

Transcript of an interview with former Roseworthy Agricultural College Staff member JACK DALY

Interviewer is unknown, and the interview is believed to have been conducted around 2010

The interviewer's comments and questions are presented in bold type

...*INAUDIBLE*....Brother was down...twelve months...two months, we got by. He came back and I stopped him

You came here in 1914? And that would have been in Colebatch's day

In Perkin's

In Perkin's day, yeah. And what did you come here as? What was the nature of your work?

Anything and everything

So you were a general handyman?

Yes

And you were working in the garden, in the paddocks

Never was in the garden, in the paddocks, milking cows, anything that came

What was your title? Did you have a position or just a...

Just a Farm Hand

Farm Hand. And you stayed in that job for all the time that you were here?

Mm

Do you remember any...er...remarkable changes or funny events or amusing people or...er...difficult people...or...anything springs to mind as an outstanding...er...piece of your life here....or any particular difficult times. For example, what about the ...er...what was...did the work of the First World War have much effect on the place? What do you remember of the...er...how hard life was?

Well you started at half past five in the morning feeding horses and you went back at half past eight at night to turn them out. You knocked off at half past seven and went back at 2 o'clock ...that was midday until you'd knock off. And you did that seven days a week. That was a great old Christmas Day when you brought all your horses in and bedded them down

Bloody rough wasn't it. So your day was half past five until half past eight at night? With a bit of time off for lunch and that was about all

That was all

And no morning tea or afternoon tea or...

No, no smokos, you weren't allowed to smoke on the farm, the only place you were allowed to smoke was down at the gate by the old oval and they took it up to the big main gate by the farm and nowhere else were you allowed to smoke, nowhere, not even out in the paddocks!

And you lived in a house on the College?

Yes

You had to come in from where - where did you come from then? Where did you live?

I was born and bred here.

So you were from off the College. How long would it take you to get to work in the morning ...an hour or...

Nah. Just across the road from the wine cellar

Oh, a few minutes, so you were very close to it

Yes. You come in here and had your breakfast...you used to allow you, I think it was a pound a week they gave you and your keep. You had breakfast at half past six, dinner (lunch) at midnight ...arr...midday and...er..lunch (dinner) whenever you liked to eat it after half past six

And you came across here to the dining room to have I, did you? You had it in the dining room?

Yea. Workman's dining room

The workman's dining room

Yea

And this was seven days a week you kept at it?

Seven days a week if you were on stables..... every morning.

You weren't always on stables...were you?

No, no

Must have been a roster system...

Well yeah. If you were mostly on stables then you might have done stables for another week or so. But...ah...even if you was on stables early morning, you never got no extra. No such thing as overtime.

How many men were there like yourself around?

Hmm...well, put in say 8 or 9

Eight or nine. So was it.....you would often have had several men on the same section?

You would have a stable hand. You'd have to come in and help him. You only get one student

Hmm. I see. Were you married, Mr Daly

Married?

Hmm

Yes

How did your wife put up with this business of long hours...and I guess she had to grin and bear it, did she?

She had to grin and bear it

Yeah

Grin and bear it was right. The students had no other way to get around only...only a dray. And if anyone ever took that dray....there were five horses...and if I were...*Inaudible*...half past six of an evening ...some got home at midnight*Interruption*.....got home at midnight and you were on it at half past five in the morning you still had to get up and work...*Inaudible*...

I see, yeah...that's a good way of getting out of it, isn't it. And what, were you happy in the work generally...did you like the life?

Happy...happy yea. Happier than what I am now. Even with these were very long hours. You did not mind them as long as you got a bit of time off somewhere else. You never got much time, not much time

A break from it; as long as you got rostered on and rostered out even it was not so bad.

Yea. The first 12 months... you got 2 days holiday...inaudible...

Did you get any annual leave at all? A week or two weeks?

Yea we got the first...the first 12 months you got 2 days, the next 12 months...five days. And the next you got..... I don't know whether it was eight days, I think...that's as far as you can go. You couldn't get any further

You can hardly say it was generous conditions, could you? You can hardly say that the conditions were generous because they weren't

Oh no

A pound a week when you began and your keep?

Mmm. You weren't game to say a word...*inaudible*...Plenty more waiting, looking for a job

This must have been the days when...ahh... any person, say, who was a member of a union and made a difficulty would simply be asked to leave when other blokes could come in and replace them

Well...err...talking about the union...there weren't any union. All I can say...err...In 15 or 16 (1915-6) my brother-in-law came here, he was rejected from the army...chucked him out of the army and he came here to work in the pantry and the one who wanted to form a union. One day he walked in...err...knocked on the Principal's door and walked in and the Principal said come in, hestarts to talk about the union.....*inaudible*...he put on the light or something and said that's your busy life and he said get out! And that was the start of the union

Did everybody joined do you think?

Yea

And did that make much of a difference to conditions and wages?

Oh yes

How...how did they change....what was the improvement?

They turned around then, you got so much....a few days a year sick leave... and then you probably got a day when it was a public holiday when it was double time. Probably got a day when...a couple of times

This was about in 1916?

Yea....from then on

How did the...um...how did the First World War effect the place? Do you have any memories of that?

It affected it pretty hard. I hate to admit it...about 1...Third years....about or nearly about the same I s'pose in the second year and the same again in the first years

So the numbers went down a great deal?

Oh you're not telling me

Those boys that stayed here...arr...feel particularly bad about staying and not going off to the war or er...was there a feeling that...

When they came of age they get their parents' consent and they packed up and went

Those that stayed...those students that were old enough to go to war that stayed behind was there any feeling that they were not doing the right thing....that they should not

No no no. There were like I say when they came of age they packed up and went. I can't talk about the War, it took a lot of coaxing from my people to sign for me to go away, it was the same for the students

What...err... are there any particular things that you did while you were here that gave you great satisfaction? Any particular...err...did you prepare a.....

Well it...it didn't matter what it was...you had a team of horses out in the paddock...when you took an interest in it and I tell you straight than lie. They are good to deal with, a team of horses, than a tractor, they never let you down.

So there was pride?

You took pride in whatever you were doing

Hmm. Are there any special things that stand out in memory of things that you did especially well?

While I think the hardest job that I put on was putting up those two big old silos up at the farm

You built those, did you?

Like hell!

Can you tell me how they were built?

Yea. They are 18 foot in diameter...six inch walls...three foot iron moulds...and that's a lot of cement gravel...all mixed by hand and then pushed to the top by wheelbarrows

Up on planks?

Up on one big long plank...inaudible...I was one of those who pushed the barrow

And then poured it down?

There was a bloke on the top, he used to.....you`d tip it out, he`d put it in while another would tamp around it, around the top.

The mould was...

Galvanised iron

Galvanised iron mould six inches apart...curved galvanised iron

Hm

One chap was telling me, an old student I think it was, telling me that one of their favourite games they used to play was to climb up those silos when they were full of wheat and jump inside and play about there. He said there was a time when he was nearly going to jump and he luckily shone his torch down when because it was dark and he couldn't see and it was a good thing he didn't jump because there was nothing in there. Would have gone right to the bottom and killed himself

Oh yea. Up there at the stables, a big thing up there used to hold about 17 or 18 ton of chaff...*inaudible*...used to have a big hole in it (where the chaff came out)...When a student who was on poultry or garden or something...he gets up on top and says this is the way to do it and then all the chaff came down on top of him, he was only a small chap. Jimmy warned me, he was on stables with me and I don't know how we got down whether we jumped off the top of the shed down onto the ground, or the haystack, or what, when we got down we opened all the doors, poor...was in the central one

All the chaff came out I suppose?

All the chaff came down on Belemy (?)

He was very lucky he didn't suffocate of course, could easily have suffocated there

Jimmy warned me, he was in the stables with me, he said if he stuck the fork in his hand he`d make the so and so sick! (some inaudible sections)

Err... are there other interesting incidents or doing funny things like that you can remember?...people doing funny things or err playing a prank or two or...

Funny things?

Yea pranks or tricks on people

There was a lot of funny things and the whole trouble was there were a lot of dirty things!

(Chuckles) Oh it doesn't matter...Philp was telling me about the...

*...inaudible...*You can't say nothing much because I wouldn't want to say things to hurt the families or any of those...

No no, I appreciate that. Fair enough. But there were some funny things and some were a bit rough...were they?

Oh, yea there were funny things and rough things. Funniest thing ever I seen was when we were down at the Procession in Gawler and...err...They did it alright they got wires and shears and cow skin and all. I don't know how they did it the made a skeleton of a cow...*inaudible...*that was the talk in Gawler for years and years and years. But as you say, funny things...*inaudible...*It's a hard, when you take a principal you don't like saying anything that happened while he was a Principal.....*inaudible*

No, that's fair too. You and your wife and family lived over near the winery?

Hmm

Now you yourself got fed here at the dining room, breakfast dinner and tea?

Until I got married, when I got married I went home

I see...arr...so you got married and you went in that house near the winery, is that correct?

Hmm

That meant that you obviously ate your meals with your wife?

Hmm

Did you get your stuff from the College or...you couldn't buy it from the College, you had to get it

Get it from Gawler

In from Gawler. And that would have what been before refrigeration this is what how often did you go to Gawler....once a week or twice?

Twice a week

To get your meat and the vegetables and so on?

Yea

Once a week or something like that. And how long would it have taken you...like to get from Gawler to your house?

All depends how much head wind you had. Only had a two stoke push bike.

Hmm. But...ah...it would have been something like an hour if you were going well?

Oh yes

An hour one way, I mean?

Yes

Well did you actually chose of your own free will to come out and be a farm hand were you always interested the land or did you almost...I know you said you almost fell into the job and you stayed here, stayed there

Yea

Would it have been your first choice and er...

Well it was, my old dad went down for a while out at...*inaudible*...he nearly had nearly ten years of that so what ever come...*inaudible*...You had to get out and go to work

Fairly difficult times, I suppose?

Didn't matter what we did so long as we got a few bob

I'm...what...if you had to go through it again, would you have put up with the same things that you put up with?

Yes, yes

You didn't mind too much?

No

Would there have been any real criticism you had of the sort of work you had to do or...not so much the names of people but were there say people about above you or below you or equal to you that made life particularly difficult at any stage...were there any....you know

All depends you might have had one or two enemies where ever you went you always had some one set against you but ninety percent of the people you work with were alright.

Um...Did you feel that you got reasonable assistance from the authorities of the College to provide the various tools and machinery and carts and so on that you needed for your work or was it difficult to get things?

Mm...but er...

I mean if you broke an axe, for example, if you broke an axe handle

Oh no, if you broke an axe handle you'd go and get another one but If you wanted a set of plough shears that broke, to put on the plough you'd come down and ask Mr Philp for new shares, he said he ain't got the money, you'd have to do with what you got!

Hmm. So it was difficult to get certain things?

He was a hard man to get a...anything out of

Do you remember his famous pen he used to have? He had the same pen for years and years. Eventually Sid Wicker and somebody else pinched it from him and wouldn't give it back

Those sort of things never stick in my mind

What do you remember about some of the Principals...just in general things? What did you hear from Perkins and then through Colebach?

Professor Perkins used to have a great big high push bike and where ever he went the road that bike...and you could be up in the paddock and the old fellow would come along and he might get off his bike and stand behind a bush and you wouldn't know he was there until he got on, hopped on the back of the implement and said "How's things going?" You couldn't stop that team and look around but once the old fellow got on that bike he never looked back. But Colebach...he was a hard man. He was very hard. Every horse had to be fed by a kerosene bucket. You weren't allowed to smoke at the yard...One of the students said "Let's have a smoke" and I said "Alright", but who would walk behind the pine tree but Colbatch, we didn't...

And then you had a...who was after Colebach? Birks was it?

Nah. Birks was...Only thing wrong with him he was all military

He had been an army man, hadn't he?

Mmm, he was a Captain in the army

Well, how did things change when Callaghan got here? Did the place really wake up to itself?

They...they didn't change that much. Everybody seemed to go on the same way. But...aah...he had a way with him that he wanted done this way or done that way and that was the end of it. But aah... he wasn't a bad man to work under. He was like the rest of us, he had his faults!

Hmm. McCulloch was after him wasn't he? Dr McCulloch came after Callaghan?

His eldest girl who was going to...Jack said "Mind you it would hurt when you get it...she said "You mind your own big business" in front of everybody (laughs).

Yea. One of his daughters is now the adviser to the State Government on women's affairs

That's what I was talking about right. Debbie, I have not met her. I don't know what became of the other girl, she went over seas.

They are both in Adelaide - the other one is married and lives at...err...Blackwood or Belair or somewhere I believe. What was I going to say....going back to Perkins...or....might have been before I think...a chap called Angas...Professor Angas was getting around the countryside...he was never here very much....he was the Director of Agriculture until 1910 and then he left to go up the river and then became a member of parliament for Victoria and Light

Don't remember him at all

Don't remember at all?

No

Just trying to think, when you came to get the job here, did you have any special training or background for it?

Nup

Do you think you wandered along and saw the Principal or who did you see?

They told my dear old dad to come and start work and that's all it was about it!

Your Dad more or less arranged it did he?

He just asked me to see if I would do it

How old were you then, when you started here?

Well about sixteen

Sixteen. So you were just not too long out of school I really suppose then

Hmmmm?

You weren't too long out of school?

Well, I worked for a cocky for a couple of cockies a couple of years or so before it actually

You went to primary school and then left

I went to the old primary school down here at Kangaroo Flat

You've been working virtually since you were a boy, really

Yes

Not stopped since?

Still going

Still going (laughing). You left in what '64 wasn't it - 1964?

No couldn't just say when that was...depending...

It's over in the other room on a bit of paper

Something like that. That's fourteen years ago

Can you account for the fact that everybody that comes to Roseworthy in any capacity at all seems to live forever? I mean Callaghan is still alive McCulloch is still alive, Philpy is still alive; Syd Wicker died at seventy something not long ago

Mmm

There is a bloke called Richardson, a student, a chap called Richardson who was a student here in 19 student he started in 1899 as student here, and he's still alive living down at Warradale at 93 or something. What is it about this place that makes people go...live forever just about. Everyone, seems they live forever?

I don't know whether it's the cook's food or what (laughing)

A lot of people have been around for a long, long time are still alive

Yea. The food was rough and ready. Used to have a....a cook and his mob and a chief steward. He had one record and a gramophone, he had this record "What's a matter with Kelly". He be paralytic drunk all day all night and all you get is this record, they be playing, Kelly, he's alright. The headmaster, bloke by the name of "Old Adams" he couldn't do nothing with him. He walked in, he'll sack one, he'd sack him. Go off into town, get some old bloke from the pub, patch him up, start him, come up sack another one before he got his bottles before the next day

That must have been a fairly difficult time when the students weren't allowed to drink on the place and knowing that the cooks and so were?

Ah well...they weren't allowed to have drink and weren't allowed to have pushbikes or weren't allowed to have anything...nothing at all...nothing at all

It would have been fairly tough life for young fellows locking them up here for three years?

Nothing here at all, then if you wanted to he would have his weekends...weekend off to go home. He'd be if the mail was not going pick up his bag and walk to Roseworthy and catch a train; no bus or anything to take you home. You'd have to walk

That would be a fair walk from here to Roseworthy too?

Some 7 or 8 miles. A fair walk

Well is there anything else that you can think of Mr Daly that's worth passing on, you see you have filled in a few details for me, you know....just give us an idea of the colour of the times, not so much, not so much...

Heh?

You've sort of given me details which have given me an idea of... what can I call it...the colour of life the way it was. Is there anything else that you can think of that is worth passing on.....any recollections say what the depression did to the place or whether any stage the place was thought to be in danger of collapsing and closing down?

Oh, we had a strike once

I realise there was a strike once. Do you know anything about that? Can you tell me anything about the strike in general terms?

Oh yea

I know that ...I know that Perks was unpopular and that he was probably the cause of it... but is there any details...was there anywhere did they meet...where did the students hold their meeting and

I think they had general tent, they had their meeting down there...That was a few years ago

1932 I think it was?

And then there was...sixteen...I suppose forty odd cows and two of us had to milk them...do all the work...used to get up about half past two in the morning...get the cows in, get to work

This was during the strike?

Yes

How long did it last?

About six or seven weeks

Six or seven weeks! So you were busy for six or seven weeks! What do you remember when you were first told that it was on? What was your first reaction to it? You know when the news first got to you

When I first got the news I was home on holidays inaudible...Said had to get back to work...Well that's one against old Perks

Hmm. He wasn't popular with the staff either, was he?

He wasn't popular with anybody.

And the strike went for seven weeks...you gave up some of your holidays to help run the place while the boys were on strike?

Yea

You get any time in lieu of that later on.... did they make it up to you?

Nup

Didn't occur to people then; did it for the love of it or something?

Never got nothing out of that. If you got kicked by the horses...all bruised up...busted up, that was just your bad luck

And you paid the hospital bill and you paid the doctor?

You paid the doctor, you paid the lot

And this even after the union? This was even after the union was around?

Oh yes...the union...What we had...

When would you say about...you got something like decent conditions, like say accident compensation and decent annual leave?

Well I'd say that came about...might have been about 22 or 23. You got four days sick leave

Four days?

Mmm. If you did not take out four days you lost that. If you were off one day the second day you had to get a doctor's certificate

Hmm. Why it is that people seemed to put up with a lot of these things...that people wouldn't put up with anymore?

Well...jobs were hard to get, you had to put up with it, if you were a married man only getting say five or six shillings a day...it was hard yakka, you were cobbled to work, you couldn't do much about it, you did the best you can

It's a fair stick to wave over somebody's head isn't it? Really black mail of some sort

It was in one way or another, it was like when Brendon Lynch got killed, they used to get the meat from the abattoirs, and this night, young Brendon Lynch, he had to go to Roseworthy to pick up the meat

Was he a student or...?

Yea, he was a student and he had not undone the old horse and gets up in the cart and a sandwich in his hand and away went the old horse. Bang hit a post or something, took him out and killed him. He used...The only way into Gawler was to put two horses in the drag and a bed on top of that and took him into Gawler. I don't what hours of the night my brother got him in there, couldn't push the horse at all, just walked him along. About a week or so afterwards and I was called in the office...inaudible...Old Coldby said to me "Why didn't you go and get the meat last night?" ...inaudible...Mr Pritchard said you had to go, he was the house master. I said "I don't take orders from everyone." He said "That's just where you are wrong, you take orders from all the staff!"

Hmm and this boy was killed. What year was that....do you remember?

No! It was a long time ago, many years ago. I am not sure, it may have been a couple of years before old Colby finished or it could have been three years before he finished

It was under Colebatch, wasn't it?

Hmm

Were there any other major accidents or things like that anybody killed or anybody badly hurt doing anything?

Oh yes, I myself had two knees smashed up, two collar bones broken at the same time, no skin off me back. We had 16 horses, we had two, three, four...there was three 8 horse teams, students had a team, two students had a team each, I had the other one and they bolted went straight over the top of the lot of us. I can still hear them saying their prayers with the horses still sitting on top of them...(inaudible)

Hmm. And of course it wasn't an easy matter to find medical attention either.

No

You had to go into Gawler or get someone out here?

No it was hard, it was like when the oval was put down, it was all graded by hand. Old Colbatch used to ride on the stick and two blokes used to pull him around, he reckons it was the only way to keep it level, it was all graded by hand

What with buck scrapers and so on?

No, it was a lump of timber I suppose it would be as long as this room, 6 x 6, he stood on it and you and I pulled it!

So literally by hand, two men pulled it and Cole stood on it, like a long sleeper I suppose?

Yea, Yea, they ploughed it up with a 10 horse disc plough...inaudible....

And where was the oval before that before that? Didn't they have an oval? Out behind the new library there?

Yes

Behind the fire station, I suppose?

Yes, the fire station was on part of it. And...ah...the tennis courts were there too

How long would it take to grade an oval like that, weeks I suppose?

Mmm, at least a couple of months or more

And he was out there every day standing on this stick, and how many hours would he be at it?

Eight.

Eight hours a day and he stood on a stick?

Yea. He was standing on that stick ...that oval was his past time. If he wasn't in his office he would be down on the oval on his stick, cutting all the weeds out

Was he responsible for the grandstand out there too?

Yea

I believe that he used to do a lot of himself or get out there and get into it a bit himself

The grandstand was built by my brother, he never had no trade. The last nail...old Colby said "Give me the hammer and nails Bill and I'll drive the last one in, he missed the nail and hit him on the thumb, it was a mess (Laughs)

He hit the wrong nail

He could give a joke and take a joke. You had no....everything was carted by horse and carts, you had no...up at the farm

You remember the various experiments that Perkins carried out ...the little experimental plots....here and there growing various things, manure tests and so on?

The experimental plots were carried on practically right up until I left

And do you remember Perkins being out there himself digging around and looking after them and so on?

Oh yes...used to go on a Sunday pulling out foreign grain heads out from the crop

Who would have been the last principal to get out and do that sort of thing? Perkins would have done it I suppose and you think Colebatch did it?

Hmm and that would have been about the last two

Callaghan wouldn't have been out there I don't think, would he?

I don't think so. He was more interested in horses

Hmm yes he kept them on didn't he fairly late when many people would have changed over to tractors, he insisted on keeping the horses

Yes, he was horse mad

What can you tell me about what the.... they used to call the harem down there? The old stallion box and the harem and the timber store

Harem?

Can you tell me how that used to work and what happened there?

Well....arr... where the old barn is - well I am not sure about the barn. When it got a lot of timber and stuff stacked in it that used to be the old stables...sixty horses in that. What they call the harem now there was 10 horses in that

That was around the back with sort of circular walls?

And right around the back..... I think there is a lot of old implements there now, that was horses there and over in the old blacksmiths shop that they knocked down, there were horses there! And then when they shifted over to the other stables that they knocked down they used to use the Harem for cows, show cows in there.

What about that stallion box there that's next to the barn that you call?

Yea

Is that where they used to keep the stallion did they?

They used to keep the Stallion there, the name was Paskervell(?)

That's where he lived, that was his house

That was his house and the harem was his yard. He was shut in like a prisoner

Hmm. These of course are Clydesdales aren't they? These are Clydesdales we are talking about?

No he wasn't he was a blood horse

Oh I see. They used to have a lot of these Clydesdales, a lot of these big draft horses

Ah...the first...the first heavy horses that come here was (Abstelowl?) called William he was half Cyrus and half Clydesdale and then they got another one called Lord and he was a Harviestoun. And now talking about horses, Colebach was the principal and he was a vet and he goes over to here Georges and buys a mare and brings it home and said to us fellows on the farm, he said "I bought this horse", he said the prized mare he said "You look after it" it's a Clydesdale, a very free worker and after that he was one of the best teamster you'd ever wish to meet. Didn't matter what else or how it was done. The farm manager, he went out to see how old Alf was getting on with his horse "What are you doing Alf? I thought I told you to tie the mare back". He said "Put a rope around her neck and drag her, I paid 65 quid for that!"

He wasn't much good

Nah, nothing at all, George thought it was alright.

Of course it is a different thing being a vet to being a teamster isn't it?

Oh yea

The horse may be a perfectly healthy horse but it mightn't be any good in a team

...how to handle...not worth tuppence

Conclusion of tape