a bush town with only a few buildings between the Portwine's Bakery on Canning Road and the Kalamunda Hotel on Railway Road. The Portwine's property consisted of the bakery, the stables and three houses. A pumping shed pumped water up to the Kalamunda Hotel and sewage from the Hotel was pumped eastwards, across the railway line into the bush between the Hotel and what is now Jorgensen Park. The hotel owner would sit in his cottage over in this bush, which was secured with barbed wire, and count his weekly earnings.

Before he was school aged Lyle rode his bike all over Kalamunda to visit relatives and to be fed. If his mother wanted him to come home she would stand on the back verandah and blow a whistle. Whoever heard the whistle, and saw him, would yell out to him to go home because his mother was calling him.

Lyle attended Mary's Mount Primary School in Gooseberry Hill which was run by the nuns. Around 1945/46 an American B52 Bomber plane crashed into Gooseberry Hill. The children were taken to the crash site to watch as the bodies were removed from the wreckage.

When he grew older Lyle caught the bus from Kalamunda to the Christian Brothers College (CBC) in St Georges Terrace in Perth and later attended Forrest High in Mt Lawley. He left school when he was about 16 years old.



Daisy the cow milked by Lyle morning and night circa late 1940's



Lyle Portwine in CBC school uniform at Portwine Bakery, circa 1949/1950

**LYLE WITH  
MICKEY HIS  
HORSE**



## No Shortage of Horses

Lyle's father and brother Jim were amateur jockeys so the Portwine's lives revolved around horses. They kept racehorses along with the two or three workhorses used to pull the bread carts. They also provided board and lodging for other people's horses so there was sometimes 10 - 12 horses on site.

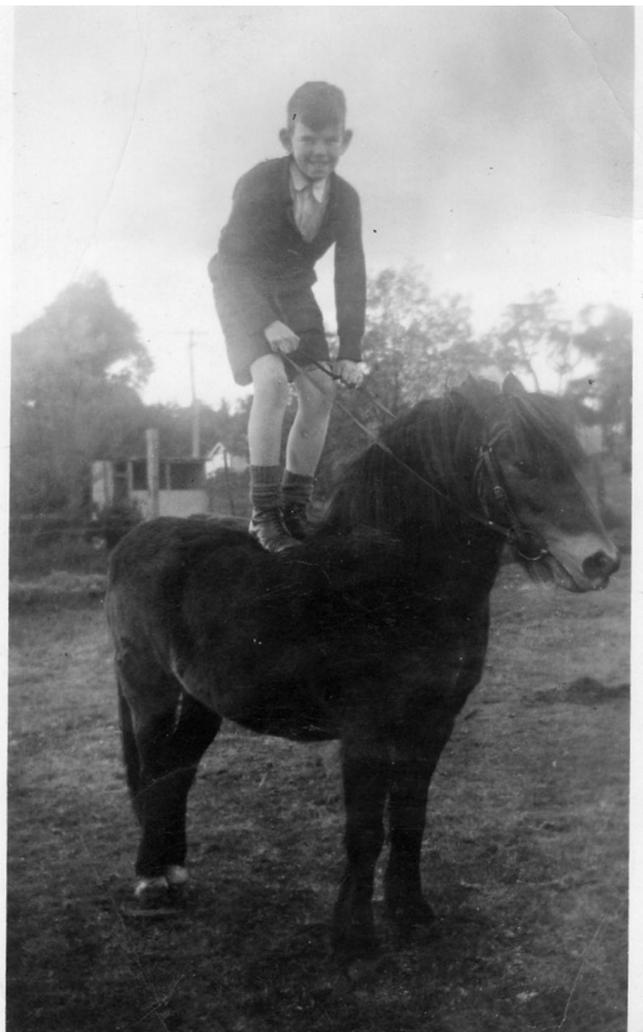
One of the horses was able to turn on the tap when he wanted a drink of water but he wouldn't turn it off so there was often water running everywhere. If the horse felt hungry he would open the sliding bolts on the feed drawer. Keyed padlocks were installed to stop the horses from helping themselves.

Lyle, Jim and his father, Robert, would attend the races at Ascot, Belmont, Canning Park and Helena Vale. Lyle worked as a strapper because he was too big to be a jockey. Lyle rode his horse, Mickey, 3 kms to Mary's Mount Primary school in Gooseberry Hill. He would tie him up in the bushes next to the school until he was ready to go home.

He was often required to clean out the stalls and make the horses' beds for the night. Lyle remembers quite a large compost pile at the back of the stables.



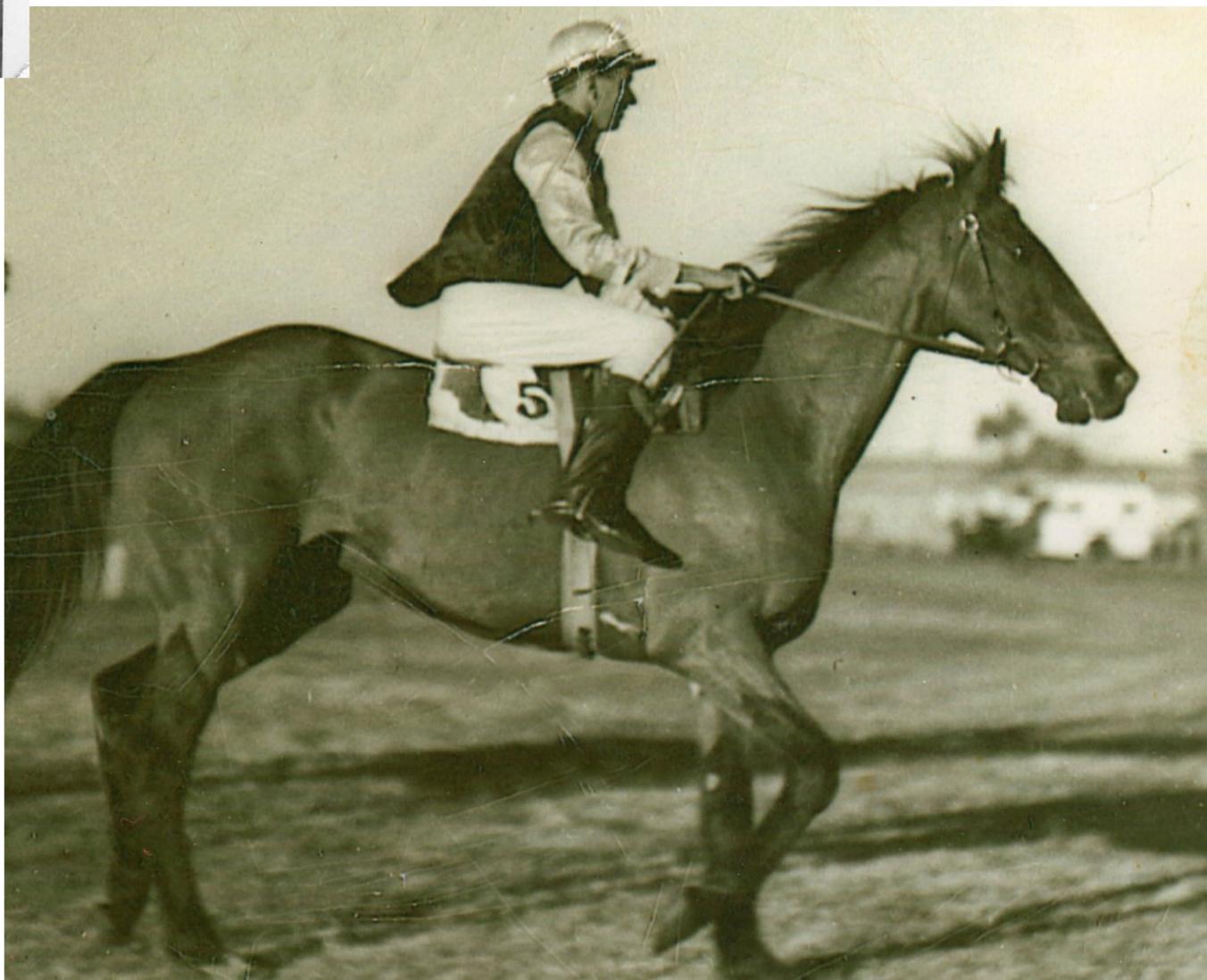
Dick at the stables at the Bakery



Lyle with Mickey his horse.

## ROBERT PORTWINE ON THREE STRIPES

Ascot - 1930's



# The Portwine's Bakery

The doughs were made every morning and left to rest for six hours before they were cut, weighed and put into tins later in the evening. Three or four batches of bread were cooked during the night and the vans were loaded up ready for delivery the next day.

After Lyle's dad died, in 1948, his brother Jim took over the running of the bakery. Lyle helped on the bread van every Saturday from the age of 8 years so he didn't have time to play with the other children or participate in any sports. Sunday afternoons were also spent in the bakehouse getting ready for Monday's deliveries.

The bakery became more prosperous during the 1950s once they imported the Travelling Rotary oven which took around three months to put together. The additional oven was needed to keep up with production resulting from increased sales.

Portwine's baked white, brown, wholemeal, bun dough and malt bread which were produced in a variety of shapes. At the end of each day all leftover bread was put through a bread crumbing grinder, re-baked, bagged and sold as breadcrumbs.

Every Friday night was pie night and people coming home from the movies would come into the bakery and get a bag full of hot pies as they came out of the oven. They were the only shop open in Kalamunda at that hour of the night and it became a social spot for young people.



New Travelling Rotary Oven in kit form 1956



Jim Portwine outside new oil fired Travelling Rotary oven 1956



## BAKERY YARD AND HOUSE

1 metre wood lengths for use in the oven. Looking West towards Canning Road - 1950s



## Portwine's Liquor

In 1958, Lyle bought the old general store in Canning Road, Karragullen because he was tired of working around the clock at the bakery. After a while he applied for a liquor license and when this was granted he became the youngest licensee in Australia.

When his brother Jim died suddenly from a horse accident in 1960 Lyle had to run both businesses. It took some time but he eventually sold the bakery to Jim Saliakos.

Around 1963 he bought the old Karragullen Railway station and turned it into a general store. There were quite a lot of burglaries committed sometimes by prisoners from the Barton's Mill Prison. They would break out of prison, steal liquor and then break back into the prison with their supplies. Once the police handcuffed a person of interest to the post of the store while they chased an escapee.

Lyle married Gabrielle Bertocci in 1964 and they had two children.



Lyle and Gabrielle's wedding South Perth 1964



Lyle and Gabrielle Portwine 1967

## LYLE PROVIDES PLANS FOR ONE OF THE FIRST DRIVE IN LIQUOR STORES

The Independent Sun,  
Thursday November 8  
1973, pg. 15



*BOTTLE shop owner Lyle Portwine and his assistant Olivia Ghilarducci outside the shop. "WE can only guess where our family surname came from," said Lyle Portwine (above) of Karragullen. "There has been a suggestion that our forebears were involved in smuggling wines from France and Spain to the English coast back in the old days." Lyle's had a liquor licence in Canning Road, Karragullen, for the past 12 years and before that was a baker in Kalamunda. Yesterday he provided plans to the Licensing Court for one of the first drive-in liquor stores in the State under new licensing regulations.*

Cover photo: Portwine Bakery 1950's. Canning Road, Kalamunda

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