

CHAPTER FIVE

Bachelor in Melbourne

When dad told the Mitchell family of my pending move to Melbourne, they very generously invited me to stay with them until I found suitable lodgings.

Jim Mitchell, accompanied by two black and white cocker spaniels, met me at the Spencer Street station on the morning of Sunday June 7th 1936 and drove me to their delightful two-storey home in St Kilda Street, Middle Brighton - a cocker standing on my lap, his head out the window and ears flapping in the breeze. They made me very welcome, but I wished to be independent and wanted to impose on their generosity no longer than necessary. Mrs Mitchell was a warm, homely person, but her husband was always cold and somewhat aloof. I discussed likely areas for boarding, and he suggested South Yarra or East Melbourne.

It was a 45 minute trip to the city from Middle Brighton - a long journey by Adelaide standards. First by electric tram to St Kilda, then by electric train to Flinders Street. I was amazed by the crowd of people walking up the ramps to the station exit. Never had I been engulfed in such a crowd. Thousands upon thousands of faces, and not one I knew! In those days it was said to be one of the busiest stations in the world. That was

because nearly all the suburban lines terminated at the one station.

After reporting to the PMB Central Office in Treasury Gardens I spent five hours driving around South Yarra and East Melbourne with Stan Chapman, who was working in the Victorian Branch in Spencer Street. We looked at fourteen lodgings advertised in the morning paper, and the most promising was "Yalcowinna" at No.2 Queens Road, Albert Park. The landlady, Mrs Partridge, said she had another Adelaide man staying there - Max Nankervis. Max and I had been together at Saints! Bob Moodie was staying at another lodging inspected at South Yarra. I contacted them both, for an opinion. Bob was not very satisfied but Max said "Yalcowinna" was good, so I booked there from the next weekend - a small room but only 30/- a week including meals, with afternoon tea on Saturdays and Sundays.

This was to be my home for the next six months. In a quite spacious garden, it overlooked Albert Park - with lake and golf links - at the curving north end of Queens Road, serviced by Queens Lane at the rear. Today it has been replaced by the Totalizator Agency Board building. Mrs Partridge was a motherly West Australian woman with greying red hair and a Rolls Royce. She ran her establishment very efficiently. Meals were served in the large dining room by a uniformed waitress with a menu card, and the rooms were kept spotlessly clean. The

electric tram trip to the city along beautiful tree-lined St Kilda Road took only 8 minutes for a twopenny fare.

I began work in the PMG Research Laboratories at 59 Little Collins Street. The Supervising Engineer, Mr S.H. Witt, was a small man, slightly built with impeccable manners. His thick growth of black hair was always brushed smoothly back from a high forehead. He gave the impression of an enormous reservoir of suppressed vitality, with piercing eyes and a slightly aquiline nose. He spoke softly, but forcibly. My first session with him lasted 90 minutes and he talked about all the work of the laboratories, founded by him in 1923. His favourite saying was "There is no substitute for enthusiasm" - of which he had plenty.

I was placed in the Laboratory Facilities Section under Divisional Engineer Alan Lorimer, who reported to the Assistant Supervising Engineer, Eric Wright. There I did acceptance tests on new laboratory equipment and calibrated various types of instruments - not very inspiring work but it gave me a working knowledge of a wide range of equipment.

My desk on the first floor was beside a window overlooking the walled back garden of the ultra-select Melbourne Club, separated from the Laboratories by the narrow cul-de-sac Club Lane. A well-kept lawn separated the Club buildings from the fives-courts at the Little

Collins Street end. In fine weather I often saw a uniformed butler cross the lawn with drinks on a silver salver. Immediately below my window was a steeply sloping slate roof at the back of the Club. Pigeons would alight at the top of this roof and find it too steep to gain a foothold. So they skidded down to the bottom, with claws frantically trying to brake, fell off and flapped back to the top to repeat the hopeless procedure. I decided that pigeons had no more brains than the fowls of my childhood.

There were two other graduates on the Laboratory staff recruited as new engineers from outside the Service, Bill Boswell and Ern Palfreyman.

I thought Melbourne in 1936 was wonderful. Yalcowinna was close enough to the city for me to walk to work in fine weather. Down the beautiful boulevard of St Kilda Road with its four lines of plane trees, across the River Yarra on Princes Bridge into Swanston Street, past the gothic grandeur of the triple-spired St Pauls Cathedral to Queens Walk at the corner of Collins Street. Here was the fascination of the windows of Henry Buck's store for men and, within the arcade, the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau. Turning right into Collins Street I passed the chocolate shop and milk bar of Ernest Hillier - a meeting place for young people and the equivalent of Adelaide's Beehive Corner. Then the Plaza and Regent Cinemas, the strange aloofness of the

Theosophical Building, the glamour filled showcases of Athol Smith, Society Photographer, and the Metro Theatre. Crossing Russell Street I came to the fruit shop of Jonas with its array of exquisite tropical fruit unobtainable anywhere else in Melbourne.

I turned left into Exhibition Street, past the Occidental Hotel to reach the Research Laboratories just around the corner in Little Collins Street.

Many of these landmarks alas are no more. Buildings between the Cathedral and the Regent have been demolished and replaced by the concrete monstrosity called the City Square, and the Reserve Bank now rises where the Occidental once stood. In 1936 the limit height for city buildings was 132 feet and I think the city was better for it. Then sunlight could more easily show off the "Paris End" of Collins Street, throwing patterns of plane tree shadows on the flagged pavement, with striped awnings shading the elegant windows of exclusive shops.

In Exhibition Street, between Little Collins and Bourke Streets, stood the Eastern market - a stone's throw from the Research Labs. This also is no more. It was replaced by the palatial Southern Cross Hotel. The Continental Grocery of Franz occupied the Little Collins Street corner; unique in 1936, it had sawdust strewn on the floor and Franz welcomed his select clientele by name. He had imported cheese and sausage unobtainable

elsewhere. Next door was a wonderful hardware shop where you could buy every kind of tradesman's tool, or screws counted out to your specification. This shop still operated a system of wire-directed catapulted cash-carriers, converging on the central elevated desk of a cashier - like the one that fascinated me in my childhood at Port Adelaide. Other shops round the periphery of this market housed a leatherworker, a basket weaver, a locksmith, a florist, a picture framer, a music store and many other specialists. Within this surrounding rectangle was a musty secondhand bookshop that repaid critical browsing in the lunch hour.

Walking across to Bourke Street you could travel down town on a cable car. The driving force for this was a hidden cable, running at a steady pace within a thin channel in the road and driven by a distant "engine house". The cable car was in two parts. The front "dummy" was quite open, with two slatted garden-like seats back-to-back and a smaller seat across the front end. Between these seats stood the "gripman", with one hand on a vertical lever and the other on a bell-pull. When he pulled the lever a great pair of pincers, projecting through the slot in the road, grabbed the cable and the car moved forward at a steady 13 m.p.h.

An enclosed saloon car was coupled to the rear of this dummy and both ran on rails let into the roadway. When the cable car negotiated a curve the gripman had to

release the cable (which then ran round a huge underground pulley) and let the car coast around until he could apply the grip once more. He also had an emergency brake for emergency stops, with the cable released. If this had to be applied on a corner (to avoid collision with another vehicle) the car would be stranded with no means of propulsion and all the passengers then had to alight and push till the cable could be engaged once more.

The car travelled down Bourke Street to the accompaniment of clangs from the bell of the dummy. You could buy a strip of yellow tickets for one shilling, which would give you eight trips within the city section. It was a delightful way to travel up and down Bourke Street, and I revelled in it. The cable car system was dismantled in 1940 but cable car No.1 was preserved for several years in a glass case in Russell Street at the rear of the State Museum. Double-decker buses took over from the cable cars in Bourke Street, but these were eventually replaced by electric trams.

I had a favourite week-end walk in fine weather - through the lovely Botanical Gardens, sloping down to an ornamental lake where the noise of the nearby city was lost in the surrounding trees. Then across the River on Anderson Street Bridge, over the railyards by the footbridge to the tiny historic suburb of Jolimont and through the Fitzroy Gardens with their avenues of trees

laid out in the pattern of the Union Jack. There was the quaint cottage of Captain Cook, brought piecemeal from England in 1933 and reassembled to celebrate the Melbourne centenary.

Sometimes on a Sunday I would pause at the north end of Princes Bridge and listen to the "soap box orators" between the River and the railway lines - holding forth at great length to mildly interested and very mixed rings of people - on religion, anti-religion or Communism. They just seemed to need to express themselves for the sake of doing so. I suppose you find people like that in every large city.

Christ Church, South Yarra, St Paul's Cathedral and the Roman Catholic St Peter's Cathedral were all within walking distance for me. I tried them all.

Don and Doone Burnard arrived from Adelaide in their trusty old car "Albert" a week after I came to Melbourne, and found themselves a house to rent in Oakleigh about 9 miles from the city. It was still under construction and would not be ready for a month. Meanwhile they boarded in South Yarra. They came to dinner with me at Yalcowinna and Mrs Partridge gave us a vacant frontroom with a blazing fire to enjoy each other's company. She was very thoughtful. Don began work in the Telephone Equipment Section in Treasury Gardens. We talked together daily by phone and often went on lunchtime walks

round the city. I often had lunch with Bob Moodie who worked in the Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office, and my second cousin Peter Newell who lived at Wantirna. Torchy Thomas introduced me to meetings of the I.E.A. and the Rostrum Movement, so I was not lonely but I missed Phyll.

The packing case containing my work desk, drawing board, bookshelves, books and gramophone records arrived by goods train and was delivered to Yalcowinna on the morning of Saturday June 20th in the coldest frost for eleven months. I spent the day unpacking, and then repacking things not needed in my room. This made me 15 minutes late for dinner at the C.T.A. Club with Phyll's father, who was visiting Melbourne on business. He said "You'll have to get out of this habit!" He was a stickler for punctuality, and always made me feel like a misbehaving schoolboy. I endeavoured to persuade him to let Phyll come to Melbourne for a few days so that we could look at furniture and houses together. Mr Williams said he would "see about that later, but not in the winter". Phyll and I exchanged letters three times a week and talked by phone once a month.

I played my first round of golf at the Albert Park course with Stan Chapman at the end of June. It was fine, but very cold. When we hit off at 8.30 a.m. the lake was deathly still, with an overhanging mist. The trees on the distant bank reflected perfectly in the still water. The greens were fast, but dew-covered, and

a putted ball threw up a curved spray as it rolled - leaving a track in the frosty surface. Stan tied up his trousers like bowyangs to keep the cuffs dry. I often played there with John Macvean, a banker of about my age, who shared a table with me and his sister Mary at Yalcowinna. Jim Mitchell came to dinner with me one evening and I found that he and John had been together at Brighton Grammar.

Bob Moodie also dined with me at Yalcowinna. He thought the menage was better than the lodgings he shared with his sister Alison in South Yarra, so in mid-August they both moved to upstairs rooms at No.2 Queens Road. Later Lionel Bridgland came to stay, and briefly Jack Treleaven, so that with Max Nankervis and myself there were five old Saints boys staying there - an unusual assembly in a boarding house so far from home. Errol Coote, journalist and author of the book "Hell's Airport" also joined us. He had been the official pilot of the 1930 Lasseter expedition into Central Australia and was the first pilot to land an aircraft at Ayers Rock. He married Alison Moodie, Bob's charming young sister.

I was saving furiously for our married home. I found I could lunch at ninepence a day for a pie, a sandwich and two cakes delivered by the office boy - who also made tea three times a day for 1/6 per fortnight including milk and sugar. Entertainment was very cheap. A seat at the cinema was less than 2/-, you could attend

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a symphony concert for as little as 2/2 and a seat in "the gods" at the theatre was 2/10. An average of 2/6 provided for one such luxury a week.

This was my weekly budget

	L	s	d
Board and lodging	1	- 10	- 0
5 lunches at 9d		3	- 9
3 teas per weekday			- 9
Laundry (ex Yalcowinna)		5	- 0
6 Return tram fares		2	- 0
4 Newspapers			- 6
Haircut (once per fortnight)			- 6
4 Postage stamps			- 8
2 Tins of cigarettes (1/4 for 20)		2	- 8
Matches			- 1
Radiator use		1	- 0
Church collection			- 6
Golf green-fee		3	- 0
Amusements (average)		2	- 6

Total	2	- 12	- 11

Out of my weekly salary of L6-6-0 (after deduction of superannuation and insurance payments) I aimed to bank L3-6-0 each week, with the object of saving about L100 by the end of the year plus some back-pay and bank and bond interest. This left me about 7/- per week for clothing. In 1936 a suit of clothes plus a pair of shoes, a hat, two shirts and two pairs of socks could be bought for L10, so I considered the 7/- weekly was adequate for clothing.

Melbourne weather had been very cold and wet since my arrival. I purchased a small electric radiator for my room, for the use of which I was to pay Mrs Partridge a penny ha'penny per hour - a small price for the comfort

it provided. I also bought an electro-magnetic gramophone pick-up for dad, to replace my own which I had brought to Melbourne. I joined Myer's lending library at a half-year subscription of 10/- for one book and one magazine.

The J.C. Williamson G and S Company began a farewell season at His Majesty's Theatre in July. I saw them do the Mikado, Ruddigore, Patience, Princess Ida, The Gondoliers and The Yeomen of the Guard. The cast was much the same as the year before in Adelaide, but with newcomers Evelyn Hall and Winifred Lawson. I joined the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Victoria, at the absurdly low subscription of 10/- a year, and saw them do The Sorcerer with Paul Fiddian (an old Prince's boy from Adelaide) in the name-part of John Wellington Wells, a dealer in magic and spells. He was excellent, serving also as secretary of Prince's old collegians in Victoria and eventually becoming Concert Manager for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

I shared these theatre experiences with my friends, Don, Doone, Bob, John and Torchy Thomas, with occasional visits to the cinema. I was particularly impressed by the State Theatre cinema in the Moorish-inspired building at the corner of Flinders and Russell Streets. No Moslem priest called the faithful to prayer from the clock-bearing tower, but the ceiling inside was curved and painted sky-blue with stars winking here and there and

drifting clouds projected on to it. The edges of this ceiling were masked by parapets with statues and foliage and the overall effect was quite realistic. You really could imagine you were in the open air, with the parapet rising in front to an ornate proscenium arch above the screen.

Phyll was allowed to visit Melbourne for ten days in late August, arriving by train with her father. She stayed at the Caulfield house of Mr Braddock - a business associate of Mr Williams. Those ten days were filled with happy reunions and sightseeing. We went to the cinema together, visited Doone and Don in their home and spent a Saturday morning choosing bedroom, dining room and lounge furniture at a total cost of only L100. Phyll had studied catalogues I had posted to Adelaide. For a deposit of L5 this furniture was to be stored free of charge until after our honeymoon.

During my months of bachelor existence my friends were very good to me. I had several dinners at the homes of Don and Doone Burnard and Torchy and Mari Thomas, and invited them back to Yalcowinna in return. Bob Moodie took me by train to Ballarat to meet his parents and sister Heather. Mr Moodie was then manager of the Bank of NSW there and I was very impressed with that city - the centre of the gold rush in the 1850s. Bob drove me round the city in the family car. We saw the beautiful Botanical Gardens with the magnificent display of

Begonias in its conservatory. Lake Wendouree, the disused gold mines and the site of the Eureka Stockade where the only battle fought on Australian soil took place - between the militia and the miners who demonstrated against the 1854 licensing system for gold-diggers. We returned that night to a rainy Melbourne.

Melbourne's weather always invites comment. The claim that this city can have four seasons in one day is not without foundation. I found that in some months the weather could build up to an extremely hot day with a blistering north wind developing - then a sudden change with the wind swinging round to the south and the temperature dropping to 30oF in 20 minutes, followed by rain persisting for several days. This cycle from fine to wet often occupied about a week, so that there could sometimes be a succession of wet weekends with fine weekdays. In November there were ten consecutive days of rain.

In December I heard my first Cicadas. These insects emerge from holes in the ground and climb into trees. In the early evening, one (they are about two inches long) would begin to "sing", and almost immediately there would be hundreds singing in unison on the same note. They kept this up for hours on end, either just before or just after rain. I understand the note is produced by rubbing their legs against their wings. Sometimes it can be

quite deafening, as I knew from my proximity to the trees at Yalcowinna.

Don and Doone took me for outings in their trusty "Albert". In June we drove to Ferntree Gully and Belgrave in the Dandenong Ranges, with a walk through Sherbrooke Forst. It had rained most of the morning and we found everything - ground, bracken and tree ferns - teeming with moisture in the shade of the lofty eucalypts. The ground was thick and springy with layers of moist, rotting leaves, and the trunks of tree ferns were padded with a bright green covering of feathery moss. We made our precarious way down to the bed of a creek, glad we were wearing old clothes. Don was the first to slip and fall over.

It was slow going along the creek bed. The undergrowth was very heavy, and we had to climb over many trunks of huge fallen trees covered with thick moss. Going on ahead, I stepped from a trunk on to what looked like solid ground and went in over my ankles in mud, sinking deeper with every step. I struggled on to the bank and climbed upwards for about 20 minutes on my own. I seemed to be hearing the cry of some birds - a warbling, then a series of repeated notes, then the sharp "whip!!" of the coachwhip bird. As I climbed higher I saw a large grey body move through the bracken some yards ahead, and I thought "the Lyre Bird"!

I stood stock still, the song broke out again, quite near. I advanced very slowly and quietly, step by step - then all at once I saw it through the bracken about 20 feet away. A large grey bird, and as it sang I could see the loose throat vibrating with the trills. After a lifelike imitation of a kookaburra's laugh it gave a series of trills, then a "whip!!" exactly like a couchwhip bird. This recital continued for about 10 minutes with a few pauses, the bird standing almost stationary. Then it turned and spread its tail - upright and about 30" high with two long brown side feathers curling at the ends and several fine long feathery strands of light grey in between - for all the world like a stringed lyre. The dark grey body was about the size of a leghorn fowl. I crouched stock still, peering through the bracken. It scratched the ground for a minute or two, then moved off.

I made my way to where it had stood, and found a circular area, about 2 or 3 feet in diameter, which had been scratched all over till there were no leaves or moss on the moist, grey earth. This apparently was one of the "mounds" which the cock birds make to dance on. I moved cautiously forward, and there it was again silently scratching the ground. Two tree trunks partly hid me. I moved to get a better view, and it heard me. Showing no sign of alarm it made off, picking its way daintily through the bracken.

They say Lyre Birds are generally quite unafraid of human beings, but very hard to find except at certain times of the year and in the early morning. I had the luck to see this one about 4p.m. in June. Its tail and its song were marvellous. I turned and clambered downhill back to the creek, calling to Don. Voices don't carry far in this thick forest. Reaching the car some distance from the creek bed I found Doone already there, and called "Don, I've seen a Lyre Bird!" He called back "Go on - you're a liar!"

I told them all about it. I don't suppose we would have seen it if we had all been together - we would have made too much noise - but I was sorry they had missed it. I was glad to get home and change my mud-filled shoes and socks.

Melbourne has a "Show Day" holiday in September. Jill Lucy, who had completed her nursing course in Adelaide, was doing a special course at the Melbourne Women's Hospital. With Jill, Don and Doone drove me in a south easterly direction for a picnic lunch near Cockatoo, about 36 miles away. It had been raining intermittently and we had our lunch at Toomuc - chops cooked over a camp fire and toast washed down with billy tea. On the way back "Albert" became hopelessly bogged at a dip in a rough track. Half an hour's work digging, baling and putting logs and sacks under the wheels was fruitless. Doone and Jill decided to walk back for help.

When they returned with a man and a horse, Albert was down to the running boards. Attaching a chain, the horse pulled it out in five minutes. We thanked Heaven, and gave the man 5/-. Back at the Burnard home Don and I had hot baths while Doone prepared tea. We had reason to remember Toomuc. It ws too mucky for words!

Jill was soon to be engaged to Miggs Chapman, who was gaining his engineering experience in England. I kept in touch with my old friends by letter. Eric Cottrell had been appointed Assistant Surveyor at Broken Hill, Colin Moodie was soon to leave the Adelaide Supreme Court and take up a position in the Department of External Affairs in Canberra, Gavin Walkley and Colin Kerr Grant were studying at Cambridge and Cuth Bammann was doing well as an accountant in Adelaide. John Thompson returned to Adelaide on leave in October; he wrote to me from Colombo on his way back to England. Rolfe and Rita Boehm were married in Adelaide, but I saw them with Don and Doone when they passed through Melbourne.

I spent a weekend with the Newell family at Wantirna, about 14 miles east of Melbourne. Ned Newell had retired from the Eastern Extension Cable Company in the northern islands at Labuan, and named his home after it. Hilda, his wife, was another of mother's Hardy family cousins and ran a florists shop in Camberwell with her daughter Helen. They were a most interesting family with very different personalities. The eldest son Peter

was a budding architect, Helen was then at a jazz-crazed flapper stage, Andrew was about to study medicine and Nancy was a giggling eleven year old, crazy about horses. Ned had the most delightful puckish sense of humour and Hilda was warm and motherly. I felt very much at home. They had a lovely view of the Dandenongs across an orchard-filled valley. On Sunday we drove to Healesville and the Maroondah Dam through valleys of tall timber and tree ferns. Hilda's brother, Frank Hardy, lived with them and helped Ned in the orchard and garden.

Torchy and Mari Thomas were very good to me. I spent several evenings at their Glen Iris home listening to records and they drove me round the suburbs with their two small daughters. Torchy spent some evenings as a tutor at Ormond College at the University. On the Melbourne Cup holiday they drove me to Frankston and Mornington on the eastern side of Port Phillip Bay. We had lunch among the tea trees overlooking the yellow sanded beach sloping down to the deep blue water at Frankston, then explored the rocky coast at Mornington with its shallow pools filled with green and yellow sea anemones, balloon-like jellyfish floating with green and purple lights and tiny fat fish darting among the rocks. Back at Glen Iris we heard the Cup had been won by an outsider at 100 to one!

I had brought my "Whiting" electro-magnetic gramophone pick-up and my "Simpson" 78 rpm synchronous

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electric turntable from Adelaide, with the object of building them into a radiogram. I purchased a superheterodyne radio receiver chassis in Melbourne and a 12" dynamic loudspeaker, after testing these in the Laboratories in my spare time. Then I found a handsome and well made second-hand cabinet, with a lift-up lid, for only 30/-, which I had delivered to Yalcowinna. Working after hours in the Laboratory carpenter's shop I constructed wooden pockets for the storage of records on either side of the turntable, so that these would all fit inside the cabinet beneath the lid.

In October Mrs Partridge moved me into a new and much bigger room in a newly completed wing on the south side of the building, overlooking Albert Park. She refused to increase my rent, as she said she had made a contract with me when I first came and I was being moved to suit her convenience. There are not many landladies like Mrs Partridge! She was a dear.

Over two months I completed the assembly of my radiogram in my new room, and was well satisfied with the results. I often entertained my friends with records there. With a certain amount of updating that radiogram provided me with music for the next 25 years.

In November I began to look for a house for Phyll and myself. We had decided to be married in Adelaide on December 30th, and I wanted to find a house that we could

rent and move into on return from our honeymoon. Torchy Thomas asked if I would like to drive through some of the eastern suburbs before joining his family for tea at Glen Iris. It was Saturday, and I had been reading the "houses to let" columns in the morning paper. This was typical of his friendship, and I was delighted. He drove me to Heidelberg, Eaglemont, Ivanhoe, East Kew then over the River to Deepdene, Canterbury, East Camberwell, Hartwell, Burwood, Ashburton and so to Glen Iris. He pointed out the main features of each district and explained their relative accessibility to public transport. I felt I had a much better idea of what to look for, and was very grateful to him.

In the following weekends I inspected about twelve advertised houses, most quite unsuitable. I realised it was useless looking at houses advertised at less than 35/- a week, and most advertisements were misleading as far as quality was concerned. Rain did not help my search. The most promising was one in Hartwell - almost new but locked up when I visited it. On the following Thursday I inspected it by appointment, and was delighted - five rooms, instantaneous gas hot water service, all brick construction, garage, made-lawn and flower beds, one minute from the electric tram and 6 minutes from Hartwell railway station. A bargain at 37/6 a week! The couple living in it were building their own home and intended to move out on December 20th. It was 7 miles

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from Melbourne, 30 minutes and 6d by tram. Don and Doone inspected it and thought it excellent.

The estate agent agreed to rent it to me from December 28th, but no later. He said it would be better to try living in it first before considering a lease, to make sure it suited us, so I clinched the deal with the proviso of one month's notice of termination by either side. The possibility of the Research Laboratories being moved to Canberra in two or three years' time made me cautious about long-term commitments.

The arrangements for our wedding proceeded apace. Pat Maclaren, the school chaplain at Saints, agreed to conduct the ceremony. The Rev. Hall agreed to read the banns at St Saviours in Glen Osmond and the Rev. Hamilton to do likewise at St Lukes in South Melbourne - the parish I was living in. I attended Evensong at St Lukes on December 6th, little knowing the significance that its street, Doreas Street, South Melbourne, would have for me in 20 years time.

On December 11th the radio broadcast the disquietening news that Edward VIII had abdicated, in order to marry the notorious Mrs Wallis Simpson, and his brother was to take the throne as George VI.

Mrs Partridge left in her Rolls on December 19th for a Sydney holiday. She agreed to my leaving my work desk

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and bookshelves at Yalcowinna until after our honeymoon. Don and Doone were going to store my other possessions until then, and collected them on December 21st, taking me home to tea.

Driving back to Yalcowinna, Don took me through an unfamiliar part of St Kilda and stopped at a strange villa-flat. I was surprised to see Stan Chapman emerge and ask us inside. There were unmistakable signs of "baching", as Dora was holidaying in Adelaide. After showing us round Stan said "Well, I suppose we'd better get on with the ceremony." He produced a parcel and handed it to me, on behalf of all the Adelaide ex-cadet engineers - Don, Stan, George McKinnon, Bill Howe, Jack White, Sid Jones and Malcolm Rogers. It was a "Hotpoint" electric iron! Most acceptable. I thanked them very much. Stan said some very nice things about Phyll and wished us every happiness.

I caught the Adelaide express on the evening of December 23rd, ready to commence my leave and prepare for the wedding. My first six months in Melbourne had been a wonderful experience. I had made many friends and was looking forward to making a home there. Despite the vagaries of Melbourne weather I was sure we could be happy. Melbourne had so much to offer.