

Italian Market Gardeners' Oral History Project

Interview OH872/33 with Bruna Rossetto nee Battaglia

(Also present are: Lena Moscheni nee Rossetto and Claudio Moscheni, Lena's husband)

**Interview deposited in the JD Somerville Oral History,
State Library of South Australia**

recorded by Madeleine Regan at Klemzig, South Australia

18 December 2014

Oral Historian (OH): Thank you, Bruna, for agreeing to this interview.

Bruna Rossetto (BR): Thank you, I appreciate it.

OH: So we'll start with your family background.

BR: Yes.

OH: Can you tell me your full name?

BR: Before I was single or ...? Battaglia, Bruna, my name is Battaglia, Bruna, but then I got married, I became a Rossetto.

OH: Thank you. And your date of birth?

BR: 4/6/1925.

OH: So an important birthday coming up.

BR: I had it. Oh, the, the 90 is in June.

Lena Moscheni (LM): Next June. [2015]

BR: Next June is 90, yes.

OH: Can you tell me where you were born?

BR: Caselle D'Altivole, Province Treviso.

OH: And that's in the region of?

BR: The Veneto. Treviso is in, including Venice, it's Veneto, Venezia.

OH: Can you tell me about your parents? What was your mother's name?

BR: Maria Battaglia, Maria, and my name was Maria, but her name before she got married she was Nadi. She was from, my mother was from Fanzolo, near Castelfranco, and my father was the other side.

OH: When was your mother born?

BR: 1902.

OH: What was your father's name?

BR: Guido Battaglia, he was born 1902 the same age as her.

OH: He was born in Caselle?

- BR: Yes.
- OH: Around the time that you were born nearly 90 years ago, what were your parents doing?
- BR: My father, he's trained when he was young to be a plasterer. He was master plasterer for the area; he was called for jobs everywhere all the time, but my mother has always been a housewife at home.
- OH: Right.
- BR: Well she had three kids and she was helping with the family and that, because they never sort of had a house of their own, they lived with the family sort of a thing.
- OH: Which family did they live with?
- BR: Battaglia.
- OH: Right.
- BR: In the main street of Caselle there's the church, the priest's house, another house, and then there was the Battaglia house, and then there was another Battaglia relation. They had, he had a, a clothes shop, tailor's, clothes and material, and then there was another one Battaglia around again, he was quite a businessman, he was selling wheat and stuff for the farmers, wheat and *semola* and *farina* (cereals), and all stuff like that. Sorry!
- OH: That's alright. Your name, 'Bruna', were you named for anyone in your family?
- BR: No, no, my name ... Yeah, but it was ... No, not that I know of, no, no, no.
- OH: Oh! You had two other ...
- BR: Sisters, Elda, Elda and a younger one after me is Gina, and then there was two more born here when we came to Australia. Her name is Loretta, she was born 1940, and my brother, Robert, was born 1942.
- OH: Did you go to school for many years?
- BR: No, I didn't went to school. In Italy I went to school until I came here. I went as far as grade 4 I think it was, and then when I came here we went straight to work for Brazzale. Brazzale had the mica factory in North Terrace, and we went to work, I went to work there, but my younger sister, Gina, went to school in Franklin Street, St Mary, Franklin Street.
- OH: We'll come back to that in a moment, but I'm wondering if you can tell me about why your father came to Australia, because he came in what year?
- BR: In 19... wait on, I think it was 1926, he came the same year as Gina was born, 1926, and he came here with a group for people from the Veneto, from Treviso, from Castelfranco, Caselle, and all those areas there. They all came to Australia, one big group, group of them, and they all came to work here. When they got here they had no work and they had to go and work out in the country. But then they found out ... he, he learnt to be plasterer when he was young, my father, and so they needed him here, and that's how he got to Australia, in Adelaide. We live in Hindley Street.
- OH: Do you know why your father came to Australia?

- BR: No. Well they wanted to prosper, but those days people wanted to prosper, they didn't want to stay there. In a family of six or seven of them they couldn't all stay there, somebody had to get out and do something, and do something different.
- OH: Do you know what happened when your father first came to Adelaide?
- BR: No, no, not much, he wasn't, didn't write, I don't, don't know much about it because he didn't write home very much. He was here in Australia, I think he's forgot all about us for quite a while.
- OH: He was here for quite a long time, wasn't he?
- BR: Twelve years before he got Mum over, and the reason that he got Mum over, because the priest, we lived so close to the church, and the priest feel sorry for Mum, she used to cry all the time. He said, he wrote him a letter, the priest wrote him a letter, a real registered letter. So they found out where he was working with the Del Fabbro. He was a master plasterer then already, and they wrote him a letter. Then all of a sudden we get, papers are ready to come to Australia. We got a letter with all the papers ready to come to Australia, and we got onto the '*Esquilino*' boat, and we came to Australia.
- OH: How old were you?
- BR: I was 13, Elda was 15 towards 16, and Gina was about 10, 11.
- OH: What do you remember about that trip?
- BR: I remember about that trip, that it was packed with people everywhere. They didn't have cabin for everybody. There was a big, the men had a big, big *stanza* (room), big, big room, all the men that side, and the other side was a big room all the women. Whoever had private cabin, that had people with money, people that wouldn't have too much money, they were just ... My, my sister, Elda, hated it, she loved [being] very private and she didn't like it at all, so she spent most of her time in bed, I was the one who stuck by and helped my mother, and then they used to do washing and ironing. I worked like a lunatic on that boat, and by the time I got off people gave me some money. When we got to Melbourne people said, *You've been a good girl, you helped us with the washing and stuff like that*, they gave me some money. I never forget that. It was the first Australian money that I had in my hand.
- OH: Wow! [laughs] So this would have been the year 1939?
- BR: In January. We had Christmas and New Years on the boat, yes.
- OH: Then what happened when you arrived? So you arrived in Melbourne.
- BR: In Melbourne. We came with the train to Adelaide, and when I got, when we got to Adelaide there was my father, and he pick us up, he took us home. We lived in the Princess Building, Hindley Street. We lived – have you heard of Princess Building, Hindley Street – we live on the top there, the Rossetto, the Rossetto. They had other shop. My father's been involved with the Rossetto fair bit, because he was a friend of the family some sort of a way.
- OH: I'm just going to pause it there for a minute just to check that the microphone is working correctly.
- BR: That's alright.

The recorder is turned off – the interview then resumes

- OH: We're resuming the interview and ...
- BR: Oh no, who's ringing me?
- OH: That's a mobile phone [ringing] Bruna, you were telling me about arriving in Adelaide.
- BR: Yes.
- OH: And you went to live at the ...
- BR: The Princess Building in Hindley Street.
- OH: Yes, which was owned by the?
- BR: Owned by the Australian company, South Australian company, but the Rossetto lived there but they, they were renting it, they didn't own the building.
- OH: Right.
- BR: Yes.
- OH: I'd like to know what your first impressions were as a 13-year-old.
- BR: Well the first impression was, it was in January, and they had the, the carnival through Hindley Street, all the lighting and all that. It was quite interesting, and being upstairs on this building, looking through the window, I could see all those lights and everything. It was quite exciting, really, I was, I was quite impressed. I liked Australia the first day I got here.
- OH: What was happening? It was a procession?
- BR: Yeah, there was a big summer festival, in January. They still have it down the river. Every year they used to have it. The Queen came over in years back, the Queen... I remember seeing the Queen Elizabeth when she was still single, the first time I seen her.
- OH: A long time ago.
- BR: Yes.
- OH: So you ...
- BR: Brazzale got all the girls to stand outside when they knew they were coming through North Terrace, and we all stand outside and wave out to the Queen, and she waved back. I thought she was the prettiest thing I ever seen. She was very pretty as a young lady, really and truly.
- OH: So when you arrived, you said that you arrived one day, and then the next?
- BR: It was, it was a Saturday morning, and I think it was the Monday I started to work.
- OH: You worked for?
- BR: Brazzale in the mica factory. They were waiting for girls to go there because they needed them. In those years the mica factory was very interesting for Australia, because they used to use the mica for all, everything. There was no digital stuff like that. Mica was in the ironing, machine, in every, in planes and everything, and it was 41 girls there working.

- OH: In the factory?
- BR: Yes, and then my sisters came, and my sister, Gina – I'll show you the photo afterwards there I think – she was going to school in Franklin Street. But after school she used to come in and help there as well, so the three of us worked for the, for the mica factory.
- OH: Was Mr Brazzale from the Veneto?
- BR: Vicenza.
- OH: Right.
- BR: Yeah, yeah.
- OH: How long had his factory been going?
- BR: Been going for quite a few years until he died. After the son kept going, Peter Brazzale, he kept it going until afterward mica was not that important, so he read, he, he closed, he, he sold that to Kodaks I think it was. And he went to Norwood, somewhere in Norwood, and he was selling different equipment and stuff like that, yes.
- OH: What was your job in the mica factory?
- BR: Cutting mica. We were, when the mica came sometimes ... See I've been up in the Spotted Tiger (mica) mine in Northern Territory as well, but not, Australian mica was not enough, they had some mica coming from India as well. So we had big sheets of India, we had all different sample, and with a sharp, little knife we used to go around the sample and then somebody else was cutting them and had all different shapes for different equipment they needed for what, for the ... and then we had a press that we cut little washers too as well, for the mica factory.
- OH: So were all the people ...?
- BR: Forty-one girls were there. There was one Greek, one Maltese, one Australian, the rest were all Venete girls, yeah.
- OH: So it was possible to communicate very easily?
- BR: Oh yeah, very easily, very, very, easily, yeah.
- OH: Yeah, yeah.
- BR: Matter of fact they, they started to, to tell me that I should start put better make-up and do something with my face, and all that, and then one day I dumped that and I walked into the factory. One girl turned around, she said, *God*, she said, *when they got make-up on they're pretty girls too*. That insult me in a way, I still remember that, how could ... I said, *Pretty girl, you're a pretty girl whether you got make-up or not*.
- OH: You know when you arrived with your mother and your two sisters, what was it like say for your mother? Like who would she have known here in Adelaide?
- BR: Oh, she had a few people that came before her from the same village, the Tonellato, the Santin, and a few people she knew, but she wasn't going out anywhere ... she was, she was too busy with the family. My father, he was a very strong person, we're not talking about him, right.
- OH: So when you moved into that building, did you have a complete kitchen?

- BR: Downstairs ... yeah, yeah, we had complete kitchen. A little lane at the back where you go in, had a backyard, had the bath and the toilet, everything in the backyard, and then you walk into the kitchen. Then two steps down there was the dining room, another two ... then there were stairs going upstairs on the side of the dining room, and then there another little closet, we used to call it *cameron* (store room), the big, where they had all the shops afterward, *cameron*, and there we had all, we store things whatever we needed, and whatever that happened.
- OH: Had your father been living there before you came?
- BR: No, he used to live in the Princess Building with the Rossettos family. He had a room there. They had, Princess Building had a lot of different rooms for different people. They, they rented the room and that was it.
- OH: And mainly to Italians?
- BR: Yes, mainly to Italian, yeah.
- OH: And ...
- BR: Oh, not many Australians go and live with Italians easily those days. We got together easier later but not in the beginning.
- OH: Do you remember, like arriving in 1939, that was the year that the War began, do you remember much about ...?
- BR: No, the War began a bit later. We were lucky to get here in time, yeah.
- OH: Do you remember much about the years of the War in Adelaide?
- BR: Yes, I remember, yes, I remember that we had blackouts, and I remember we were not allowed to go out in the street late at night. What else [do] I remember? I remember going outside, I wanted to go the chemist. Star Grocery wasn't that side, and in the other side there was a chemist, had to go and get something for my sister, she was sick or something, and I was terrified walking in the dark with this [laughs] thing, but, but the blackout was there then.
- OH: What do you remember about the situation with Italians when Italy joined the War with Germany?
- BR: Yeah, well it wasn't that easy, it wasn't that easy, no, it wasn't that easy. But I, I made friends with people and it was not, it wasn't easy but it was ... it was alright after all. Then Anna Rossetto was there, she live in the building, and Anna Rossetto, she's Oscar's cousin, she was Oscar's cousin, Rossetto.
- OH: Oscar Mattiazzo, yeah.
- BR: I mean her cousin. Anna Rossetto, she was the same age as me, so already we were connecting together already then.
- OH: So what did you do for a social life when you weren't working at Brazzales?
- BR: Nothing, housework and cleaning and doing. We used to go to help your Mum on a Friday night, and help to clean the house.
- OH: So help, help your Mum, Lena [Moscheni nee Rossetto]?
- LM: Yes.

- BR: Yeah, to clean the house on Friday night, and everybody worked through the week so we had to do our washing and everything else at home, so ...
- OH: So what about your parents visiting some of the Veneti at Lockleys?
- BR: Yeah, they used to live, yeah, down Lockleys they used to visit the Tonellato on a Sunday. We ride the bike down there you know.
- OH: And that must have been quite a trip on the bike?
- BR: Quite a ... I know, I remember that once, I never forget ... we went down there, and then coming back this bike that I had, had a puncture, and it was by the brewery there coming up to go to the city. Everybody went, nobody waited for me, and I was there walking with this bike on the puncture and I, I got, I got back there later, but that's the truth, you know, everybody was doing their own ... I think Oscar Mattiazzo was in that bike ride too those years. I remember that too.
- OH: When you went down to Lockleys, I'd like to ask you what you remember? What did it look like because the Tonellatos were ...?
- BR: They had, the Tonellato had the, the tram, they were living in the tram.
- OH: The *vagon* (train carriage)?
- BR: The *vagon*, yeah, and then they had the, the kitchen and the dining room just across from there, over there, but they were very nice, generous people, lovely people. We'd spend Sunday night all together there. Mr Brazzale loved to come down there because he used to have a lot of fun with the people. His wife was very reserved, but Mr Brazzale loved to mix around, be nice with people.
- OH: What do you remember about the *vagon*?
- BR: I remember the *vagon* there was all nice and clean, every little room was, it was, it was beautiful inside, really and truly top class. I think it was a first-class *vagon* that they had there, it was very nice. As you walk in they have sort of a little lounge and then all these little cupboards with people to sleep in there.
- OH: Do you remember colours of the *vagon*, what colours went in ...?
- BR: Colours? It was gold inside, colour, and some, I think it was some reddish and tan, three colours sort of a thing, yeah. I remember that too.
- OH: Who else would have been there when you went to the Tonellatos?
- BR: There was the, what's her name? Wait on.
- OH: Piovesan?
- BR: Piovesan next door, Piovesan. There was Bruno ... and Rosalia and Angelo were their parents those days, yeah, and they were quite nice people. Rosalia was a good lady, she was really a very good lady.
- OH: So what would you do when you went to visit the Tonellatos with your family?
- BR: We used to go there and then muck around with the kids, around, running around and whatever. We were only, we were only kids, you know, sort of grow up.
- OH: What do you remember about the people's market gardens?

BR: They were all hardworking people, hardworking people. See when, and after I got married Lena, Lena's, Lena's father was my husband older brother, and he had a farm down there by the, Frogmore Road, Lockleys. He had a farm on the side there, and my husband, then he started to work there for him.

OH: What do you remember about that, because you would have gone there?

BR: Yeah, I, I would have gone and help sometimes, yeah, sometimes, pack tomatoes and stuff like that. Then I got pregnant and they didn't let me go down anymore. All of a sudden Beppi [laughs], my husband, it was funny. I got pregnant I said, *God, I think I'm having the baby. Don't be silly*, he said, *I've got to go and take all the truck full of vegetables, I've got to go and deliver the stuff at the market, you can't have the baby now.*

[Lena and Madeleine laugh]

BR: He said, *No, you can't have your baby now*, he said, *I have to go*. And he ticked off and went, and all of a sudden after he's gone I'm on the ground, pale with pain. Lena's Mum come over, got up and got up. *Oh*, she said, *we have to get a taxi or something to take you to the hospital*, and her Mum was bigger than me.

LM: My Mum was pregnant as well.

OH: At the same time?

BR: She was, she was twice my size, and when we got to the hospital she take me in, and the nurse grab her Mum and take her in. *No, no*, she said, *it's not me, it's her*. They look up and down, *She can't be*.

[Lena and Madeleine laugh]

BR: Of course Silvano [Lena's brother, Silvano Rossetto] was 11lb baby, my baby was 6lb.

LM: Yeah.

OH: A bit of a difference.

LM: Yes.

BR: Bit of a different wasn't it?

OH: So you had your baby then?

BR: Yeah.

OH: Yeah.

BR: And I had my baby straightaway, [after] half an hour I had the baby.

OH: Wow!

BR: They kept, they kept you in hospital for quite a while those days. The Queen Victoria Hospital, they keep you there for 12 days, not allowed to walk around the place, not allowed to go home before then.

LM: True.

OH: So we're going to talk about your marriage to Giuseppe Rossetto, but is there anything else that you can just tell me about the Veneti families down in the, what you called the Lockleys area?

- BR: Lockleys way. I remember the Berno very well, they were quite nice people. They were hard working, they were quite nice to everybody. There was other family but I don't really remember their name very well. I remember their view but I just can't tell you the name at the moment. See it's been 50 years, 60 years ago.
- OH: Absolutely, and your memory is fantastic.
- BR: Thank you very much.
- OH: What do you remember about the Berno family then?
- BR: They were all hardworking people, they made a lot of money, they made a lot of money. They were all single and one of them got married, but some of them, oh yeah, one got a girl, a woman from Italy, one of the Berno got a wife from Italy,¹ but I mean she didn't like to be here, so they went to shift. Well they had a lot of money, they sell the land, and they went to live in Castelfranco Riese near Castelfranco, they went back there. I'm the only one to stay, stop here in Australia afterwards. Then some of the kids they had they came back, but then they went back there again.
- OH: And the Santin family, what do you remember?
- BR: Oh, they're lovely people, yeah. The older one, he died fairly young.
- OH: Lui?
- BR: Yeah. Oscar Mattiazzo's wife, that was the only girl they had, and she was beautiful person, really and truly a beautiful person, yes.
- OH: When would you have seen those families?
- BR: Once in a while on a Sunday when we ride the bike down there. We all got together down there.
- OH: So all the families would get together?
- BR: All, everybody turned up to say hello, walk in and out sort of a thing. It was a very friendly area those years, weren't they, very connected with everybody.
- OH: What about weddings or First Communion or Confirmations, do you remember any of those?
- BR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I had First Communion in Italy, and I had Confirmation in Italy. My, my auntie was my godmother, Zia Isolina, yeah.
- OH: Do you remember going to any weddings or fiestas at people's places down at Lockleys?
- BR: Yes, we, we all got together, but I don't remember who, what or was, but I remember going to those social, social things, it was good. Everybody was quite connected with one another, really quite friendly.
- LM: We were like a big family.
- BR: Yeah, yep, it was, there's no doubt about it.

¹ Both Pietro and Alberto Berno married women from the Treviso region in Italy. Pietro married Antonietta Pastro in 1948 and Alberto married Elvira Carraro in 1950. Both couples returned with their children to live in Italy in 1969

- OH: Ah! How different was it to go there than to be living in the city? What did you see when you went down there?
- BR: Oh, I loved living in the city because I could see different things, I was a sticky beak; and then I loved singing those years. I loved singing! When I was up there living, at Rossetto on the top there, I used to sing like a bird, people stop in the street to see who was singing. Then there was another Australian lad living two rows away, and he started to sing very well too. He said, *We should go on the radio together*, and he, he went on the radio. I didn't want to go but I could have went with him to, to sing in the radio, and I was only about 14, yeah, but I loved singing, yeah.
- OH: Did you sing at any parties or things like that?
- BR: We did a little bit but not very much.
- LM: Zia Severina [Tormena] did.
- BR: Yeah, Zia Severina did. Yeah, I sing sometime but not, not ... Then I started to get a bit shy, as you get older you get to be shy, you're not game that much.
- OH: If we just go back to Frogmore Road or Lockleys for just a few minutes.
- BR: Yeah.
- OH: Some people have said that it was like being in the country when you went there.
- BR: Yes, it was, yeah, really country, there was not much road, dirt road, dirt road, there was no footpath or nothing, no buses going through there, nothing, there were really nothing. You had to walk from Grange Road or Henley Beach Road, if you want to get there, by the river there where they had, they had the land, you had to walk, there was no, no other facility, you walk.
- LM: Mum and I used to ride the bike too.
- BR: Yeah.
- LM: My Mum.
- OH: From the city?
- LM: No, not, not from the city but to go around people's houses to see somebody we'd ride the bike.
- OH: And this is at Lockleys?
- LM: Yes.
- OH: Yeah, yeah.
- BR: There was a lot of ...
- LM: No, she didn't ride – excuse me – she didn't ride the bike, somebody gave her a 'donkey' [ride]. We used to call it 'donkey', sitting on the bar there, a man gave you a ride and took Mum and I to Henley Beach Road to catch the tram because it was a long walk.
- OH: Yeah, a decent walk.
- BR: It was a fair bit of walk, a long walk.
- OH: Yeah. Do you remember seeing what people were growing?

- BR: Yes, they were growing, mostly they were growing tomatoes, spinach. Some had some peas in winter I think it was.
- LM: Dad did.
- BR: Yeah, they had some, they had some peas in winter, but mostly the tomatoes were very popular a thing.
- OH: Do you remember glasshouses?
- BR: Oh yes, very good. It was hot, it was hot working in the hard glasshouses. I went in and helped a bit then those years, but I didn't then because I think I got a bit of asthma, I wasn't breathing properly inside the glasshouse. The same as Italia Tonellato, she married Lui [Tonellato] ... she got sick from there, she was in the [Royal] Adelaide Hospital ... she nearly died that time. She was not allowed to go into those glasshouses again ever, ever, again. She was very sick that time, she nearly, nearly died, but then she got better and she become a strong woman. She's still alive alright. She was my Matron of Honour when we got married.
- OH: Oh!
- BR: Yeah.
- OH: Let's talk about ...
- BR: And Mrs Conci, she was, I was godmother to her child, to Denny Conci. I be godmother to Denny and I be godmother to Adrian, Italia's older son, to the both of them. And we, we were close, everybody was close to one another, you know, sort of a thing.
- LM: We stuck together.
- BR: Yeah.
- OH: Bruna, let's talk about you getting married. You told me before that you didn't have much of a social life, but how did you meet your husband, Giuseppe?
- BR: Well ... he was a Rossetto, he used to come to his brother's shop, and that's where I met him. One night, wait on, one night, Anna and I, Anna Rossetto and I, we were only 16, we walk down, to walk Hindley Street just to have a look at the lights and stuff like that, and all of a sudden this bloke walks up, a real gigolo, he come up. Anna said, *Oh, that's my uncle. Oh!* He said, *What are you two going down there, you're not walking down there by yourself, I'll walk with you.* So he walked with us to go down to where Brazzale was, down by the [Morphett Street] bridge, and then we walked, then we walked together and that's how we met. Before he left he went like that to me, he give me a pinch underneath my cheek. I fell in love with that.
- OH: Straightaway?
- BR: Straightaway [laughs].
- OH: What did you know ...?
- BR: Sixteen.
- OH: What did you know about the Rossetto family?

- BR: Well, because I was there with Anna and the family, I found out, you know, everybody, everybody was kind, so kind to us, but people those years, they were very kind to one another, it wasn't just in our group sort of a thing, yes.
- OH: How did they show their ...?
- BR: Do you ever heard the family Maschio? There was Flora Maschio and all them, yeah. Flora was, she had a tough mother.
- LM: Yeah.
- BR: Yeah, very tough mother, but Flora was alright, they'd be, she'd be really wealthy.
- LM: They had, they had the wood yard across the road.
- BR: Yeah, but they, they had, they, they were really, they became very well-off afterwards.
- OH: Were they Veneti?
- BR: Yes, from Riese, Castelfranco Riese, mm.
- OH: So you knew quite a bit about the Rossetto family, that there were quite a number of them?
- BR: Yes. Well being there in the shop we met every one of them, yeah.
- OH: Can you tell the story about how you came to get married?
- BR: Yeah, well because my father didn't want me to get married to him ...
- OH: Because you were young?
- BR: I was young and he was older.
- OH: How old were you?
- BR: I was 17 when I got married with my husband. He was 30, and on top of that, the priest wrote a letter to my father, *Don't you interfere any more, let them get married and make a family out of it, and don't, don't keep ...* because my father was not a very nice man really, but never mind, let's not talk about him. There's a, an old photo I'll show you.
- OH: Well, we'll get the photo after.
- BR: After, okay, yes.
- OH: Yeah. So you and Beppi were getting closer and decided to get married and ...
- BR: Yeah. You know that we never, we never got together once, just to grab a kiss and that was it, never went out together, never got together, never once 'til we got married because I ... I was frightened to stay with my father. I went to the mother's place, because I knew the mother, I was helping to clean the house, and I went down there and that's, we got married and I got out there.
- OH: And of course we didn't say that ...
- BR: I sort of got married ... everybody thought I got married just to run away from, to get away from my father, but that wasn't really the truth, I loved Beppi from the first day I saw him.
- OH: So who helped you ... I just want to say one thing. Lena's parents, we'll just identify them, Gelindo ...

- BR: And Lina Rossetto.
- OH: ... and Lina Rossetto, and of course ...
- BR: And they'd been kind to me, very kind, very kind.
- OH: And I think at that time, was Beppi living at their place?
- BR: Yeah, he was living there with them at their place, yes.
- OH: So how did it happen that you came to have the wedding day?
- BR: Well the wedding day, the priest came to the house where we live in Hindley Street, and the priest he said, *Mr Battaglia*, he said, *two young people, they can create a good family here for Australia, let them get married*. He said, *I'll ...* and Brazzale was, when I was working for Brazzale in the mica factory, he organised a priest – I had good people all the time – the priest, and he [Brazzale] let all the girls ... it was pouring rain on a Tuesday afternoon ... he let, told all the girls to go to the church and be there when we got married. Then the priest was late because he went to a funeral.
- At the back of that afterward there was Pierina Paleno, she married this Dr Rosario afterwards ... and she, she had a beautiful voice and she sang in church, Ave Maria. I started to cry, and I feel like crying now, it was so emotional, so beautiful. I feel as if nobody was there but I had a lot of friends.
- OH: So when you ...
- BR: The Brazzale family had been very good to me, Evelina being my big one.
- OH: So when you got married, your family didn't attend the wedding?
- BR: No, nobody, only the, the people from the mica factory, Brazzale, and the Tonellato, Leo Conci and his wife.
- LM: Us.
- BR: Yeah, and you, all of you.
- LM: Zia Severina [Tormena].
- BR: And Zia Severina there, but no, nobody, no other ... My family there was nobody.
- OH: But the Rossetto family?
- BR: Yeah, they were all there.
- OH: Yeah! Who?
- BR: Then we went home in the night time, nothing was organised to eat or nothing. I remember having boiled some eggs and some sort of *radicchi* (salad greens) and stuff like that.
- LM: Mum ...
- BR: Mum didn't, yeah.
- LM: Mum had a reception for you, don't you remember?
- BR: Yeah, yeah she did, she had a reception afterwards.
- LM: Afterwards.

- BR: The week after I had a reception at the church, St Patrick's Church there. They organised a reception there.
- LM: I thought that Mum and Dad, when you got married that day, after we came back home, we had a reception.
- BR: They had a little bit of, yeah, a little bit, but then afterward your father, your father said, *No, it's not going to go this way, we have a thing at, at the church there.* You know St Patrick's Church have a little hall there?
- LM: Yeah, at the back, yes.
- BR: Yeah, that's where we had another thing there.
- LM: Yes, yeah, I remember that too, yeah, yeah, a little ... It was not a ...
- BR: And of course Beppi, Beppi played the piano accordion then.
- LM: Yes.
- OH: I want to ask you like what day of the week did you get married?
- BR: Tuesday afternoon about 2 o'clock.
- OH: Who was the, who was the ...?
- BR: Father Horgan.
- OH: He was the one who really helped you?
- BR: Yeah, he was a nice priest.
- OH: Who bought your dress with you?
- BR: Well ...
- LM: Mum came .
- BR: [Your] Mum came along, and because it was coupon during the war you couldn't buy anything you wanted, only coupon you can buy one thing only.
- OH: Because the year was 19.. ?
- LM: What year?
- BR: '42, and your coupon ... and I like a lovely floral dress, she said, *No, no, you can't have that because you can't go everywhere with that.* She saw this beautiful black dress with a little coat and all, and that was more expensive, but she said, *With that you can go anywhere. For home you can stay ... we find a little rubbish to wear at home.* She made me buy that, I've got photos of it, with it.
- OH: And we'll have a look at them after.
- BR: Yeah, where I put them, I don't know, but I got them, I got them. I got them in my bedroom.
- OH: Oh lovely! So how did it feel to be getting married? What was ...?
- BR: Do you want to know the honest truth? I got married, and I was terrified to go to bed with a man, terrified, and he was so good to me. And since, well he never touched me for more than a week, he just kept me calm and make me tranquil, but he never touched me, never tried to do anything for more than a week. I never forget that. I could love him more for being so kind to me like that. He was a perfect gentleman, Beppi, there was no doubt about him.

- OH: Where did you live when you got married?
- BR: I live in their house for a little while, yeah, we live there for quite a while.
- OH: With Lena's parents?
- BR: Yeah, and then after, because I wanted to go to work, Brazzale offered me to go back to, to go to work, and so we're living in Beppi's sister, Tormena, Johnny Tormena and [Maria Rosa] we live there, so she look after, she look after Val when I had, Val was born. My Val was born there with them and ... No.
- LM: Yes.
- BR: No, she was born at your place.
- LM: No. You ...
- BR: Val was born ...
- LM: With Zia Severina[Tormena]?
- BR: With Zia Severina?
- LM: Yes.
- BR: I thought Alan was born when I was with Zia Severina.
- LM: No, I think it was Val. Ask Johnny, he should know.
- BR: No, no, but I remember Zio Galliano [Tormena] come to see me in hospital.
- OH: It's a long time ago but you're doing very well with your memory. What about your mother, what did she think about your wedding?
- BR: Mum couldn't say a word, she was frightened of my husband, my father, she was frightened. No, she loved my husband, Mum loved my husband, and my husband loved her too. Beppi loved Mum, yeah.
- OH: Were you able to go and see your family once you married?
- BR: No, never, I was never allowed to go into the house. It took many years before, ever, ever. Then he [my father] got sick and my mother started to cry, and said to Beppi, *Beppi, please come and visit us, come on, come on*. I didn't want to go. Beppi said, *Come on, it's your parent, we have to go. I can't, I can't*. He said, *Come on, let's go*. He dominated me to go but just for Mum's sake because he loved my mother very much, she was a dear lady. That's the truth, isn't it?
- LM: Yeah.
- OH: So you went?
- BR: Yeah.
- OH: But did you ever see your mother by herself?
- BR: No, we never. She was, she was frightened of my father, she wouldn't dare try.
- OH: So the people that you and Beppi mixed with were the Rossetto?
- BR: The Rossetto, there was Mattiazzo, some relation of Oscar, they used to live in Currie Street, Emilio and ...
- LM: The butcher.

- BR: The butcher, and Anna ... what's the other, what's the other girl's name, she was the same age as me, we used to be good friends?
- LM: Olivia.
- BR: No, Olivia was the mother.
- LM: Gusta.
- BR: Gusta, Gusta.
- OH: Gusta Mattiazzo?
- BR: Yeah, she was ... We were the same age, we became very good friends, the two of us, yeah.
- OH: And Anna became Anna Santin?
- BR: Anna Santin, yeah, and then it was, what's her name?
- LM: Rita.
- BR: Rita, she marry, what's his name, Renzo?
- LM: Renzo ().
- BR: He died. No, she still, she's still alive, isn't she?
- LM: Yeah, but Renzo died.
- BR: Yeah, I know Renzo died, but she's ...
- LM: But she's with that, what's his name?
- BR: What's his name, yeah.
- LM: Oh, he's 90-plus years old.
- BR: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was quite an intelligent fellow from Vicenza, a friend of, a friend of Arturo Pagliaro.
- LM: What's his name?
- OH: It will come to you. Bruna, what was Beppi doing for work at the time that you got married?
- BR: He was working in the farm for her father.
- OH: So Gelindo's farm ...
- BR: Had a farm.
- OH: ... was down on the river?
- BR: Yeah.
- LM: River Road.
- OH: River Road, Lockleys.
- BR: Yeah.
- OH: And so Beppi was working with him?
- BR: With him, yeah.
- OH: Do you remember how many glasshouses they had?
- BR: Oh, they had, wait on.

- BR: I think there was five on one side and two separate one on the other side, if you walk through. They didn't have that many all of a sudden, because the, the place wasn't that big, was it? There were a lot of vegetable outside.
- LM: You had vegetables
- BR: A lot of vegetable outside.
- LM: You had cauliflower, cabbage, peas.
- BR: Yeah, a lot of stuff outside. The glasshouses was more for tomatoes those days.
- OH: How close was it to the river?
- BR: Oh, not, not that close but close enough, not that close.
- LM: You used to get ... pump the water out of the river.
- BR: Yeah, pump that water out of the river to go to the farm.
- OH: Did he own the land or was he leasing it?
- BR: I think he owned it.
- LM: No.
- BR: He leased it then?
- LM: Leased it.
- BR: He leased it. I think there was some Bulgarian people owned all those land down there.
- LM: Yeah.
- BR: Bulgarian people live along Frogmore Road in a lot of places there, they owned sort of the land.
- OH: Along River Road?
- BR: Yeah, yeah.
- OH: Findon Road [as it is known today]?
- BR: Yeah, yeah.
- OH: Yeah, oh! So you remember going down there sometimes?
- BR: Yeah, sometime, not very often but sometime, because I used to, while they all go down there, used to help her Mum and then I used to help to try to do some cooking. Then I started to work, I was working at Brazzales. I been a hard worker all my life.
- OH: It sounds like you were very ...
- BR: And I'm proud of it.
- OH: It sounds like you were very busy, like doing all those things. I'm going to ask you about what was the work that ...? Well let's just talk about the fact that you had three children.
- BR: Yes.
- OH: Valeria was born in?
- BR: 1943, Alan 1946, and Denis 1949.

- OH: So you were a busy mother. Where were you living when the three of ...?
- BR: I was living with John (Johnny) Tormena, with Tormena family, my husband's sister, when the kids were born, the other two, and then afterwards ...
- OH: Was that in the city?
- LM: In Weymouth Street.
- BR: No, in Weymouth Street, Weymouth Street.
- LM: That's the city.
- BR: And next door there was a Griguol; Mrs Saturno, Queenie Griguol next door.
- LM: And Cescato.
- BR: And Cescato on the other side, but then afterwards Brazzale offered me a little house in Liverpool Street, so we left Zia Severina, and I remember walking down, poor Zio Galliano, he helped me. I was walking down with the pram and a baby there, and Alan on one side and Valeria, and he walked home with me because it was getting dark. I moved in there to this little house and I managed, managed it alright, it was quite comfortable.
- There was five of those little houses, and there was another Italian family there, I remember them, but I just don't remember their name. Then there was a policeman next to that, and then there was a, I think my sister, Elda, came from Griffith. She was married to Dante. They were in Griffith, they came over and they got the last house. Then there was Vicenza people, Maria, Maria and her husband ... they born from Vicenza. They had two sons, there was – I don't remember their name now – but I remember there very well.
- LM: And then there was the factory.
- BR: And then there was Brazzale's factory, next to Maria was Brazzale's factory. She was, she was keeping guard, more like a guard of the factory, her and her husband then, at that stage.
- OH: Then I wanted to ask you about the decision that you and Beppi made to go up to the Spotted Tiger Mine in the Northern Territory.
- BR: Well, I'll tell you the decision was. Whoever didn't have an important job with the government during the War, you had to go and work, work for the government where they send you, and of course Beppi said, *I'm not going to go and work for the government*. He didn't like it, so he decided her father had the mica mine, and decided, the father wanted him to go up there anyhow, so he went up there and work in the mine, and I stay and live with Zia Severina [Tormena], with Severina, Johnny and Maria, but then after I started to get lonely, I wanted to be with him. He came home a couple of years after whatever, and of course I got pregnant with Alan, and then when he come home the last time I got pregnant with Denis. So in the end I had three kids.
- I was there living Liverpool Street with my three children, trying to work and go and help a little bit in the factory and I was, I been working all the time, but then after I started to feel lonely for him. I didn't like the idea just being by myself with the kids there, I wanted to go up in the mine. He didn't want me to. He said, *It's not a life for you up there with the kids, it's not a life*, and of course Val went to ... Then after ... Val was about six years old when she went

to the convent in Alice Springs, she was a boarder there, and I took my two boys in the Spotted Tiger Mine.

OH: What year would that have been?

BR: Well Denis was only one.

OH: So about?

BR: 1950, '50, '51.

OH: How long did you stay there?

BR: I stay there for two, three years.

OH: What did you do when you were there?

BR: I cooked for 12 men and had kids to look after.

OH: What were the conditions like?

BR: Oh! There's a stove on this side.

OH: We can look at the photo after.

BR: They're there, there's the book there.

OH: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

BR: Stove on this side, you walk across there's a, a big room with a long table. There, there was an old fridge in there as well. They had *frasche* on top, *frashce* means hedges, they make the, the roof with hedges and stuff like that, and the kitchen had, in the kitchen was a small pole but it had a big, nice big stove. Some men were there, and one of them was a cook before I got there. He was a Napoletano man, a nice man, he said, *I'm not staying here*. He said, *I'll teach you how to do the bread and stuff like that*. The first week he told me, show me how to do the bread, and then I bake the most beautiful bread afterwards that people from Alice Spring used to come on a Sunday, have a day out, just to have my bread.

LM: A good one.

BR: And I used to have beautiful little roll rosette, used to make the yeast and put a little bit of oil in it, and a tiny little bit of butter, and then roll it up and put lovely and hot. They loved it, they have, and we made beautiful bread, really and truly did.

OH: The 12 men were they all Veneti?

BR: Yeah, most, yeah, some from Vicenza. There was the Cesare Daminato and his brother, all there those men. Dante Gava was from Pordenone. Then there was another from Friuli, and then there was Beppi Facchin from ... Enrico Fantus and his two boys, Bruno and David. Bruno didn't like it, he came [back] down. Well they had enough, and a huge big tent. I went up to see the camp this last year. My boys took me to see it. I got a bit upset because there was not a thing, no a scratch there was only a few rocks with half of the stove there. The Aboriginal went there and, and do things.

LM: (inaudible).

OH: I think that we'll keep going, and we can talk about it after.

BR: Yeah.

- LM: Yep.
- OH: Because I was just going to say how did you find those years?
- BR: Well the, until I got used of it I found it very hard the first year, but I got used to it and I quite enjoyed it. Everybody was nice to me.
- OH: And the boys were little, one year old and?
- BR: Alan was four, and when he was about, I'll say not much after, he used to follow the men up into the mine, the Spotted Tiger was right [gestures height] up there.
- OH: Did you come back to Adelaide at all in that time?
- BR: I came back from, no, but when I came back I had, I had a cyst on my breast and it was coming up too big, and my husband was really worried about it, he made me come down, and I come down. Brazzale gave me the little house in Liverpool Street. That's when I went to Liverpool Street, a little house in Liverpool Street. I had the cyst operation, everybody was upset. Oh, when I went to hospital everybody from Brazzale was there praying, and then all of a sudden they operate my cyst, four hours later they send me home. I walk into the factory and they were all there praying and saying things, and working, crying over me and I walked in. They went, *Oh you, we thought you were going die.*
- [Laughter]
- BR: They really thought I was going to die. Those years they used to be frightened of breast cancer. Matter of fact I was, I remember being in this big room and there was a lot of older women, they had breast thing in there, and it was terrifying to look, really, truly. I was the lucky one, I was the youngest one of the lot there.
- OH: So then ...
- BR: But that's good I had that cyst out then because you never know what it could have came to.
- OH: So then you continued to live in Liverpool Street?
- BR: Yes, yes.
- OH: And did you work at Brazzale again?
- BR: Yes, yes.
- OH: How long did Brazzales ...?
- BR: Mica factory ...
- OH: ... stay open for?
- BR: They open for a few, a lot, a few years, but then mica wasn't sociables anymore because they start digital. They didn't put mica in everything like we have digital in everything now, so that was, that's ... that's when he stopped, but mica is still being used in some places.
- LM: Toasters, irons.
- BR: Yeah, yeah, but that was, it's all digital now, it's not, they don't use mica anymore. I don't know what they use.

- OH: Did Beppi stay up in ...?
- BR: He stay up there for a little while longer, but then he misses the kids and everybody else, and then he was worrying about me, thought maybe, they thought I was going to die with cancer. I got out of it very good.
- OH: When he came back what work did he do?
- BR: He went back to work for Del Fabbro.
- LM: Cement.
- BR: Vittorio Del Fabbro, and then after a while later, he work for Marble and Cement down in Phil Street, Flinders Street, down Thebarton somewhere. There was Marble and Cement, big place there and he ... So yeah, he ...
- Claudio Moscheni (CM): ... somewhere.
- BR: Yeah, yeah.
- CM: Yeah.
- BR: And he, he became a good polisher, he started ... he became a good marble polisher. Matter of fact he, a lot of the, the building that they got in Adelaide, 'The Advertiser' building then, the Police Department, and some at the, at the Opera House [Festival Theatre] down there with the ...
- CM: (inaudible).
- BR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he's done some work there. It was marble standing up, outside the Police Station, with marble standing alone everywhere, and in the Town Hall they had all marble again, all on the side, and the stairs some of it.
- OH: He was involved in that?
- BR: Yeah, he was a cutter, then a polisher and a cutter, yeah. He was very much in demand then.
- OH: You came to live on the eastern side of the city, you came to live at Klemzig?
- BR: Oh yeah. Afterwards, wait on, we used to, I used to go for a walk with Zia [Nana] Rosa.
- LM: In Gilberton, Johnny.
- BR: Yeah, I went to live in Gilberton with Johnny and Maria, we live in Gilberton together.
- LM: With the Tormena?
- BR: Yeah, Tormena, we live there for a while, then we used to go for a walk. Then we'd walk up and see them and, and we walk across the river, walk up, and it was hard to walk back. I saw this house on the corner which, it was there, there's photos somewhere. Anyhow, the house on the corner, and it was just finished I think – somebody was there for a month or so I think, that's all – and I said, *Oh*, I said, *let's* I said to Beppi, *Let's* I took him to see it. He said, *We buy a house there*. He said, *Don't be silly, it's too far away from the city*. He loved to live in the city, loved the city.
- Then all of a sudden I said, *We have to, we've got to do that*, because we only had two bedrooms, one for me and one for the kids, and I didn't like my daughter to sleep with her brothers and whatever it was. So we end up buying

the house, and you see yourself close to the Fogolar Furlan [Club] had just been built there, It was closer for him to go and play bocce and whatever he was doing. So that created ... we said we come live in Klemzig, and I never shifted from Klemzig. Over 50 years I've been here.

OH: You've had a busy working life too, haven't you?

BR: All the time, all the time.

OH: Can you just say a little ...?

BR: The first years I used to work, be a cleaner, West Theatre, the first year, 6 o'clock in the morning, finish half past ten, then go down to the Black Orchid coffee lounge, do cooking. Then in the afternoon ... rush home to get my family meals, and then back at night-time at 8 o'clock for a couple hours. My husband didn't like me to be ... He used to take me up and down being the night time. He didn't like me to be out, and he was good for that, good man. So I never used to go home 'til 9 or 10 o'clock at night, and every day was like that.

OH: And then you had a lovely opportunity to work in the Wallis Theatres?

BR: Yes, yes. First I started West Theatre, but then from Wallis Theatre started in the candy bar, and I been in the candy bar 36 years, 30 years now. A beautiful family, Wallis, the people work for, they really ...

OH: And they keep in touch with you, don't they?

BR: Oh, still now, yeah.

OH: We're getting close ...

BR: I had tea with them last night at Mitcham Cinema.

OH: Lovely.

BR: They pick me up, yeah, beautiful people. Michelle Wallis and her husband and 12 people, big, long table of people. They, they invite me, pick me up, take me there for Christmas.

OH: Lovely.

BR: Beautiful people to work for. The Wallis family they, I think they're famous enough but they are, they're worth what they, they talk about, really and truly they are.

OH: In terms of your family, you have how many grandchildren and great-grandchildren?

BR: I have nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

LM: And I have a granddaughter who's been working in 'Neighbours' in Melbourne, she worked with 'Neighbours', and she's just had a ... No, she had a little boy, he's two years old. Matter of fact a while back it was very upsetting because he got meningitis, but he got out of it alright, got out of it alright. He got better and he got out of it alright, but he was ... for five days it was very bad.

LM: And Adam.

BR: And Adam.

- LM: Works at the ABC.
- BR: Yeah, Adam, my grandson, works at the ABC, and Lana, one of my granddaughter, Lana, she's a top nurse at the [Royal] Adelaide Hospital in day surgery – she's a very qualified nurse – and the older one, she works ... in the office for the Labor Party.
- OH: So you've got some talented grandchildren.
- BR: That's for sure.
- OH: We're coming to the end of the interview, Bruna, and I was going to ask you what does your Italian heritage mean to you?
- BR: It means a lot, it means a lot, my Italian heritage means a lot, but Australia is my home, I feel that Australia is my home, there's nothing else more ... I went to Italy a couple of times for holidays and stuff like that, I was glad to come home, yeah. There's too much going on. It's a lovely life in Australia, I think Australia is the best. Don't you agree? I wouldn't go live in Europe if you pay me for it, no way.
- LM: I don't barrack for anybody else but Australia.
- BR: Me either.
- OH: What about if you go to Italy, what do you say to people, that you're Australian?
- BR: Oh yeah, but they, they, they think we're nothing because we're Australian, true, yeah, they don't think us very much being Australian, but now the things are changing and a lot of, a lot of the Italians like to come here. There's a lot of people that come here for holidays and everywhere, everywhere, especially Melbourne.
- OH: You know how you both said that in the past, in the days when you were growing up, that the Italian and the Veneto community was very close.
- BR: Very close.
- OH: Has it changed?
- BR: I don't think so, I don't think so.
- LM: No, we ...
- BR: No, before the Fogolar Furlan [Club] along here, there's a lot of Veneti go there, it's an old place, it's lovely spot. Have you ever been there?
- OH: Beautiful!
- BR: I like it.
- LM: I love it.
- BR: I think it's very, very nice, and the people, Mr Farini and all them, they're lovely people, yeah, no, I like there.
- OH: One thing that we didn't talk about was when did Beppi die?
- BR: Oh, that was sad. He had emphysema because he was a heavy smoker. Matter of fact I look after him for over a year at home, he never wanted to go to hospital, never been to hospital, never. He said, *Don't you dare put me into*

hospital, you got to look after me. Go and get a nurse or anybody you want, but I want to stay home.

And he got so sick one night. It was about 4 o'clock in the morning, he wasn't breathing, his eyes was closed, it was terrifying – I look after him at home myself – and, and all of a sudden I got frightened. I rang up Dr Doman, which he was from St Peter's, and he said, *Mrs Rossetto*, he said, *I've got an ambulance coming for you straightaway*. He said, *I'll come*, he said, *but I don't know whether the ambulance get there before me*. The ambulance arrived and they carry him out.

As he's carrying him out Dr Doman arrived as well, and he said, *I'll come, I'll come and see in the, in the hospital, in the Adelaide Hospital*. He was in the Adelaide Hospital. He said, *I'll come and see you there*. We had to take, he was unconscious, but then all of a sudden in the same time in the same day they gave him an injection or something, he revived. My daughter was on one side and I was on this side. I was holding his hand, Val was holding his hand, and all of a sudden he woke up. He said ... He look, he look, *Where am I? In hospital. Ah, la xe rivada* (it has arrived), because he was always talking about die. He said, *La xe rivada*, as if to say 'death is here'. And that was the last word he says.

OH: Ah! And what year was that?

BR: '92.

OH: '92 mm, and I'm sorry, we've ...

BR: In November, November '92.

OH: '92, a long time ago.

BR: Yeah.

OH: And I'm sorry we have to end at this point, but thank you very much for the information that you've given.

BR: I gave you as much as I can think. Sometimes I think a lot more things but, you know, you can't ...

LM: Me too, I still remember things.

OH: Yeah, yeah. Well you've done very well and thank you very much.

BR: Thank you. I'll take it off now?

OH: Thank you, Bruna, thank you.

BR: It's alright, love, I appreciate it.

OH: Thank you ...

BR: I'll go and put ... I'll make you a coffee while you put your pieces away.

OH: Thank you ...

BR: Thank you.