

**CITY OF SYDNEY**

**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS**

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**INTERVIEWEE:** Ross Ellis 1

**INTERVIEWER:** Richard Raxworthy.

**DATE:** 11 January 2001

**PLACE:** Andy Ellis Tailors?

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**TRANSCRIPT**

0.00    **RR:**    This is tape identification. Sydney City Council, Sydney CBD Oral History Project, tape 4, and we're talking to Mr Ross Ellis of Andy Ellis, tailor. And could I ask you to spell your full name first?

RE:    Ross. Like the whole lot? Yes, R-O-S-S, A-N-D-R-E-W, E-L-L-I-S.

**RR:**    And the business name, could you spell that as well, please?

RE:    A-N-D-Y, E-L-L-I-S.

**RR:**    What year were you born?

RE:    1940.

**RR:**    Whereabouts?

RE:    In Sydney.

**RR:**    Whereabouts in Sydney?

RE:    In the – oh, in – it's the hospital out at Bondi Junction.

**RE: No, where was your family living, out that way?**

RE: Oh, yes. I think at Bondi, I think, yes.

**RR: And you grew up around there?**

RE: Mainly at Randwick I grew up, I think 'round there.

**RR: And you went to school there?**

RE: I went to school at Clovelly Public School and then to Cleveland Street High School.

**RR: Did you go on from there any tertiary education?**

RE: No, I - - - well, I did the tailoring course.

1.49 **RR: Where?**

RE: Up at East Sydney Tech [Technical] College up at Paddington there.

**RR: Where did you work first?**

RE: Here, from here.

**RR: Who started this business then?**

RE: Dad started it.

**RR: Right, I thought so, yes.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: Your father. You don't know when he started it and where?**

RE: No, exactly the dates, but he made stuff for the Army during the war, so it was, you know, before that date some time. So, it must have been probably '38 or something like that.

**RR: Where was he from? Was he local?**

RE: Well, he lived in Sydney at Bondi Beach there when he was young but he – I think he came from Ballina originally; I think the family came from Ballina.

**RR: And your mother came from up there as well?**

2.40 RE: No, she came from down Bega way.

**RR: What sort of influence did you get from your parents, do you think?**

RE: Well, on business – like, this business or -?

**RR: Anything.**

RE: Oh, well I think I got from Dad, you know, love of the bush and that, you know, 'cause I'm a caver. I'm interested in caves but I think I got all that from going into the bush, from him as a young boy.

**RR: But he didn't do caving?**

RE: No, not – he hated the thought of caving. As soon as I'd mention it he'd get claustrophobic. Yes, no.

**RR: And it's a foregone question as to whether – I mean, your father wanted you to come into this line of work or did you volunteer, so to speak?**

RE: Yes, I think he wanted me to come into it, yes, yes.

**RR: Did you do anything else before you came into the business or just came straight in?**

3.45 RE: Just came straight from school. I was going to do the Leaving Certificate but I got really sick in that final year, so I just decided to leave and come in to work here.

**RR: Now, do you know the history of this land and building at all?**

RE: No, I don't. Not actually the - - -

**RR: Did your father start the shop here?**

RE: Yes, he - - - not – there was a shop here before he - - -

**RR: What sort of shop?**

RE: I think it was a shirt shop.

**RR: Did he buy that or -?**

RE: No. We don't actually own the building at all. We've rented it all the time.

**RR: But he started somewhere else, didn't he?**

RE: Yes, he started up in Oxford Street, above the building; Adelsteins was in it on the top floor of that. Don't know what the address was.

**RR: You don't know what number it is.**

RE: No.

**RR: But is it still there? Is any of the building - - -**

4.41 RE: The building's still there, I think, yes, yes.

**RR: You can't remember what number? No.**

RE: No, not offhand, no. I think – it was right on the corner of a street. I could look it up, you know, if you want it later on.

**RR: Thank you.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Did he start in this line of business, your father, do you know?**

RE: No. I think he first started off – well, he did all sorts of things. He drove a horse and cart, delivering coal, I think, initially from when he was real young, when he was about fourteen. But then he worked in a fruit shop, I think, and then I think he went into tailoring after that.

**RR: Do you know where he learnt his tailoring?**

RE: He more or less learnt it himself, I think, from working, 'cause he was a good worker and I think it was because of seeing how good a worker he was in this fruit shop, that Adelsteins – or Zink's it might have been that he actually worked for. I think they - - -

**RR: They're still going.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: And the person he worked with who you mentioned earlier on and we've got his name – did he work up at Oxford Street?**

5.53 RE: No, he just worked from here, I think. I don't think he ever worked at Oxford Street.

**RR: Do you know was he a qualified tailor?**

RE: No, he was really in charge of the mercery side of things, like the shirts and all that side, I think. So, there were two – they separated it as a business in those days.

**RR: Did he make shirts, the other man?**

RE: No, he never made them. It was all ready-made stuff, yes. But he was the – dressed the windows and everything like that.

**RR: Do you know what decided the location of the business? Do you know why he moved down from Oxford Street to here?**

RE: I think just business was expanding; sort of thing, there and initially we had all the top floor of up here as well as the workroom above the shop.

**RR: Did he have other employees?**

RE: Yes, oh yes, lots. There was about – probably about twenty, twenty five people worked upstairs then – and he had his own workroom there 'cause initially the business over at Oxford Street was just a tailoring workroom, whereas he came here and it became like a shop with all the other things to go with clothing, rather than just making suits only.

**RR: And who started the line of riding coats?**

7.22 RE: Dad, that was Dad's. He had a customer who came in here, a good, you know, tailoring customer whose daughter rode horses and he asked Dad could he make a riding coat and Dad said, well, if you tell him what he wants he'd make it for her - and she went on and became a champion rider and people started asking her where she got it from. It just went on from there.

**RR: How long ago would that be, do you think?**

RE: Oh, must be about – I'd say 'round from about the seventies, I think, yes. Probably 1970 or '69, something like that.

**RR: And as far as you know with your father, was it a good business up at Oxford Street?**

8.26 RE: Oh, yes, yes, really good. Well, that's why he moved down here, 'because it was expanding and he wanted to get into the accessories side of it as well.

**RR: And this area was good for those days? What was around here then?**

RE: Oh, well, Mark Foy's [department store] was up – you know, they were still going up in the building up there and Anthony Horderns was still going. There was a big furniture store next door that was owned by Johnny O'Keefe's father who Dad later went on to make all his suits, and then he – that's how he got into all the rock and rock band suits. He made all, you know, most of the famous ones in that era, yes.

**RR: Can you remember any others?**

RE: What, the bands?

**RR: Yes.**

9.12 RE: Well, he made for Digger Revell, Johnny O'Keefe, Col Joye, you know - even people like Brian Henderson, he made his suits. The compere of Sydney Tonight, Mike Walsh, I think his name was. Nearly all the people who were on the hit parades at that time he made for. I've got a book there I could actually get some more of the names out for you, if you like.

**RR: Yes, that'd be interesting.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Yes. And do you still do suits for them?**

RE: No, the - well, the bands sort of nowadays don't particularly wear suits, you know - they're wearing all sorts of things - but no, that sort of era died out, which we just make standard suits generally now and the riding coats.

**RR: But for instance Mike Walsh is still around. He could be contacted for that sort of thing, yes.**

10.17 RE: Yes. No, wait; it mustn't be Mike Walsh then. It's - his name was Walsh but he died, you know, he died in an accident on stage with electricity from the microphone, I think. So, it's not Mike Walsh ..... that's around now. I'll have to look and see what I can find his name.

**RR: And was that all from Col Joye, was it, through -?**

RE: Well, that - all the bands, you know, got to know about it from that, yes.

**RR: Were you working for your father then?**

RE: I wasn't right at the beginning but I was there when a lot of them were still - I served Johnny O'Keefe and I know Col Joye. But our main one that we're still doing stuff for now is Slim Dusty: he's been coming here for, you know, thirty-odd years - - -

**RR: And he still comes here?**

11.13 RE: - - - and we just finished a whole heap of stuff for him just a few weeks ago.

**RR: I would like to record him about your father.**

RE: Well, yes, he would be a good one to talk to, yes, because he actually visited Dad in hospital - just before he died he went out to see him.

**RR: Now, what about the change of the area around here?**

RE: Well, yes, there's been a huge amount of changes, really, with – a lot of them have affected business, like when the trams went off. You know, people used to come all the way from down town up to here but the buses aren't as easy to get up and down as the trams were. You'd just hop on one anywhere you like and hop off anywhere you like.

**RR: What about riding coats?**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Do you still get people from the bush?**

RE: Yes, we still get riding coats, yes. We do them just ready-made as well as tailored and they go all over the country – even some go to England and the odd one to America every now and then, yes.

12.16 **RR: And how does that come about?**

RE: Well, I think they've just seen coats when they're over here, visiting sort of thing and they – it's something different – they, you know.

**RR: What colours do you do them in?**

RE: Well, we do them in any colour people want but, you know, the main colour seems to be navy blues but – and green; green's been popular last few year.

**RR: And what about red?**

RE: Well, they're mainly for the jumping people.

**RR: And you don't do it for them?**

RE: We do some of those but not as many as the broad dressage kind of coat.

**RR: Who was the person again who started your father off in that area?**

RE: Shane Coughlan was the name of the rider.

**RR: Is he still around?**

RE: Well, that's a girl.

**RR: Girl?**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Is she still around?**

RE: Yes, I'd imagine she would be but I couldn't really say, because they usually don't stay in the riding - - -

**RR: No, not that long.**

RE: - - - when they're only in the – when they're younger.

**RR: And how has the business changed in other ways - were the clientele 'round here?**

13.25 RE: Well, most of our businesses is from people around the area that come in, all the offices and things like that. And we've been, as you say, about what, forty seven years here – a lot of people that come back every now and then for a suit or a pair of trousers to be made, yes.

**RR: What about the new blocks of units around here?**

RE: Well, that sort of picked things up a little bit, yes.

**RR: They do come in?**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: What about the backpackers?**

RE: Yes, you get the occasional alterations from them but generally don't seem to buy much; they've usually got what they need.

**RR: What about before, when there was the CB Private Hotel over the road and the West End [hotel] – did you get people from there, from the country?**

RE: Yes, yes, you know – a lot of times you don't really know where they come from but we do, we get a lot of people from New Zealand too who must be staying in – like, you know, they're from New Zealand, mainly 'cause my wife's a New Zealander and I recognise the accent, sort of thing. But people just generally don't tell you where they come from unless you actually have to write a name and address down on something.



14.40 **RR: But you get orders from New Zealand as well?**

RE: Yes, yes or - - -

**RR: Is that riding coats?**

RE: - - - sell the riding coats to New Zealand too, yes, yes.

**RR: And do you send any over sight unseen ..... measurements or whatever?**

RE: No, not - - -

**RR: You measure them all up, yes.**

RE: Well, if they want a ready-made coat you send it over but, you know – and they can return it if it doesn't fit and that. But anyone wants one made to measure they have to come into the shop so we can do the measuring.

**RR: And the ones from New Zealand that come into the shop for the made-up, do they get the information from over there?**

RE: Yes, I think – well, they travel around to different shows, people, so they see the coats on people and ask where they got it from. I imagine that's how they get - - -

**RR: Right, word of mouth, that way, yes.**

RE: Word of mouth, yes. Yes, most of our business is word of mouth. We do an odd advertising thing but not very much.

**RR: How do you advertise?**

15.43 RE: Mainly in a magazine, the riding magazines.

**RR: Which ones?**

RE: Oh, *Horse and Rider* and *Hoofs and Horns* but I haven't done any advertising in that for quite a long time.

**RR: And what about the Pony Club people – do you get many of them?**

RE: No, they – generally, it's after the Pony Club that they need the coats for. You don't get many for the Pony Club.

**RR: And what about around here – do you get any Asian people coming in?**

RE: Yes, yes. Yes, they – unfortunately, most of my manufacturers don't make stuff small enough. You know, it's hard - they want the smaller size than the size I have, generally. But I do sell a fair bit to them.

**RR: I notice your labels there – they've got Andy Ellis and a horse, somebody on a horse on there.**

RE: Yes, yes. Yes, well, Dad loved horses too, you know. I think that's possibly one of the reasons he was interested in it as well. But he just liked making really nice clothes for people.

**RR: I see you stock shoes as well now.**

16.57 RE: Yes, shoes, shirts, trousers, you know, ties, belts, all accessories, sorta, to go with a suit or just to wear as casual.

**RR: And has your range changed over the years?**

RE: Oh, a lot of things have gone out of fashion that people don't buy much any more, I s'pose. We've, you know, just gone into the basic kind of thing more now, than having everything that you could possibly have. Like, we used to have pyjamas and dressing gowns and slippers and anything you could think of but it just gets harder, too, for smaller shops like this to buy a smaller quantity from any manufacturers now; you have to buy things in bulk.

**RR: How do you keep up with any advances in the trade or changes in the trade?**

RE: Well, mainly just through, you know, reading the - - -

**RR: What?**

RE: Well, the magazines and the papers; just anything you see what's – and also look around the other shops; see what's being sold there.

18.07 **RR: So, who are your competitors?**

RE: Oh, well just – mainly, I s'pose it's the big stores like Grace Brothers and David Jones and – well, a lot of the other stores that have opened up in the last few years.

**RR: But what about riding clothes?**

RE: Oh, no, there's really – the only main competitor there are Melbourne firms, really.

**RR: Which ones are they?**

RE: There's Ritchie's, there's one, and there's another one – oh, I just can't think of their name offhand.

**RR: Do you have any relationship with them at all?**

RE: No, no, no.

**RR: You just know they're there?**

RE: Yes, yes, yes.

**RR: And do you get people sent down from the department stores or anywhere like that?**

RE: Oh, well, I would say they come from the department store but people do tell them to - you know, particularly for alterations they send them in here, yes. And it looks like he's right.

**RR: Do you do a lot of alterations?**

19.14 RE: Yes, yes, quite a bit of that kind of work, yes.

**RR: And you do it personally?**

RE: Yes, I do it myself, yes.

**RR: Since you've been here, have you ever had any other employees?**

RE: What? – well, I've only sort of had the business since Dad passed away three years – and just for a while my wife worked with me.

**RR: You didn't work here with your father?**

RE: Oh, yes, yes, yes, I worked with him all the time.

**RR: For how long?**

RE: Well, since I was seventeen, which is – well, I'm sixty now, so whatever that is.

**RR: So, you worked with him for a long while?**

RE: Yes, I was with him all my life, virtually, yes, yes. But I was up in the workroom for a long time and he was mainly down here in the shop.

**RR: But you don't have the upstairs now?**

RE: No, no, we don't have that now.

**RR: When I was talking about the building, asking you about the building, the people who own are after redeveloping, aren't they?**

RE: Yes, well it – we've been on a no lease here for about twenty years or more – so, because it's always - - -

**RR: Have you heard anything about - - -**

20.27 RE: Well, it's been up for sale numerous times but we don't know what's happening now, yes.

**RR: The last application I saw was for a twenty eight storey building - - -**

RE: Yes.

**RR: - - - with a hundred and ninety one apartments.**

RE: Yes, yes. Well, I don't know what happened about that but I think it's died off, yes.

**RR: I notice that this is a heritage – they count these shops in with the Chamberlain Hotel on the corner.**

RE: Yes, they can't - - -

**RR: Heritage Register, yes.**

RE: Yes, they've got to keep the frontage of them, do they?

**RR: Right, I don't know.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: But it was passed in 1997 and it still hasn't gone through, so I don't know what's happened.**

RE: Oh, yes, yes.

**RR: Do you know?**

RE: No, I don't know, no.

**RR: Right.**

RE: So, it was approved, that, was it? Yes, yes.

**RR: Well, I looked at it and it seemed to be approved in 1997.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: Whether it was held up because of the heritage aspect, I don't know.**

RE: Yes, yes, I don't know.

**RR: Probably.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Yes. But it's on the Heritage Register.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: The shops along with the hotel.**

21.23 RE: Yes. I knew the hotel was but I didn't know the shopfronts were, yes, but it is - - -

**RR: Well, it said – shall we put it this way? – it says from 420 to 428.**

RE: Oh, yes. Well, it's all part of the one building, I suppose, yes.

**RR: Do the same people own it?**

RE: Yes, it's owned by two people jointly, yes, yes.

**RR: Now, what about advertising? You used to advertise in those papers but do you do anything else?**

RE: Well, in the early days Dad used to advertise all the time on radio and TV.

**RR: Do you know what radio stations, radio and television?**

RE: Oh, not offhand, I don't think – but I think it was Channel Seven, mainly. It was the stations that had Johnny O'Keefe shows on and Brian Henderson's bandstand, those – no, that was probably Channel Nine, wasn't it, Bandstand and that - - -

**RR: I don't know.**

RE: - - - yes, I think it – but he, on the radio he had, you know, I think he tried all different people and whoever was popular at the time.

22.35 **RR: Brian Henderson is still around, isn't he?**

RE: Yes, yes, yes.

**RR: He's on – not Bandstand any more?**

RE: No, no.

**RR: And your father used to make suits for him?**

RE: Yes, he made suits for him in the early days, yes.

**RR: I might ask him.**

RE: Yes, yes, yes. Well, I think he actually won 'Best Dressed Man on Television' when Dad was making his suits.

**RR: Right.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: And what about the window-dressing? Is that the same as when your father had it or have you changed it?**

RE: Oh, no. This other fellow I gave you the name of, he handled the window-dressing and he used to get, oh, really outstanding windows put in. He had one time there used to have – when poker machines first came in he put a poker machine in with all the money pouring out of it and the window got smashed and a lot of the money got stolen.

23.30 Another – he used to think up all gimmicks all the time. One time there was a big scare with counterfeit ten pound notes, I think, in – so they had ten pound notes in the window for sale for a dollar and they reckon only one person came in because they thought they were all counterfeit ones. So, and he had contacts with the MGM movie studios. He used to get pictures of all the stars and put them in the window.

**RR: And posters?**

RE: Yes, posters, yes; big, blown up posters. And they'd advertise the latest film with it as well at the same time.

**RR: But you decided on what was put in the window now, do you?**

RE: Oh, well, I mainly do the windows myself now, yes.

**RR: I notice there's a lot of – well, I suppose it'd be considered band  
- - -**

RE: Yes, they're - - -

**RR: - - - jackets from a long while ago.**

RE: Well, they're more for, like, the young people who go to formal things for their schools now and it's – they're put in mainly to make people stop and have a look at the window as well. So, most people walk past they wouldn't be seen dead in that coat that's in there but at least makes them stop and look in the window.

24.49 **RR: What about the old-time band people?**

RE: Yes, well, we don't get them in any more. It's - - -

**RR: There's not many of them left?**

RE: No, that's right, yes. Yes, it's been quite a long while since any of those were in.

**RR: Yes. And what about point of sale stuff? Well, I noticed the labels – is there anything else that you particularly use?**

RE: What, our label you mean?

**RR: Yes.**

RE: No, mainly that's – that's our sleeve ticket label - - -

**RR: With the horse on it.**

RE: - - - and we've got our own label inside which has got the same emblem.

**RR: Based on the horse, yes.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: And what about packaging – do you package stuff in a particular way?**

RE: No, we don't have any, no. We just sort of put them in the plastic bags sort of thing now - just gets too expensive.

**RR: And did you ever have any fancy - - -**

RE: Yes, Dad did have but with his name printed on paper bags, you know, but that was a long while back though.

**RR: Yes.**

25.49 RE: Yes, sort of in the heyday, when things were going real well.

**RR: So, do you have any idea when he moved down here?**

RE: I think it was about 1954, through the '53, '54, '55 ..... ..

**RR: And he was up at the other place during the war, was he?**

RE: Yes, yes, yes.

**RR: So, do you think he started before the war in Oxford Street?**

RE: Well, I'd say it must have been before the war, wouldn't it? Otherwise he wouldn't have got the work.

**RR: He wouldn't have been in business during the war, yes.**

RE: Yes. Well, I think that's why he didn't go into the Army, 'cause they said he had to make the – he made the Army stuff for them.

**RR: Was it officers' dress uniforms or what?**

RE: Just, yes, it – well, mainly the, yes, the uniform with the - - -

**RR: The dress uniform?**

RE: - - - blouse sort of top, yes.

**RR: Well, that's the - - -**

RE: Yes, yes. I think, yes.

**RR: You've had the one fellow working here with you since your father died, only, haven't you?**

26.50 RE: Well, no. I've been on my own other than my wife: yes, she worked here for a while but things weren't enough for two.

**RR: Did she work here before?**

RE: No, she just came in mainly to get me over the loss of Dad, 'because I always wondered how I'd go coming in here on my own after he'd gone, after being with him for so many years.

**RR: Yes.**

RE: So, she just came in for support, really.

**RR: Did you ever computerise your accounts?**

RE: No, they're still done by hand.

**RR: What about suppliers and people that you bought from – how have they changed over the years?**



RE: Oh, well, I don't suppose they've changed. They've sort of gone onto computer invoicing and things like that and they keep up with the styles that are - you know, mainly you follow their lead, from the travellers. If they say something is selling well, well you'll put into stock.

**RR: So, have there been any particular stages in the business since you've been in?**

28.06 RE: Well, the biggest shock with the GST coming in, that was a big shock: business dropped off quite a bit from that 'because during the whole course of the - the whole life of the business we've never put anything up ten per cent in one go. It's quite a big shock.

**RR: Now, when he had the band people in - - -**

RE: Yes.

**RR: - - - what years would that be, roughly?**

RE: They were in the fifties - the middle fifties till the middle sixties, I s'pose, yes.

**RR: And the riding coats?**

RE: They started up - well, I think I said around about the seventies, something like that, yes, or maybe '65.

**RR: And now?**

RE: And now, yes, still doing them, yes.

**RR: And you're still doing all the other things, the suits and jackets?**

RE: Yes, still making the suits, yes; just business suits and trousers.

**RR: And do you make them yourself or do you put them out?**

RE: Oh, no, I've got a - there's a small workroom that makes all my work for me, yes.

**RR: Are they local or elsewhere?**

RE: They're in Sydney, yes.

**RR: And how many fittings do you do for a .....**

29.21 RE: Generally just the one but if someone's an awkward size, well, you have an extra fitting just to check the first one came out right with it

but mainly only one. Well, probably if you count the first time you come in you've got to be measured, then you have to come back for a fitting when the garment's in a half made stage.

**RR: Do you do any broad fitting shoes and things like that?**

RE: No, they are – we go to Triple E but we don't have an extra wide shoe.

**RR: Thinking of the building and the business, are you going to keep in business until - - -**

RE: Well, we'll keep in business while ever we're available to stay here sort of thing. A few ..... when that application come in we did think we'd have to get out there, so we looked around for premises but it's hard.

**RR: And where did you think of?**

RE: Well, mainly Parramatta we were looking at because of being a bit closer to home. It's hard in here with parking and everything.

**RR: Have you got any room around the back at all?**

RE: There is a parking place behind but it's not part of the business – it's you've got to pay to park in there.

**RR: And so you're going to stay here until - - -**

30.47 RE: Until – yes.

**RR: There's enough business going ahead?**

RE: Yes, we're still going but things have quietened off: it does get worrying at times but they're still going and the only thing – unless business gets that bad, the only thing that would make us move would be the building being sold.

**RR: Yes. Have you ever been involved in any public affairs in the city or politics?**

RE: No. I'm a member of a caving club and I've been the editor of its monthly magazine since 1966, I think.

**RR: Do you get any business from them?**

RE: Yes, yes, most of the people in the Society have got an Andy Ellis suit. ....

**RR: Well, there you go.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: And apart from – we must work out who should be interviewed apart from you – the other gentleman. You already gave me his name. What's his name, sorry?**

RE: Rodney Jacobs, yes.

**RR: Rodney Jacobs, yes.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: He worked with your father as well?**

RE: Yes, and he worked – he's been retired for ten to fifteen years, I s'pose.

**RR: And we haven't got anybody from the band era, apart from Brian Henderson?**

32.00 RE: No. Well, unless you can contact Col Joye – I'm sure he's still around.

**RR: Is he?**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: Didn't know that.**

RE: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

**RR: Because he started your father off - - -**

RE: Well - - -

**RR: - - - in that line of - - -**

RE: One of – yes, I forget who would have been the first person to start off, because Dad did – he started a club that was called the Beau Brummel Club, which – and all the fellas – it was the “bodgies”, I think they called them in those days and they – it wasn't a rock 'n' roll star or anyone started him off on making that bodgie kind of suit. It was a dancer, I think, a jitterbug dancer who wanted a suit like they were wearing in America and they said, “Could you make this style of drape suit?” and Dad made it and it just developed from there and then the bands started coming in and yes.

**RR: What about “widgies”- do they do any women's clothes?**

RE: No, we didn't do women's stuff in those days. It was all men's stuff.

**RR: Have you done anything for any women band people?**

33.18 RE: Not that I can think of, no, no.

**RR: And do you have any material that you could donate or we could copy in the way of photographs or paperwork and memorabilia?**

RE: Oh, yes, there's – I could let you have a lend of them to copy.

**RR: Copy them, right.**

RE: Yes, sure, yes.

**RR: Thank you.**

RE: I've got a whole scrapbook there that I could let you see.

**RR: And lend your advertising?**

RE: Yes, I think there's a few bits of advertising.

**RR: I've got my camera with me, by the way.**

RE: Have you? Yes. Well, you can take them and have a lend of them - -  
-

**RR: Thank you.**

RE: - - - and do whatever you like with them. But a fella actually got probably one of the best photographs at the moment that I've – he's writing a book on the history of rock 'n' roll for ABC, I think. They've been doin' a programme on the history of rock 'n' roll and he's doing a book on that, yes.

**RR: He's got a lot of your photographs?**

RE: Well, only one but it's probably the best one that – I think I've got a actual sort of photocopy one of it there anyway, so I can show you that.

**RR: Yes. It's a pity you can't get a copy of the photograph ..... ..**

RE: Well, I can probably contact him but he said he'd bring it back when the book's been done, so it mightn't have been published.

**RR: It might be a while, wouldn't it?**

RE: Might be a while, yes, yes.

**RR: Whereas I'm supposed to be finished with this in March.**

RE: Are you?

**RR: The beginning of March, yes.**

34.34 RE: Oh, right, yes, yes. Yes, I can ring him and see if I can get it for you.

**RR: Well, see if you can get it back.**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Thank you. I've got my camera with me, in case you've got anything else.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: Well, is there anything else that I should ask you, do you think, that I haven't?**

RE: Well, the only other thing on – if you want information about Dad is he was a champion speedboat racer. You know, he had a boat called 'Chickadee' and it held all the course records here for many years and he was really a champion boat racer, yes.

**RR: Must have been a fairly expensive hobby in its day?**

RE: Yes, it was, yes – and they used to blow up.

**RR: More expensive than caving?**

RE: Yes. Blew up a lot of motors, that's for sure. Yes, but that was a fantastic boat, yes.

**RR: You never did any waterskiing from his boat?**

RE: Yes, yes, he's taught hundreds – that's another thing he used to do is teach people to water ski. He taught my son the water ski. Oh, he didn't have the speedboat; he went to a more sedate outboard boat, as he got older but he always had a boat all his life.

**RR: And where did he keep his boat?**

35.52 RE: He kept that over at Cammeray, where he lived over at Cammeray.

**RR: He lived there?**

RE: Yes, and my brother, Raymond, he's got his boat now. We still go out on the Shoalhaven River with it ..... yes.

**RR: Your brother is older than you?**

RE: No, he's younger than me.

**RR: Younger, yes.**

RE: And I've got a sister who's younger than me as well, Christine.

**RR: And you've got children and grandchildren?**

RE: Yes, I got – I got two children. Stephen just turned twenty one yesterday and Jeanette's eighteen – she will be eighteen shortly, in June, yes.

**RR: And no interest in going on in this style of business?**

RE: No, no. But don't know - Jeanette's still at school and Stephen's doing computer aided drawing for the Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation, yes.

**RR: CAD, yes.**

RE: Yes, yes.

**RR: And he might computerise you.**

36.55 RE: Yes. Well, I use a computer for doing this monthly magazine I do for the Sydney Speleological Society.

**RR: What sort of computer?**

RE: It's a Macintosh, yes.

**RR: And what sort of software?**

RE: Oh, what – that we do the magazine on Quark Express.

**RR: You do?**

RE: Yes.

**RR: Well, that's quite complicated?**

RE: Yes, oh, yes. Well, you know, I've – that's about the only thing I'm really good on in computers but the kids can virtually do anything on the one we've got at home.

**RR: But you don't use it for accounting or anything like that?**

RE: No. Well, I asked the accountant did he think we should do it but he said the way I do the book is adequate, so – and I've been doing that for twenty or thirty years, doin' all the books as well.

**RR: What do you do? Kalamazoo style of thing?**

RE: Yes, Kalamazoo, yes. Yes, that's it, yes. That's for the wages and the accounting book, yes. The book's about this thick.

**RR: You don't need it that thick any more, I shouldn't think.**

37.54 RE: No, that's right, no.

**RR: Because you're here on your own?**

RE: Yes, that's right, yes.

**RR: Well, I can't think of anything else for the time and - - -**

RE: Yes.

**RR: - - - and in that case I'll say, thank you very much, Mr Ross Ellis.**

38.12 RE: Okay, thank you.

**Interview ends**

25.03 RD: Thank you.

**Interview ends**