

Recorded: 18 September 2021
Interviewer: Jenny Stephens
Abstractor: Jenny Stephens

The time codes in this abstract summary have been recorded based on the original audio files. Please note that the times may differ for the online audio due to the original files being combined into one file. However, the order of content in this abstract below will match the online audio.

File 01 18 September 2021

0:10 Introduction and consent

File 02 Birth details, loss of mother as a 15 month old baby.
Home burnt down. Family left HERIOT and moved to ROXBURGH with father's new wife

2:33 Brother ROBERT born after 8 years
Schooled in ROXBURGH where met husband (KEN) at age of 15
Describes courtship. Also part time work during young years.

5:21 Ken moved to OTEMATATA, worked in ROXBURGH MATERNITY HOSPITAL. Engaged and then married at 17. No children for 9 years.

5:31 Career steps explained. TWIZEL, describes genesis of the town.

7:27 Two children born in TWIZEL. Roberta retired from her job(s) and took up a new position when eldest child was 12. Described the role of WATER TREATMENT OFFICER. A number of career changes followed.

9:20 Described husband's work involvement in the HYDRO DEVELOPMENT.

10:10 RECREATIONAL pursuits followed in TWIZEL including Roberta's flying licence. Outlines her experiences.

13:20 Volunteered as a VETERINARIAN'S ASSISTANT.

File:3 WORK OPPORTUNITIES in Twizel area and choices made

0:51 Moved to CROMWELL. Describes the mood of the CLYDE DAM PROJECT and the community's response.

4:00 BANNOCKBURN, LOWBURN, and CROMWELL (pop about 3000) at that stage. Could have been better designed – explains supporting ideas and how plans from Wellington and Transit NZ were involved

6:23 Twizel had 72 clubs and organisations. Largest primary school in the South Island for a population of 6000. Nobody out of work, a young town. Older people were made a big fuss of as less common in the area.

8:23 Whole town of Twizel was levelled as it was 'riverbed wadis' and had to be drained and reformed. Soil was reinstated after new layout. Describes experience of new ground and plantings.

- 10.12 Husband made redundant after Twizel consequently they moved to Cromwell. Not easy to accept. Worked at RIPPONBURN. Next venture Part time PROMOTIONS OFFICER for Cromwell. Further opportunities described.
- 13.00 GOLDFIELDS HERITAGE TRUST set up she volunteered as representative for Cromwell. Involvement in CAVALCADE started as part time promotions officer.
- File 04:** Review of previous work positions retold.
- 1.47 Through her promotions role she learnt the history of the area - which was based on gold. Describes how the OTAGO GOLDFIELDS HERITAGE TRUST was started and the vision of FLEUR SULLIVAN.
- 5.46 Her time of awakening to the rich history not fully known to all.
- 7.00 Early days of GOLDFIELDS CELEBRATIONS involved a gold coach and were organised by FLEUR [SULLIVAN]. Was around 1989-90.
Also described first efforts of the committee to raise funds and have a re-enactment of the first comers. Roberta's response to the plan. Attracted 220 (240 horses) which astounded everyone.
- 12.25 Roberta's RIDING CAREER described. How it changed her outlook on life.
- 15.14 Opening of OLD CROMWELL TOWN
- 15.44 Description of the COACH RE-ENACTMENT and response from the public.
- 17.29 Role as COORDINATOR once Cavalcade 'would not go away'. Sponsorship was amazing and the blessings of DOC due to a good relationship with them. Described changes after tragedy at CAVE CREEK.
- File 5**
- 1.00 Psychology of CAVALCADE ACTIVITY
Roberta's additional responsibilities with running Cavalcades. Visiting all trails and trouble shooting
Dealing with host town. HOE DOWN and involvement of all people.
- 3.32 Selecting destination towns for each year. How decision making takes place.
- 6.31 Campervan people. Popularity of association with the vibe of the celebrations
- 7.45 OTAGO GOLDFIELDS HERITAGE TRUST other activity and Roberta's retirement
- 9.00 Description of major achievements from Roberta's perspective. Attitude to challenges
- 13.40 Hardiness of the Cavalcade riders and the many years some have participated
- 18.25 Recognition for services to the community (MNZM). How it felt and was played out.
- 21.30 Future plans. Roberta's hope/visions for the future.

File 6

Roberta's advice re correction in previous record re KAY ADAM (teaching location).

- 1.34 Additional information relating to Roberta's adventures and speechmaking to various groups.
- 3.10 1997 invitation to travel with her daughter's mother-in-law. This included visits to BEIJING, LONDON GUERNSEY ISLAND, CANADA, HONOLULU. She caught the travel bug.
- 6.11 Invitation from the NZ AMBASSADOR TO IRAN to visit Iran (2001) and the preparation for the voyage. Understanding culture and travelling in this land. The ambassador had contact with an American woman who had married an IRANIAN PRINCE. The couple were friendly with the SHAH.
- 7.45 Experiences involving (CASPIAN) HORSES. HORSE TREKKING BUSINESS.
Travel to a mountain village to see the compound in the mountains where these horses were bred.
- 8.44 Time of the SHAH being deposed and risk(s) to American friend and her business arrived. No longer permitted to conduct business, her herds were dispersed. Nine-hour ride to get to the village.
- 10.50 Rained-in in the village and stranded because of slippery, muddy conditions
- 11.30 Travel within Iran and flights to amazing sights
- 13.10 LAUNDRY ARRANGEMENTS, ACCOMMODATION and TRAFFIC CONDITIONS experienced
- 14.27 Safety perception of this population. LAWS and RELIGIOUS BELIEF notwithstanding.
Locals interest in foreigners wherever they went. Also attitudes to life and family described.

File 7

- 0.30 Further travels.
In 2009 Roberta heard KIM HILL'S Interview on radio with KRISTINE TOMASZYK formerly from Poland. She wrote a book called ESSENCE.
- 3.30 Further details about this family and their struggles following the war and their escape from SIBERIA to PERSIA/IRAN.
- 4.00 Roberta travelled (with eight others) to accompany Krystine back to Iran to present her (translated) book to the MAYOR OF ISFAHAN. 'Other side of Tehran' noted.
- 6.15 Roberta's family details
- 8.00 Clarification (incomplete) re countries involved in war and movements between countries.
- 9.00 Embassy location(s) and surrounding countryside.