



**Kalamunda & Districts  
Historical Society  
Oral Histories**

a Memoir of

**EVELYN  
KITNEY**  
(Nee McCullagh)



McCullagh Cottage circa 1970

## EVELYN KITNEY

talks about how they kept  
abreast of world news during  
the war years

'We didn't have a radio until, I  
don't know, during the war I  
suppose some time.

I know we didn't have the radio  
before that because the day they  
announced the Second World War  
I was over at Grandma's listening  
to the radio and I come home and  
I said to Dad, "They've just  
announced Australia's at war."

We didn't have a radio so  
whenever the news was on we all  
went over and listened to  
Grandma's radio.

They weren't in everybody's  
house'.



Evelyn's uncle,  
Private William Hugh McCullagh lost in  
action in WWI

An interview of Evelyn Kitney, (nee McCullagh) was conducted by Gigi Hesterman on 15 April 2014  
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



L-R: (back) Evelyn and Fred  
(front) Stanley and Jean McCullagh. Circa 1931

Bunt (Henry) McCullagh's early truck. L- R: Fred, Bunt, Jean, Evelyn, Stanley, Ruby McCullagh (nee Lindley) Circa 1930

Evelyn Kitney, nee McCullagh was born 23 July 1925 to Henry (Bunt) and Ruby McCullagh, nee Lindley. She was born and raised in Kalamunda.

Evelyn's grandparents, Harry and Caroline McCullagh, moved to Kalamunda from South Australia in the 1890s. Her grandpa operated a contract cartage service and worked on the new railway line. Evelyn's grandma opened the first post office in the area.

Evelyn's maternal grandfather was killed in an accident in Melbourne. Following his death her grandmother moved the family to Pickering Brook where they lived with Evelyn's great grandfather.

Bunt and Ruby married in Kalamunda in 1921 and had five children. One of their children died as an infant at the age of 3 months.

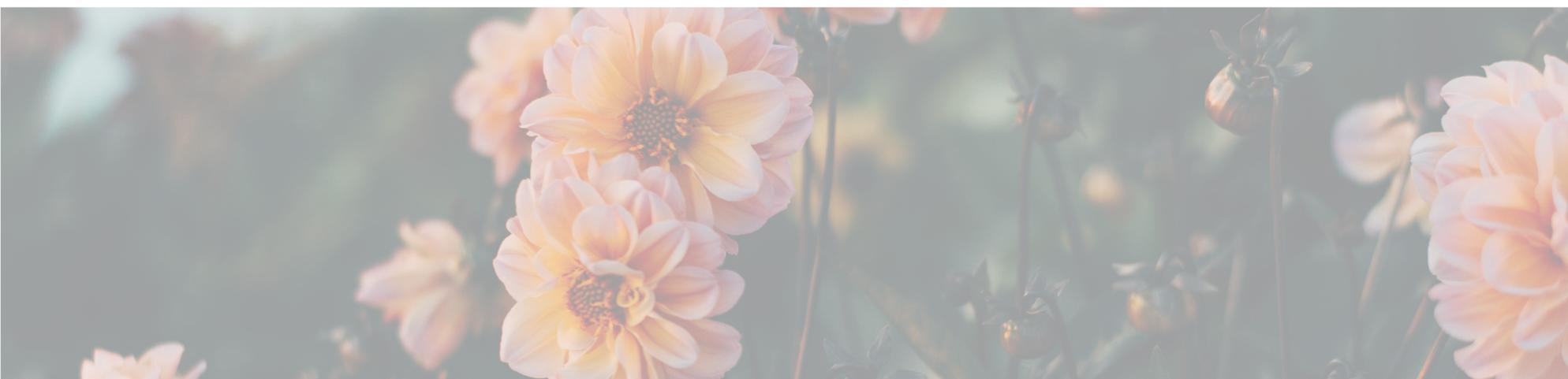
The family lived in the 'McCullagh Cottage' in Railway Road Kalamunda. Evelyn told how houses at that time were not allocated a number for identification. When they did, the cottage address became 63 Railway Road, Kalamunda.



## Evelyn in the back yard

MCCULLAGH'S COTTAGE

CIRCA 1930





## *McCullagh Cottage*

63 Railway Road,  
Kalamunda

**CIRCA 1927**

L-R: Bunt ( Henry) McCullagh, Jean (baby), Ruby McCullagh (nee Lindley), others unknown

### *At home in the McCullagh Cottage*

The family home had a room in the front of the house which was always called the front room, it was never called the lounge.

Evelyn's parents' bedroom was opposite the front room. There was another room off that which was the boy's bedroom. The *little* bedroom was for the girls.

There was a large kitchen at the back of the house. It had a big fire stove which burned most of the time for cooking and heating.

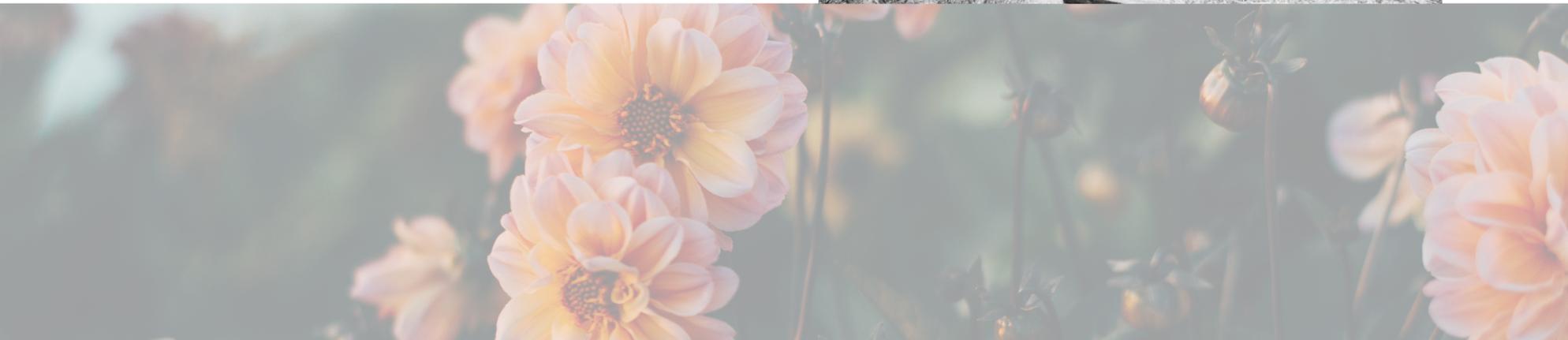
In the earlier days there was no electricity but Evelyn recalled sleeping at her Grandma's whilst it was installed at the cottage around 1930.

During the day the family spent their time outside or in the kitchen where they would have their meals. She remembers playing games or reading books in the evenings in the front room with a big fire burning. When she was older they gathered around the piano on Sunday evenings and would have sing-a-longs.

As there was no bathroom in the house a wash tub was brought into the kitchen and one-by-one they would have a bath using the same water. The water was drawn from the well, put through the copper to boil and carried to the kitchen to fill the tub.

The well was quite a distance from the house and was about 40 feet deep. There was a large wood heap close by because Evelyn's Dad was a wood carter and he would sell some of the wood for additional income.

Evelyn also remembers the toilet being way down the back yard.





Evelyn and Jean McCullagh. Circa 1937

## *Kalamunda in the 1930s*

Evelyn remembers the isolation with very few properties around them at the time. Her Grandma bought the vacant block of land in between her own house and *McCullagh Cottage*. There was another house on the corner of Headingley Road. Other residents in the street included the Elliots, Fishers and Miss Synnott whose house can still be found on the corner of Railway and Stirk Roads.

On the occasions that Evelyn had a penny to spend she would go down to the little shop and buy a lolly. She remembers Hummerstons' grocery store and across the road a newsagent who sold a variety of goods and had an open air tea room attached to the shop. Evelyn's mum would walk to the shop and load up her billy cart with goods to carry home or she would get items delivered from the grocer, butcher and baker.

On the weekend city people would come to Kalamunda by bus with their luggage stacked on the racks on top of the bus. The town folk would wander around to see who was coming and what they were wearing this year.

Evelyn attended the Kalamunda State School, as it was called then, and stayed there for nine years. She went to school by Shank's pony (walked) with the other children. It was about a one mile walk but she remembers it being safe then.

She recalls going into the bush for the paper chase. The children would drop pieces of paper and the rest of the class had to follow them. They would spend about an hour out in the bush just following the paper trails.

When Evelyn left school she travelled by train to Perth every day to attend the Perth Technical College. She would leave Kalamunda at 8:20am, change trains at Midland and arrive in Perth at 9:05am. She would do her homework on the way home because she didn't get home until around 6:45pm. Whilst it took a lot of time to travel the fare was only five shillings on a term pass as opposed to five shillings a week on the bus.





L-R: Evelyn and Jean McCullagh, Peggy Odgers  
Jean McCullagh's Debutante Ball. Circa 1947



Kalamunda Football day. Circa 1948



Jean McCullagh Railway Road.  
Circa early 1940s

## *Kalamunda dances, balls and the footy*

Evelyn was 16 in the 1940s when she started attending the local dances that were held weekly in the Kalamunda Agricultural Hall.

The dances, often fundraisers, were organised by the RSL Ladies Auxiliary or the Red Cross. There was also an Agricultural Show that was followed by a ball. Evelyn recalls the lovely supper, coffee and large crowds that attended.

During the war years there was a shortage of men but there was often an army camp close by. The soldiers would come to the dance by the truck load. The Americans had a large camp near Mundaring Weir and they would also come to the dances. Evelyn's girlfriends often travelled from Perth and stayed overnight for a fun night out.

Evelyn remembers how they turned her old blue evening frock into a new ball gown. They bought yards of mosquito netting, dying hers blue and her sister's pink. They cut down the old evening frock, turned it into a petticoat and laid the tulle over it resulting in new ball gowns that year.

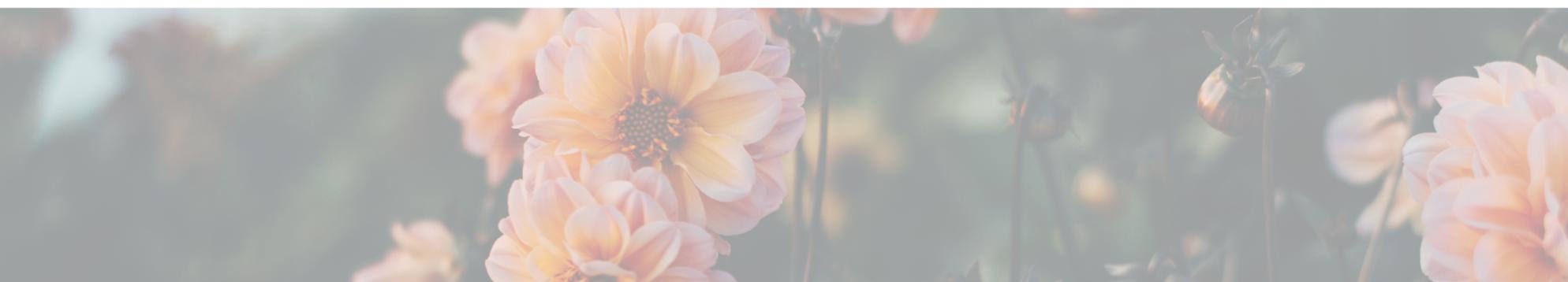
The Kalamunda Football Club started from nothing but gradually grew in popularity. The girls followed it just as much as the boys and they would put on afternoon tea when the game was in Kalamunda.

As the club started to travel around to compete with other clubs the Kosteras put on a bus to transport them to Mount Helena, Mundaring or Sawyers Valley. She remembers a time when there were three buses going out on a Sunday afternoon because there were so many people going to the football.

Evelyn's younger brother became the goal umpire for the team. The team were good enough to play in some of the Grand Finals and won a couple of times.

They had a WA Football League (WAFL) player on the team at one stage and another who was their coach because they lived in Kalamunda.

Most country towns had their own football club and teams would travel miles to compete with other clubs. It was a real social event.



Cover image: Evelyn McCullagh in her evening dress with dyed mosquito netting overlay.  
Circa early 1940s

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