

Italian market gardeners oral history project
Interview with Irene Zampin Berdusco – OH 872-45

Interview deposited in the State Library of South Australia

Recorded by Madeleine Regan on 23rd June 2017 in Caselle di Altivole, provincia di Treviso, Italy

OH: This is an oral history interview recorded with Irene Zampin, Irene --- your married name is...?

IZ: Berdusco

OH: Berdusco and I'm interviewing Irene for the Veneti market gardeners oral history project. I'm interviewing Irene in her home in Caselle¹, in the Veneto, Italy. My name is Madeleine Regan and the date is 23rd June 2017. Thank you, Irene, for agreeing to this interview.

IZ: Not at all.

OH: 00:45 We're going to start by talking about your family background. But first, could you give me your full name?

IZ: My name is Irene Zampin.

OH: What is your date of birth?

IZ: I was born on 4th of May 1952.

OH: And where were you born?

IZ: I was born in Adelaide, South Australia.

OH: Were you named for anyone in your family?

IZ: No, not really. My name, the reason of my name is a bit strange, if you want me to tell you the story?

OH: Great.

IZ: I remember, no, I don't remember really. But they always told me that when I was born, my father came to see my mother in the hospital and my mother wanted to call me Graziella and my father came with a motor-bike and with his friend, Santin, Romildo Santin. I think they had had a few, few drinks before coming there and they were very happy and when Mum said: "Now, go to the Council and give the name, Graziella to this baby girl." So they left and while they were leaving going towards the Council, they were singing "Irene, goodnight." [sings the song] "Irene, goodnight, Irene, goodnight..." When they got to the Council, the person asked them what name shall we give this baby girl? I suppose they both looked at each other because they couldn't remember the name. And they finally decided, I don't know who, they said why don't you call her Irene. So that's my name, Irene. [laughter] How it came out.

OH: That's a great story, I think it's terrific.

¹ Caselle di Altivole is in the province of Treviso, it is one of three *frazioni* or geographical areas of the *comune*

IZ: Yes, but Madeleine, when I got here to Italy, I found out that Irene in Italian is [pronounces in Italian - Eerene]² Irene and Irene was the name of my grandmother. --- It's a strange story, isn't it?**OH:** And you didn't know?

IZ: No, I didn't know, nothing about mother because the Italians used to call me Oirene, not Irene and they used to write it not 'Irene' but [sounding out phonetics] Oirin. But when I got to Italy I found out that my name Irene was [pronounces with soft 'i']Eerene in Italian and my grandmother was named Irene.

OH: And which grandmother was it?

IZ: My mother's mother.

OH: Was she alive when you came back?

IZ: No, no.

OH: But what a coincidence?

IZ: Yes, strange.

OH: Yeah.

IZ: It's a strange story.

OH: Yeah.

OH:(03:20) Please can you tell me the full names of your parents? If we start with your father?

IZ: My father's name was Antonio Zampin. They used to call him Nico. My mother's name was Ines Simeoni and they used to call her Delia.

OH: Delia. So, two names different from their given names?

IZ: This is for all the Italians, I think.

OH: Oh.

IZ: For all the Italians.

OH: And the dates of birth and the place of birth of your father?

IZ: Well, Mum and Dad were both born in Riese. Dad was born on 19th April in 1917 and Mum was born on 1st of November, that's what we think because when we came back to Italy, she found out that she was born on 31st of October 1923. [laughter] It's funny.

OH: It is funny. Can you explain where Riese is located? --- In the province?

IZ: Riese is in the province of Treviso and --- it's a bit difficult to explain where is Treviso because I remember when I came to Italy, everybody used to ask me where are you going to live? But nobody knew Treviso, Riese or Veneto. They all knew Venezia, Venice.

OH: Ah.

IZ: So I used to say: "I'm going to Venice." "Oh, how lucky you are!" [laughter]

OH: Well, it's not far from Venice, is it?

IZ: It's not far.

²The phonetic spelling in Italian means that Irene is pronounced 'Eerene'

OH: How far?

IZ: But now probably people know it's near Castelfranco Veneto.

OH: Yes. How far are you from Venice, here?

IZ: Let's say one hour's drive,

OH: Right.

IZ: Around 50, 60 kilometres, yeah.

OH: And can you tell me about your brothers and sisters?

IZ: I've got a brother that came back to Italy with me. He was ten years old when he came here. And I've got a sister in Australia. She was around 18, she got married before we left for Italy.

OH: And their names?

IZ: My sister's name is Teresa, we call her Terry. And my brother's name is Dennis, like Dennis the menace. [laughter]

OH: And going back to your father, how many brothers and sisters would he have had?

IZ: My father's got quite a few brothers and sisters. I really don't remember how many, around six or seven.

OH: Right. And your mother?

IZ: My mother's got three sisters and a brother.

OH: Okay. And what do you know how they first met?

IZ: My father and my ---, ah? They used to live near each other, really. And I remember that. I remember [laughs] what they used to tell me, I really don't know, don't know. But I know there was another person that was interested in my father. So there was a bit of jealousy. So my mother didn't want him to go with the other one. So she said: "No, you're going to be my boyfriend." [laughter]

OH: And then they were together.

IZ: They were together.

OH: Do you know what work they were doing prior to getting married? And when they got married?

IZ: Oh, I don't remember when they got married. But I know my mother's parents used to have a bakery, a bakery and my father was --- an agriculture, let's say.

OH: A *contadino*?³

IZ: They were very poor, poor, yeah.

OH: And having brothers and sisters must have been a bit of challenge if there was so many.

IZ: Yes, that's true. That's why one at a time they emigrated to Australia.

OH: When you were born in 1952, do you know what were your parents were doing at that time?

³The word *contadino* in English means a farmer or agricultural worker

IZ: Oh, they were gardeners, they were always gardeners Probably working for other people then slowly they bought themselves a piece of land. And started doing gardening, always did gardening.

OH: They must have been very good at it?

IZ: Well, yes. [laughter] They made us work too.

OH: Before I finish with your family background, your own family? You're married?

IZ: Yes, I'm married with Giuliano Berlusco and I've got two children, Luca and Claudia.

OH: And grandchildren?

IZ: Yes, I've got two grandchildrens, Tommaso and Mario.

OH: So you're a busy grandmother?

IZ: Grandmother, yes. [laughter]

OH: (08:15) We're going to turn now to your parents and arriving in Adelaide. What do you know about why your father migrated and you know, any reasons?

IZ: Because there wasn't any work here and they were very poor. And his brother left before him, so one at a time, they called a few other brothers in Australia.

OH: And do you know when your father went to Australia?

IZ: The year? 1947, I think it was.

OH: How old would he have been?

IZ: Oh, I have to work that ---

OH: He was born in 1947?

IZ: He was born in 1917.

OH: Oh 1917, I mean.

IZ: 1917.

OH: Yeah.

IZ: Around 30 years old, I think it was, yeah.

OH: Oh, so he wasn't very young?

IZ: No, no.

OH: No. and already in Australia, who was there in his family?

IZ: There was Piero, Pietro and Silvano.

OH: And there's a story about Pietro?

IZ: Ah, Pietro, I'd always heard that he died in an accident. I didn't know my uncle Pietro.

OH: And your other uncle?

IZ: Oh Silvano, he was very nice person, very nice. He took care of us, really.

OH: When you arrived?

IZ: When we arrived. He helped Dad a lot. He was a good help for us.

OH: Yeah. So I imagine because of your uncle, that's why your father went to Adelaide?

IZ: Yes, because he was called there by *zio*⁴ Silvano.

OH: Who... Were there other relatives in Adelaide that your father knew at that time in 1948?

IZ: No, I don't think so, I don't know. Relations were just *zio* Silvano.

OH: When your father first arrived, do you know where he lived?

IZ: I remember him telling me that they used to live over the Berno's house.

OH: Right.

IZ: The Berno's.

OH: Do you remember where that was?

IZ: Yes, it was right next door, where we used to live now, at the moment.

OH: On what street?

IZ: On Valetta Road, Valetta Road.

OH: Yeah. When did your mother arrive in Adelaide?

IZ: I think, don't know if it was six months after. She already had *Terry*, my sister. My sister was two years old when she went to Australia.

OH: Right.

(10:54) Did your mother ever tell you what it was like for her when she first arrived in Adelaide?

IZ: Oh yes. She said it was very, very hard. She cried a lot, she said. because she --- I remember always, the sentence. She said: "If I had that small house that my parents had for the pigs..." I don't know how you call it, a stable for the pigs?

OH: Yeah.

IZ: "We would have been better." Because they used to have, at least it was a cement house. And there it was, there, she said she saw snakes and everything.

OH: So, a big challenge for her...

IZ: Yes it was.

OH: To move from what she'd known in Riese?

IZ: Mmnn.

OH: So you do you think that it was more difficult for your mother than your father?

IZ: No, from my mother, it was more difficult. Yes. Because she had a nice house, it was a big house here, they were rather well, they weren't really poor as my father. And when she got there, she says, you know I would have gone back straight away -- to Italy. It was hard for her.

OH: Yeah. Makes you feel sad?

⁴ *Zio* is the Italian word for 'uncle'.

IZ: No but when, after 20 years when she came back to Italy, let's say she wanted to go back to Australia.
[laughter]

OH: Oh, okay. [laughter]

(12:17) I understand that your mother had some relatives in Adelaide at some time?

IZ: I don't know, one of the sisters arrived before her or after her. She called one sister at a time. She had two sisters in Australia.

OH: And did they live in Adelaide?

IZ: They always lived in Valetta Road, in Adelaide. Yes.

OH: So, close?

IZ: At Lockleys. Yes, close. One in front of the Santin's.

OH: On Frogmore Road?

IZ: On Frogmore Road, yes.

OH: Oh.

(12:52) When you were born in 1952, do you know where your parents were living?

IZ: I think at the Berno's, you know. I'm not sure, I think.

OH: Yeah, and you told me previously that you understood that the Berno family had a few houses?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Near their place?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Because they had a big lot of land?

IZ: They had lots of land and they had this big house where they used to live and other two or three houses --- in one of them, my parents lived.

OH: Yeah.

IZ: But houses! I'm talking of one-roomed house, you know.

OH: Like, really basic?

IZ: Yes, really basic.

OH: And I guess...

IZ: I don't even know if it was made of asbestos? It was probably made of --- how do you say *la miera*?

OH: Oh plaster? Is it?

IZ: No, no not plaster. Tin.

OH: Tin? Oh, corrugated iron?

IZ: Yes.

OH: So no wonder your mother found it really difficult after having come from a good set-up here with her family and good house. Yeah.

IZ: Yes.

OH: (14:08) Do you remember who your godparents were?

IZ: My godparents of...?

OH: Your *santoli*, for your baptism?

IZ: For my baptism, I think it was Berno's. I'm not sure [laughs] if it was the Berno's.

OH: Yeah.

IZ: And for confirmation, it was Antonini.

OH: Antonini? And they were also *veneti*?⁵

IZ: *Veneti*. And they used to live in ... wait a minute, on Frogmore, on this road here, wait a minute ...

OH: Findon Road?

IZ: Findon Road.

OH: We've got a map in front of us with a lot of information about the *veneti* who were there as market gardeners. So Irene and I are going to refer to that during our conversation.

OH:(14:53) Do you have any first memories as a child?

IZ: As a child. I used to remember the school, the primary school where I used to go. I remember Sister Perpetua. Probably a whole lot of people remember Sister Perpetua, she was very severe. I remember, another thing I remember was when I used to go to school --- if you used to go to Mass in the morning, you could save a little black child so they used to put a little dolly, a black dolly on a calendar so whoever collects more dollies in the calendar was a good girl, let's say. Do you understand what I mean?

OH: Yes, I do?

IZ: So I used to go to Mass every morning.

OH: Before school?

IZ: Before school, I used to be early in the morning.

OH: Because you wanted to make sure

IZ: Yes, save a lot of children. And so I remember going without breakfast because you couldn't make communion with breakfast. Do you remember?

OH: Yes I do.

IZ: So I used to go without breakfast. And every two or three times, I used to faint. [laughter] So they used to take me out of the church because I used to faint.

OH: Because you had eaten?

IZ: Yes, so I remember that and I remember, even in primary school that we used to clean the windows, they used to make us clean the windows, clean the floor. We used to work.

OH: Wow. Remind me the name of the school?

IZ: Perpetua. We used to call her Perpetua. Oh no, the school, sorry. --- St Joseph's, at Flinders Park, Flinders Park.

OH: In Captain Cook Avenue, I think?

IZ: I don't remember the road, I can't remember

⁵ Gabriella Antonini has been interviewed for this project

OH: (16:36) I wanted to ask you about the house that you grew up in that you remember on...

IZ: Yes.

OH: On Valetta Road.

Do you know when your parents moved to this house? Do you know who they bought it from?

IZ: Nobody remembers when they moved but it could have been around 1955/1956 because my brother was born when we were in our new house. My parents bought the land and had the house made then.

IZ: Valetta Road.

OH: If you were looking at it today, could you take me through the house? Like, you know the front door, where you went.

IZ: Well, facing the road, you never entered in the door facing the road where there used to be a verandah. Always on the other side. You used to enter in the laundry. That was the entrance. The laundry, then there used to be room just for the toilet, a small room bathroom, then you entered straightway the kitchen. And we had two bedrooms next to the kitchen. That's all.

OH: So your parents were in one bedroom and

IZ: The three of us in the other bedroom.

OH: How big was the kitchen?

IZ: It wasn't very big. I don't know how to measure it.

OH: So it would have had a stove, a sink?

IZ: Yes, a stove, we had everything.

OH: No lounge room?

IZ: No, no lounge room.

OH: Who built that house?

IZ: I don't know.

OH: So it was already there before your family moved?

IZ: I think so, yes.

OH: How far from Valetta Road would it have been? Was it right on the road?

IZ: No, no, we had a small garden in the front with a big pine tree and I remember in summer we used to go and sleep on the lawn outside because it was so hot. We used to put a blanket there and we used to sleep in front of this, in front of the house. No, we had a small garden in front with the flowers and behind and on the side we had all the glasshouses.

OH: Who looked after the garden in the front of the house?

IZ: I think it was my mother. [laughs] I don't remember my father looking at the garden. I think it was my mother.

OH: And that pine tree, was that there when you moved, when you were growing up?

IZ: Yes.

OH: And there's a story about that pine tree?

IZ: That pine tree, to me, it seemed very, very big but when I went back to Australia. No, sorry I'm making confusion. I had a photo and I looked at it when I was here in Italy and I said that pine tree isn't that big. It was probably because I was small and I could see a big pine tree. I remembered that Dad put a swing on the pine tree. And then when Dad died, in .. when Dad died, the pine tree died also. My sister wrote to me, she said: "Listen, the pine tree died also."

OH: It's a...

IZ: Strange story.

OH: It is a strange story. What year did your father die?

IZ: Can't remember. I haven't got a great memory for dates.⁶

OH: That's alright, that's fine.

OH:(19:44) I'm going to ask you about, you know, growing up in your family? What language did you speak at home?

IZ: In Australia?

OH: Yes.

IZ: Oh, we used to speak. [laughs] It wasn't Italian, it was dialect, it was a very bad dialect with Australian words turned into Italian.

OH: Oh, okay, like examples of...?

IZ: Chair, Chair. Oh --- the car, il *carro*, when you say *automobile*, factory, *fattoria*

OH: Yeah, and *fattoria* actually means a farm.

IZ: Means a farm. So when I got here, I used to speak like that.

OH: Oh.

IZ: It was terrible.

OH: So when you say, dialect was bad, maybe it was an old form of the dialect that maybe your father ...?

IZ: It was an old form dialect because the Veneto dialect has changed now.

OH: yes, that's interesting.

How often did you see your uncle and aunt, your Zampin...?

IZ: Zampins?

OH: Yeah.

IZ: I don't know how often. But he used to come and see us because he had a car. He wasn't, I don't remember where he used to live, but not very far from us. But he used to come and see us all by himself or with all the family in this old, old car. [laughter]

OH: And there's something quite special about your uncle and his family? Like your uncle did not marry an Italian woman?

IZ: No, he married an Australian, English, she was from England, I think, my Auntie Amelia. She was a very nice person. And they had eight children and so when they used to come, there, nobody used to move from the table. [laughs] So Mum and Dad used to look at me and say: "I've got three and they're all... [laughs] I'm having trouble to pick them up." And instead, "Look at them." They wouldn't move without, if the auntie wouldn't say: "Yes you can take a biscuit."

OH: Oh, so they were well behaved?

IZ: Yes, really.

OH: Did you have any of your cousins who were around your age?

IZ: There was Cynthia, she was my age.

OH: And she was the last girl?

IZ: She was the last one. I don't know if Peter was younger though. He was probably the youngest.

OH: Yeah.

(22:14) And what kinds of things were important to your parents? Like we'll talk about the market gardens in a little while. But what do you think was important as you were growing up, to your parents? --- like raising their family?

IZ: Raising their family, a good school that they have a good job, that was important I think.

OH: you told me you went to church. Did your parents go to church?

IZ: Yes, they used to go.

OH: Where did they go to church?

⁶ In the editing process, Irene stated that her father died in 1990.

IZ: No, I think there at Flinders, there used to be a church there.

OH: Okay, At Flinders Park?

IZ: Flinders Park, yes.

OH: (22:59)Do you know where your mother would have shopped or your father would've shopped for say, food and clothes?

IZ: No, I don't remember, don't remember. There used to be a delicatessen on Findon Road, at Adami's. We used to go there sometimes. There used to be a butcher, the Adami butcher there. But I don't know where else she used to go.

OH: Did you ever go into the city of Adelaide?

IZ: Yes, yes, quite a lot of times.

OH: For shopping or?

IZ: For shopping with the bus. We used to catch the bus or the taxi.

OH: Oh?

IZ: Yes, it didn't cost a lot then, the taxi. [laughter]

OH: And where did you catch the bus in those days?

IZ: I think it was in Findon Road. Or on Grange Road. Wait a minute. I can't remember if it was Grange or Findon Road. There used to be a bus stop. I can't remember exactly.

OH: Yeah,

IZ: Or we used to call a taxi. They used to come there. I remember.

OH: Interesting.

IZ: It didn't cost then. [laughter]

OH: No.

OH: (24:05) Did your parents visit other people regularly?

IZ: Oh, yes, yes. They had a whole lot of Italian friends.

OH: Yes? Do you remember the names?

IZ: Quite a lot. There used to be the Ballestrin's, the Tonellato, there used to be the Berno's. Did I say the Santin's. Oh they knew quite a lot of people, the Recchi.

OH: Because the Recchi family lived close? What do you remember about the Recchi family? Who do you remember in that family?

IZ: I remember all the family. Lidia, the mother, Vincenzo the severe father and their children Fulvio and Annunziata. I remember them well because I use to play with them and go over to watch TV since we didn't have one. The first thing that comes into my mind were the big bowls of Spaghetti with tomato sauce that Lidia use to prepare for us. The best I had ever eaten. When I went to visit them in Italy (they also came back to Italy) at Rimini, Lidia prepared me the same spaghetti with tomato sauce. Delicious!

OH: They used to grow celery?

IZ: Right across the road, yes.

OH: Did they... because you're talking about the *veneti* mainly, did they walk there? Or drive?

IZ: No, we used to go by foot. Yes. If it was a bit further on, we used to go by car.

OH: So your parents didn't own a car?

IZ: No, in the first years, no. *Zio* Silvano, he brought an Italian car, I don't remember the name of the car?

OH: Was it the Simca?

IZ: Simca, he bought a Simca and he took it to Australia and after a few years, he probably bought himself another car and Dad bought it from him, bought the Simca from him. So we used to go out probably to the beach or to town because he used to drive.

OH: Yeah.

OH:(25:25) What kind of occasions were important for your family? Like were birthday parties

IZ: Weddings, birthday parties. I know we used to go to Campbelltown. What was there at Campbelltown? There used to be a big church at Campbelltown, a big feast.

OH: Yeah and a lot of Italians used...

IZ: Used to go there.

OH: I think there were some priests who were Italians.

IZ: Yes and then they used to go to the Veneto Club with *zio* Silvano, he was the one who used to go often so he took us too.

OH: Yeah. And if you think about weddings, do you remember where they were, like the receptions, where they were held?

IZ: No I don't remember that. I remember the weddings but I don't remember where they were held. No.

OH: Yeah.

OH:(26:15) Now we're going to talk about your parents and the market gardens. And if you can just explain exactly where your parents' market garden was, that would be helpful.

IZ: Well, we used to live right Valetta Road, the corner of Valetta Road and ---Findon Road. And they used to have a piece of land right there in the corner.

OH: Do you know how many glasshouses they would have had? Roughly?

IZ: Oh, 20. I'm not sure.

OH: When you were growing up, if you think back to sometime when you there, you might have been 10 or 12, what did the area look like around where you lived?

IZ: Oh, everybody was cultivating the land. There wasn't so many houses then. Because when I went back in 2000 to see Australia, I couldn't recognise it any more. There was all houses everywhere. No, there was a whole lot of land. We were circled by land, let's say.

OH: Do you remember if there were high bushes and things like that between people's properties?

IZ: Yes, there was a big bush behind us because, not very further down, there used to be the River Torrens passing by and there used to be a big, big bush there.

OH: Yeah.

OH:(27:49)And you had some neighbours, who were your neighbours?

IZ: Our next door neighbours? There used to be a Chinese family, there used to be the Westies,⁷ there used to be the Berno's. Then in front, we used to have the Recchi and I can't remember other families. Yes.

OH: You were saying earlier about the Chinese family that you used to go and visit them.

IZ: Yes, we used to go there sometimes, not my parents, probably us children they probably had some children too.

OH: What do you remember about them?

IZ: Don't remember very much really. I remember they had this poor shed where they lived in there, they used to cook. They had some children, I think, yes, because one became a doctor.

OH: Interesting.

OH:(28:43) What vegetables did your parents grow? What do you remember?

IZ: They used to grow tomatoes, tomatoes, yes. I love tomatoes. [laughs]

OH: Yeah. Did they also grow beans underneath the tomatoes?

IZ: No. But I remember no, tomatoes. And salad, too, I think.

OH: They grew salad?

IZ: Yes, yes.

OH: So the salad would have been outside?

IZ: Outside, yes.

⁷ “The Westies” were the West family who had land on Valetta Road and grew mainly celery

OH: Where did they sell the vegetables? Do you remember?

IZ: In the market at Adelaide. They used to come and pick it up and used to sell it to the Adelaide market.

OH: How was your mother involved in the market garden?

IZ: Oh, she worked a lot. The whole family worked a lot. Not that we got other people to help us. Mum used to work a lot because the glasshouses were made like a triangle. So, on the higher part, my father used to work, and the lower part, my mother and the lowest, us because we had to put the strings of, the strings to ---

OH: To get the tomatoes growing up?

IZ: Growing up. So we used to put those up.

OH: And so you had some jobs?

IZ: We had jobs, take out the buckets full of tomatoes.

OH: On --- I haven't asked you this... But do you know if your father and mother bought that land?

IZ: Yes, they bought it. It was theirs, yes

OH: On the land there was the house, there was the glasshouses. Was there a shed or sheds for packing?

IZ: Yes, there was a big shed where they, you had to divide the tomatoes, big tomatoes, small tomatoes, those made badly, you had to divide them so they had all these crates where they used to put in the tomatoes. Yes.

OH: And get them ready for...?

IZ: To take them to the market. And they used to come and pick them up.

OH: Yeah. When did you do your jobs for the market garden?

IZ: When?

OH: Like was it before school or?

IZ: No, no I think, after school, yes, after school. After school or on holidays.

OH: Because you were too busy going to Mass before school, before school. [laughter]

(31:06) Do you know if there were other kids that you were friendly with from other market garden families?

IZ: Yes, I was friends with the Berno's, with the kids, I was friends with the Santin's, Diana Santin. They used to grow cucumbers, I remember that we used to go to rob, the kids, me and her and other kids, we used to go and rob the cucumbers while they were small.

OH: And sweet?

IZ: And her grandfather used to run after us [laughs] and tell us off. I used to remember that, yes. And then we used to go to the Recchi. There used to be other kids there to eat the celery.

OH: So they were other families?

IZ: Yes, there were other families, yes. They were nearly all gardeners around there.

OH: Do you remember if families helped each other out on the gardens?

IZ: Yes. No not really not that they didn't want but everyone was busy.

OH: And their own gardens.

IZ: Probably my uncle that used to work in the factory at Holden's probably used to give us a hand when we needed a hand. Or my *zio* Bruno⁸ that didn't have work on the land. But the other gardeners, you know, you couldn't ask *them* they were busy for themselves. So how could you ask them to come over my place? I never seen other gardeners there helping.

OH: Did your parents have much equipment for the market gardens? Like would they have had a little tractor or anything like that or was it mainly....?

IZ: I think it was mainly by hand. I don't remember there was tractors. They probably had the pump because they used to --- I don't know but they used to pump the tomatoes ---

⁸ *zio* Bruno Basso was married to Irene's Auntie Bruna, her mother's sister

OH: For chemicals, you mean?

IZ: I think so, yes.

OH: And the water, did you have a bore?

IZ: We had a tank.

OH: Oh, okay.

IZ: I remember there used to be a big tank [laughs] behind.

OH: (33:09) I was going to ask you about your two aunties and their families. So they lived quite close?

IZ: Yes, they were on Frogmore Road, quite close.

OH: Can you remind me the names of those two families.

IZ: There used to be my mother's sister, Gilda Simeoni that married Romeo Favaro. But he didn't used to work the land.

OH: Where did he work?

IZ: I don't know if he worked at Holden's or other places. And then there was another sister, Bruna, Bruna Simeoni that married Bruno Basso. They used to have a piece of land too. But even my uncle used to work in a factory. Probably he was the one that used to work at Holden's, I don't remember really.

OH: But they weren't market gardeners?

IZ: No not really market gardeners just had a small garden for themselves I think.

OH: (34:07) And we've talked about your neighbours but do you remember the sorts of vegetables that other families were grown? Were they different? Like you've talked about the Santin's growing cucumbers?

IZ: They probably had tomatoes too. The Recchi used to have big celeries. I don't remember the vegetables ... but the salad.

OH: And celery was a big crop?

IZ: Oh they were huge, yes.

OH: (34:36) In the Veneto community in Adelaide who would have been the close friends of your parents, who would they have seen most?

IZ: --- The Santin's, the Tonellato's ---

OH: All of those

IZ: All of them, I could see them close to everybody. They were preferred -*zio* Silvano -- he was the brother, but they were friends with everybody. All the *veneto*'s used to meet together.

OH: It seems like they were a very close community

IZ: Yes and all these *veneti*, they all lived nearly in the same part of Italy, the same. They used to live always near Riese, some from Spineda, some from San Vito, some from Vallà, all around.

OH: Who came from Spineda?

IZ: I don't remember who came, somebody came, I don't remember their name.

OH: What was the other area, Vallà and...?

IZ: Valla'.

OH: And what was the other area?

IZ: San Vito, Altivole, the Santins from Caselle di Altivole

OH: I'm interested because I know people who came from Riese, from Vallà...

IZ: Castello di Godego,

OH: Yes.

IZ: they were all around the same area so you know, when they used to meet, they used to say "Where

do you come from?" You can imagine... [laughs]

OH: Yes, they would put the bonds even more closely, yeah.

IZ: Yes.

OH: So for your parents, the Veneto community was very important?

IZ: Yes, certainly. That's why they never had to learn English. [laughs]

OH: Did your parents not learn much English?

IZ: No, no not at all, nothing at all, Just what's necessary to go for shopping because when they used to the doctor either me or my sister used to go along as an interpreter. --- No, no they never learnt English.

OH: What about the business work? Like, who, you know, did all the finances and things like that? Did your father do that?

IZ: My sister, she used to help them.

OH: I can understand why people in a closed community, they don't need to be going out.

IZ: No.

OH: No, no, it's interesting.

(37:04) We've talked about you going to primary school, can you just tell me the name of that school?

IZ: The primary? Saint Joseph's school.

OH: And it was at... Flinders Park?

IZ: Flinders Park.

OH: And you told me how you used to get to school, so you didn't go by car?

[laughter]

IZ: No. Always by foot and while I was walking, I'd pick up somebody else, the Mercurio's and --- the other kids. I remember we were five or six, we used to go along, along Findon Road and then in front of the Adami's there used to be a road that used to turn to your right, you'd go further up and then you turn to your left and the school was there, I don't remember the road though, it used to be.

OH: Yes, when we look at the map, [indicating the map] it's quite a decent distance.

IZ: No, no, it was... To me it seemed a long walk, [laughs] a really long walk.

OH: But I think it's quite a walk, you know. I imagine it must have been half an hour.

IZ: Half an hour? I don't remember really.

OH: And what time was Mass when you were going to Mass?

IZ: Oh probably around 7:30, 7:00, 7:30. Because what time does school start?

OH: 8:30.

IZ: 8:30.

OH: Wow! Did other kids do that too?

IZ: Well, church, had lots of kids there.

OH: All saving black babies.

IZ: yes.

[laughter]

IZ: It was funny.

OH: What did you enjoy about school?

IZ: Oh, the tuckshop.

[laughter]

The tuckshop.

OH: Oh so you didn't take your lunch?

IZ: No, I used to take my lunch to be at the tuckshop to sell. You know, you used to have a tuckshop, you used to sell the sweets or so because every once in a while a sweet used to go in your pocket.

[laughter]

No, we used to take our lunch.

OH: And what you would have taken for lunch?

IZ: Oh, egg sandwich, onion sandwich, tuna sandwich, never salami. No, because you know, Italians, better not show yourself being an Italian,

OH: You don't want to smell too much?

IZ: Yes. [laughs]

OH: So when you finished at primary school, you moved to...?

IZ: Hindmarsh.

OH: And that was, we were talking earlier, I think it was called St Joseph's because there were so many of them.

IZ: I don't remember, it probably was, yes.

OH: How did you get to St Joseph's, Hindmarsh?

IZ: With the bus, we used to go

OH: So you would have gone down to Grange Road and caught the bus?

IZ: Yes, I think it was Grange Road, yes.

OH: And how many years did you have at Hindmarsh?

IZ: Three years, three years at Hindmarsh because then I left for Italy.

OH: What kinds of subjects did you study in high school at St Joseph's? What subjects did you like best?

IZ: If I remember well, we used to have History, English, Maths, Geography, French, Religion, Shorthand, Typing and maybe other subjects. I used to love typing and shorthand. Typing was a great help when I got to Italy, since I was the fastest typewriter in the school. Unfortunately shorthand didn't help me since I studied the Pitman shorthand and it was different from the Italian shorthand.

OH: Yeah. And as you were getting older, what sort of things did you do with friends?

IZ: Oh no, we didn't go out with friends. Always with the parents. I remember just once, that I went to the Show,⁹ you remember in town there used to be the Show in November. This was the year before leaving for Australia, for Italy but they let me go with Diane Santin and a cousin. We went to the Show. It was the first time, by myself. Always with my parents.

OH: So they were very protective?

IZ: But everybody used to go around with their parents. I don't know the Australians kids, I'm talking about the Italian kids. Nobody, where could the kids go? They used to go out with the parents.

OH: Yeah, I guess we're talking about a girl who was only 15 when she left Australia.

IZ: Yes, yes.

OH: But did you go out with your parents say to the beach or things like that?

IZ: Yes, to the beach, yes always with them.

OH: Which beach did you go to?

IZ: We always used to go to the Grange beach, it was the nearest one, sometimes to Henley but always the Grange beach.

OH: And where were other families there?

IZ: Oh, it was full of Italians under the bridge.

[laughter]

If you go there it was full of Italians all under the bridge. At least, those years because --- when I there lately back, there was nobody there. Nobody goes to the beach. At least at Grange. At Henley, yes.

OH: Henley is quite a popular...

IZ: Yes, but at Grange, there was nobody, really.

OH: Would you have ever gone to see films with your parents?

⁹ The Royal Show was held once year in Adelaide

IZ: Yes, we used to go to the Drive In not with my parents, I use to go with my sister because my sister had a boyfriend and I had to keep an eye on her. [laughs] So we used to go to the Drive In. [laughs] They used to sit at the back and I used to be at the front.

[laughter]

OH: So how did your sister ... how was it possible for your sister to have a boyfriend if your parents weren't happy for her to be going out? How did they meet?

IZ: Probably at a party or there always used to be a feast at the church or something. I don't remember how they met. Or probably passing a word, you know. That there's an Italian boy, can he come and see you? Like that.

OH: And his family was from the Veneto? Mazzarolo?

IZ: Yes, yes, he was from Riese, from Riese.

OH: Oh.

IZ: Better than that?

OH: Your parents couldn't have hoped for better.

IZ: For better. Oh, that's interesting, isn't it?

[laughter]

OH: Why do you think your parents were happy that was marrying a boy from Riese?

IZ: Mainly because he was an Italian, he was a "Veneto", he was from Riese and then they knew his parents in Italy! Better than that!

OH: And they married young?

IZ: I think Terry was 18 or 19. But it's not young because those years, they used to get married at that age. If you think 1960s, they used to get married 18 or 19, even here in Italy. When I got married I got married 23 years old, I was rather old. [laughs]

OH: Really?

IZ: Because everybody used to get married around 18, 19, 20.

OH: Oh, gee.

OH: (43:07) I was going to ask you about naturalisation and whether you know if your parents became naturalised as Australians?

IZ: No, no, my parents, no.

OH: Do you know why?

IZ: Because probably Dad knew he was going to come back to Italy. His intention was to go there, make a few money, come back and make his house, you know. He didn't, never wanted to stay there to Australia.

OH: And that would have pleased your mother, at the time?

IZ: Oh, she was happy about it, you know about coming back to... it was sad for my sister. She was hoping to take her along too. But you know, she had to decide because either she would have lost me too because I was 15, if she waited a few years, she would have lost me too. So she said it was better we go now. So she was rather happy to come back to Italy.

OH: Yeah. What about you? have you got dual citizenship?

IZ: I've got Italian and Australian citizenship because I was born there, and then when you come here, I was born from Italian parents, I'm always Italian.

OH: And you told me an interesting thing about making an application for your daughter and your son?

IZ: For both of them, I've already done it for my daughter, I haven't sent it ahead yet because now there is a crisis in work. It's not for her but for her son. He's still small but she said "Mum, it's getting bad here in Italy. It's better that you know that you get my citizenship in Australia and then I'll make it for my son. Because you never know how it's going to go on later."

OH: It's like the old days in some ways.

IZ: They're getting back to the old days, I was thinking about it, thinking back to the old days.

OH: (45:09) I'm going to ask you now about your parents making that decision to come back to Italy in 1967. In 1967 what was the situation here in Italy?

IZ: It was the best years in Italy. There was work, no there was money, it was getting very... it was the best years. Because after the War, Italy started to become, let's say healthy. And so it was one of the best years until '80, '85 and things started to get bad again.

OH: So, they were coming back at a time where it was possible for them to make a start again?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Did they have to buy a house here or land?

IZ: Dad came here three years before coming here in 1964 because his parents told him there's a house, they were selling a house here at Riese, if you want to come and see it. So he came here and saw it and he says: "Yes, I'm going to buy it." And so --- they bought it. So when we came here, we bought the house, the house was already bought but we lived over our grandparents because they fixed it up, it was still to be fixed up.

OH: Oh, did the house have land with it?

IZ: Yes, they had a piece of land, yes.

OH: And your parents, at that time, were they still wanting to work?

IZ: They had to work, they had to do something [laughs] So they got an animal, a cow, a veal just to sell the milk, some oaks, some piece, just to live.

OH: yeah. And who were the family who were closest to your family when you came back? So it would have been your father's parents?

IZ: No they were dead. It was my mother's father that was alive and he had a brother here. Dad had some sisters here. No they had quite a few relations here.

OH: So that would have helped them?

IZ: Yes, that helped.

OH: (47:34) I want to know how you felt about leaving Adelaide and Australia at 15.

IZ: Well, when they told me, I was rather happy because I'm going to Venice.

[laughter]

IZ: And then Dad said, you know, we're going to live near *a carabinieri*, how do you say *carabinieri*, the police.

OH: The police?

IZ: Near a police station, so you know, when you're 15, you're thinking all these beautiful police.

[laughter]

IZ: So I was happy. You know when I --- When I really realised that I was leaving Australia was when I got on the ship, when the ship was leaving the port. So I realised. "I said: oh my God.", I said. "I'm not going to come back any more. Where am I going?" That was --- yeah,

OH: The reality?

IZ: Yes, that was a big *colpo*.

OH: Yeah, a big sort of strike¹⁰ for you.

IZ: Yes, that was a strike for me. And then when I got here, it was beautiful straight away but then when I had to study, because my Italian, as I told you, was full of dialect, of English and Mum wanted me to study, to have a good work so she said, you know, you have to learn Italian, you can't speak English and not know Italian. So they put me in with the small children. So you can imagine that I was big, tall and rather healthy [laughs] with these small children. So there I started, you know. It was terrible for me. And then they came here with another mentality, they came here with a mentality as when they left for

¹⁰ It was a big blow, something that really affected Irene

Australia. So I wasn't allowed to go anywhere. I had to go with, always with them out, never with my friends. So it was rather hard, it was very hard for me.

OH: So you didn't have independence?

IZ: No, not at all.

OH: It would have taken a while to make friends?

IZ: Well, I was lucky I had some cousins. So with the cousins I made friends with other people, yes. Then when I went to school, I met a Canadian girl so we speak English, you know, that was good for me. [laughs]

OH: What was the Canadian girl doing here?

IZ: Oh, she was always... her parents emigrated from Canada

OH: Were they Italian?

IZ: Always from Riese, yes.

OH: Oh, how interesting.

IZ: Mmnn, yes, she used to speak English so we had a good, you know, a nice time.

OH: (50:03) What, if you can remember, what did you miss most from your life in Adelaide?

IZ: --- --- [sighs] I don't know. Everything. I--- missed everything even if I had, you know I didn't have a big life, who knows what, my friends, the sports, Everything. Because at least I used to go to school but then on Saturdays there was sports day. We used to go play basketball because I was in a basketball... that was --- Everything I used to miss. Going dancing at the Veneto Club¹¹ with my parents, it was old people, you know. It was not that I had a beautiful life, going out with the girls or who knows what?

OH: But it was a different life?

IZ: It was a different life, it was different, yes.

OH: And the Veneto Club, at that time, had activities for younger people too, didn't it? --- You know, so it meant that you could go and meet other younger kids.

IZ: Yes, always with the families. It's not that you used to go in a room with other kids. [laughs] It was always with families, always together. I remember that I used to dance with people and I used to say: "Oh, they're old." They probably were 30 or 40.

[laughter]

IZ: But I learnt how to dance.

OH: Well, that was good, that was good.

We've talked about your sister, staying in Adelaide. What wast that experience like for you?

IZ: Oh, that was hard. It was hard, was hard to think, you know --- we used to speak, you know, you couldn't speak, you couldn't explain to her --- the difficulty that, you know, you had here because I understand that she had difficulty there too. She, her parents left her. It was hard for her too. So how can I tell her? She there, could say: "Well, you've got your parents, there." [laughs]

OH: Yes.

IZ: I've probably started explaining to her lately about these things.

OH: Yeah. And maybe it's easier in a way when you are older because you understand more about...

IZ: Yes, and you notice when you're older how much she misses, how much she misses to you.

OH: Yes.

IZ: Because now I would love to have my sister here and chat, you know, because I used to be rather timid, my sister used to be the one to talk a lot. And I used to be timid when I was small. But now, you know, I would need someone to, when you got problems to talk about, you know if you've got your sister...

OH: Yeah, it's important isn't it, that relationship?

IZ: Yes.

¹¹ The Club was actually the Italian Club in the city of Adelaide. The Veneto Club was built later

OH: How long was it before you saw Terry again?

IZ: Nearly 30 years. Wait a minute --- no, wait a minute. She came here after four or five years, she came here. Then, not 30 years --- can't remember. It was so many years.

OH: A really long time?

IZ: A lot of years that passed.

OH: So she came here after four or five years and then next time you saw each other when you were in...

IZ: No, she came here again when my mother was sick.

OH: Right.

IZ: That was the period that was long,

OH: Oh okay.

IZ: I don't know how many years it was, 20 or something,

OH: Wow!

IZ: It was many years. Many years.

OH: And your mother was sick for a long time?

IZ: No. She had an *aneurisma*¹² and she was, so she came here but my mother couldn't understand, you know. But then she got well. So Terry came back again another time.

OH: And at that time was your father still alive?

IZ: No, Dad was already dead.

OH: So you remember when your Mum died?

IZ: I don't remember dates...

OH: A while ago?

IZ: Dad in the 1990 and Mum, 2005 and, I don't remember, 10 or something, like that.

OH: Okay.

IZ: Not many years ago.

OH: (54:26) You keep in touch with Terry now?

IZ: Yes, with the phone. [laughs]

OH: Which is good because it is not as costly?

IZ: No, no, you just buy a card, once you couldn't. [laughs]

OH: No, it makes so easy.

54:41 You know the experience of leaving Adelaide, what were the arrangements about packing up the house and doing that kind of stuff? Do you remember?

IZ: What do you mean?

OH: Like, you know, your parents would have to pack everything up in the house to send...

IZ: They had the *baule*

OH: The big boxes? Trunks?

IZ: The trunks, they used to have them the trunks. I remember the packing, but they sold a lot of stuff too. They didn't have... Well, we just took the underwear, dresses

OH: Clothes?

IZ: Clothes, sheets, a lot of *stoffa*, material...

OH: Oh, okay.

IZ: Because there they used to have good cotton. A lot of sheets because we used to have... my sister used to work in the beginning, in a sheet factory... they used to have...

OH: Was that Actil?

IZ: No, I don't remember, no. With a 'K'.Mmnn and they used to have these cotton sheets that when you got here, you couldn't use them because they were small.

¹²The Italian word, *aneurisma* means aneurism in English

[laughter]

IZ: And they were so hard.

OH: Oh.

IZ: Oh well. No, they sold the furniture, they sold everything.

[Irene's son enters the room]

OH: We can just pause for a minute. Let's pause.

OH: (55:58) We're resuming the interview after a little pause and Irene, we were talking about your parents packing up, leaving Adelaide.

IZ: Yes, they didn't have much to package because you know, they didn't take home furniture or who knows what because they had very poor stuff there.

OH: (56:16) What about the glasshouses, what happened to them?

IZ: They sold it to another Italian man, always from Riese.

OH: And sold the house and the land?

IZ: They sold the land with the house, they probably threw the house down because they built a factory there afterwards, yes

OH: (56:37) Do you remember if there any farewell parties or things like that?

IZ: Yes, the girls I used to go school with they gave me a farewell party, a very nice farewell party. And I remember the first dress that my mother bought me. Because all my dresses were made for me by my Auntie, one of her [mother's] sisters that was a dressmaker. So I remember going to town, she bought me this beautiful dress, I thought I was a princess.

[laughter]

OH: Do you remember where you bought it?

IZ: No, I don't remember. It was one of those hippie shops.

OH: Oh, okay.

IZ: It was strange to go there with her. [laughs]

OH: And we're going to have a photo of those girls who were at your part?

IZ: Yes, I can give you a photo?

OH: Did your parents have any farewell parties?

IZ: No, no, I don't remember, no.

OH: And when you first arrived in Riese --- ?

OH: (57:36) Oh, what about the experience of being on the boat? What was that like?

IZ: Oh, it was beautiful, the ship. It was 20 days on the ship, it was a beautiful ship. It was the *Achille Lauro* that now, it doesn't exist any more. It was lovely there but I was always with my parents and I was by myself so I said, I decided, even if I was timid, I said to myself: "I have to meet other girls." And I saw there was a group of either two or three other girls. So I said: "Now I'm going to there by myself and I'm going to tell them if I can be their friends." And that's what I did. And so we used to go around everywhere on the ship. There used to be two cinemas, we used to go and see two films a day and in the evening we used to go with our parents dancing. There was the swimming pool, oh it was beautiful. It was a beautiful life on the ship.

OH: It sounds like cruise life.

IZ: I even found a boyfriend on the ship.

OH: Oh, really?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Was he Italian?

IZ: He was a sailor, yes Italian. It was an Italian ship, yes.

OH: Wow. And you were 15. Did your parents know?

IZ: No. Are you kidding?

[laughter]

IZ: Are you kidding?

OH: (58:48) Your first impressions? Like where did you arrive in Italy?

IZ: Genova.

OH: How did you get from Genova?

IZ: We were one of the last ships that passed through the Suez Canal they closed it because the war there after our ship.

OH:

IZ: I remember crossing the Suez Canal because the jeeps passed by with the soldiers, they used to leave soldiers every once in a while.

OH: Wow.

IZ: So, came through the Suez Canal, then we came to Naples, Hong Kong, Naples.

OH: How did you get from Genova to Riese?

IZ: When people used to arrive at Genova, they used to hire a bus because there used to be quite a few Italians, not all from Riese but on the way home from Genova to the Veneto, there used to be other Italians, so they hired a bus and we used to get on this bus. And auntie came to pick us up with the bus.

OH: Oh. When you arrived, what were your first impressions?

IZ: I remember the streets, they were all very small. It was strange, so strange. No, it was nice when we arrived there. [laughs] But when you had to stay here, it was a bit tough. [laughs]

OH: Yeah.

OH: (1:00:18) How many years did you study at school here?

IZ: Here, I made one year --- with the small kids always study private by another teacher. Then another three years as a secretary. I was already a secretary in Australia because when you did high school, you used to study shorthand, used to studying and everything there. So when I came here I was already in secretary. I could be a secretary when I was there.

OH: Is Shorthand the same in English and Italian?

IZ: No, it's different.

OH: I thought it would be different. So you had to learn?

IZ: Yes, but they were all surprised because I used to know the Pitman, we used to call it Pitman Shorthand. It was different from the Italian one. But when I used to tell them, you know, the teacher, she was very interested.

OH: She would have been impressed.

IZ: I was very good at typing, they wanted to send me ---- for a course or something, you know.

OH: Wow. You did one year in the primary school and?

And three years to study the secretary. It was more to learn Italian.

OH: Right. And did your parents pay for a private tutor?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Because they really wanted you to...

IZ: To go ahead with the school, yes.

OH: You must have worked very hard with your study?

IZ: Yes, of course.

OH: And then after three years, what happened?

IZ: I found a good job, as an interpreter, yes. Translating English, from English to Italian or Italian to English, yes.

OH: Where was that job?

IZ: At Castelfranco Veneto. It was a very big firm.

OH: What kind of business was it?

IZ: It was military business, yes.

OH: So did you have a security clearance?

IZ: Yes.

OH: So how old were you when you started?

IZ: [counts] --- 19, 19.

OH: And from Riese to Castelfranco, did you catch a bus to work?

IZ: No I used to go by car. The first year there used to be a friend of mine that she used to work there too, she used to pass by, she used to pick me up. And then I found, I got my money and I bought myself a car, paid it a bit at a time.

OH: A Fiat?

IZ: Certainly.

[laughter]

IZ: It had to be a Fiat. But it was a really small box, you know. [laughs]

OH: But independence?

IZ: Those years, it was independence, yes.

OH: So when you started work, did you have more independence from your family?

IZ: Yes, yes, I was 19, come on! [laughs]

OH: Yeah.

IZ: Even at 17 or 18, I could go out with the girls you know. I had a different age. But they had to come over my place: "Signora, can she come out with us?" "Mr. Nico, can she come...?" You know, always ---

OH: Very formal? Yeah.

(1:03:24) And did you know, any time from the time that you arrived here, did you ever think about returning to Adelaide?

IZ: Yes. [laughs] Not more than once. Nearly every day, every day. Oh no, it took me years. Even now, you know, it happens.

OH: That you have a strong feeling towards...?

IZ: Of course. When I went to Australia in 2000 for a visit, I was hoping that you know, that now I'm going to Australia, I hope I don't like it. I hope I come back and I'll say: "How well I stay here in Italy." I came home and it was worse than before. [laughs]

OH: Why do you think it was worse?

IZ: I don't know, it's different there. Life is different. They all seem very polite, very educated, even the children, they've got good jobs, good families and--- they all respect the laws, calm --- like that. So you think of these things you know.

OH: And you went with Giuliano in 2000?

IZ: Yes.

OH: How long did you stay?

IZ: Two months.

OH: And how long were in Adelaide?

IZ: Well, we --- travelled, we travelled quite a lot. Let's say, two weeks travelling, because two days to Canberra, two days in Melbourne, three days at Sydney. Let's say nearly 15, 17 days we travelled. Then we stayed the rest of the days at my sister's place.

OH: What were some of the biggest changes that you saw when you returned to Adelaide? Did anything surprise you?

IZ: Well the first thing was the constructions. It was all an urbanized area and no more farms existing near town. I had a hard time to see some glasshouses. The Grange beach: I was surprised to see how the beach was neglected. Nobody under the jetty (I'm joking) but nobody at the beach; probably all at Henley.

River Torrens and the paths for bicycle riding and for walking that bring you to West Beach and up to the mountains. Beautiful, a real dream. The small coloured birds at Kidman Park. I don't remember seeing them when I lived there. I could only remember the magpies.

OH: Who did you see from the Veneto community?

IZ: Everybody.

[laughter]

IZ: We went to see everybody and I took a photo of everybody. [laughs]

OH: How many kilos of photos did you?

IZ: Twenty kilos of photos.

OH: Unbelievable. [laughs]

IZ: It was strange when he opened the trolley. I said: "Oh no, what's he going to do now?" And he asked like that, put it down and said: "Okay, Let's go."

OH: This was at Customs?

IZ: Yes.

OH: [laughs]

IZ: We had to develop them there because it cost much less there, at that time.

OH: Yeah. So you would have visited your cousins, your Zampin cousins?

IZ: All my cousins, all my friends and other relations that I've got there, yes.

OH: And how was that?

IZ: Oh, it was beautiful. [laughs] It was nice, yeah.

OH: Have you seen other people who have come back to, you know Riese?

IZ: Come back to live or?

OH: To visit?

IZ: Oh, they all come to visit me. Yeah. All those that come that know, they come to visit me, yes.

OH: So you've got that link?

IZ: Yes, I've got that link.

OH: Still with people in Adelaide, like Diana?

IZ: Diana, my cousin, Cynthia, Angela. Whoever comes here, they all come to see me, yes. Aida, that came here...

OH: Aida Innocente?

IZ: No, no, the one of Recchi.

OH: Oh, Aida Valentini?

IZ: Valentini, *si*.

OH: Oh, that's lovely. Did your parents talk much about their life in Australia when they came back here, do you remember?

IZ: Yes, my mother did, my mother did, yes.

OH: And one of her sisters came back? To live here?

IZ: Came back, yes.

OH: And she would have had the experience of missing the other sister?

IZ: --- (1:07:12) Well, she had that, but Mum went back there another three or four times.

OH: To Australia?

IZ: To Australia, yes. For a trip. Then she went back for a year, to live another year there, with my father.

OH: Oh.

IZ: Oh, she used to go, she made quite a few trips.

OH: How interesting. Like that must have been important for your parents to go back and stay --- in Australia?

IZ: The year that they went there?

OH: Yes.

IZ: I don't know. It was something to do with the pension, I think, that year.

OH: And where did they live?

IZ: Over my sister's place.

OH: That would have been a good experience for them?

IZ: Well, it was a good experience for them, I don't know for my sister, how it was.

[laughter]

OH: (1:07:54) Have you kept in touch with any of the other Veneto families who lived in Adelaide and then came back to the Veneto?

IZ: Well, we meet each other. It's not that we go and see each other. The Berno's, if I see them. There's a friend of mine, Elisabeth Pastro. We often see each other. We go away for lunch or for a breakfast. Elisabeth.

OH: She's related to the Berno? Elizabeth.

IZ: That's another one. Sorry? Yes, she's related to the Berno.

OH: Yes, because the Berno's mother was a Pastro?

IZ: Yes.

OH: And another?

IZ: I've got another friend. She was born, she went to Australia for a few years, just two or three years they stayed there. And she came with me in 2000 because she said: "I want to go back, I want to see where I went to school and this and that." So she came with us. She stayed there for two weeks and she came back home. We often see each other. She's my best friend.

OH: What's her name?

IZ: Gianna, she's Carraro.

OH: That was her family name?

IZ: Yes, Carraro. They used to live on the other part of town, don't remember where, though

OH: In Adelaide?

IZ: In Adelaide.

OH: (1:09:09) How did you meet Giuliano?

IZ: Giuliano? [laughs] It's a strange story this one here, too. [laughs] Because I had another boyfriend really when I met him. And my friend, Diana Santin, came here to Italy and it was my birthday. I was giving a small birthday party. So she came over my place to greet me happy birthday. But Giuliano took her because she didn't have a car. --- And I met Giuliano but I had the other boyfriend and after a few months I left this boyfriend, and speaking with Diana or I don't remember if I wrote to her and I said: "I haven't got a boyfriend any more." So she thought straightaway because probably Giuliano told her you know, "Irene, I like Irene." So she wrote to Giuliano straightaway and she says "Listen, she's left her boyfriend, you'd better go there."

[laughter]

IZ: So he didn't have the courage to come over. So he said he used to go up and down on my street, you know hoping to see me outside and then finally a day, he had the courage, he came in and said "Oh, do you remember me?" So we started chatting and that's how we became ... [laughs]

OH: And Giuliano came from Caselle?

IZ: Caselle.

OH: And Caselle is not very far from Riese?

IZ: It's around four kilometres from Riese.

OH: Did your parents, your families know each other?

IZ: No, they used to know the people in the village, the same village.

OH: Yeah. And so where did you get married? In Riese?

IZ: At Riese, yes. You usually get married in the town that the bride comes from.

OH: Where did you live after you got married?

IZ: At Caselle.

OH: Did you live with Giuliano's mother?

IZ: Yes, I lived with Giuliano's mother and his sister.

OH: And how was that?

[laughter]

OH: *Una sfida?* A challenge.

IZ: Yes. [laughs]

OH: It must have been difficult to make that transition?

IZ: It was very hard, yes.

OH: And for how long did you live...?

IZ: Eight years.

OH: Eight?

IZ: Yes.

OH: Were the children born in that time?

IZ: Yes, they were born in that time so the house was getting to be a bit small, and we had just this part of the house but it wasn't finished. And so we had to finish it, you know, so...

OH: So, you did. And your travel to Australia and we've talked about that and the importance for you of making that connection with Adelaide. I wonder if you would go again?

IZ: Oh, certainly

OH: Yeah?

IZ: Certainly, No I would love to go again for another trip.

OH: I hope you do.

OH: (1:12:09) This is a question I always ask in interviews about people's understanding of their heritage. Do you feel Italian? Do you feel Australian?

IZ: I don't feel anything. --- I don't know what I am, you know. I don't feel Italian. I don't feel Australian. Or probably I feel more Australian but I can't pretend to be an Australian. I don't feel, you know I could even go and live in China because, you know --- I'm not --- how do you say ...?

OH: Well, it's like you haven't got your feet really strongly...

IZ: I haven't got my feet -yes, --- Instead like my husband, he's always been a Caselle, he would never move to Australia, from Caselle. He wouldn't even go to live at Riese. But you know, sometimes I feel bad. I say I would love to be like they are. I would love to say, you know, I'm Italian. So I don't feel really --- I could go and live anywhere.

OH: So do you think that is because of your experience of having the first 15 years in Australia?

IZ: Yes, it's that.

OH: And already at 15, we are, have an identity, don't we?

IZ: Yes, because I can see the difference between me and my brother. My brother was ten years when he came here. It's a difference between me and him. He doesn't miss Australia. He loves to go there but he doesn't miss it like I missed it.

OH: Has he been back to Australia?

IZ: He went once, he'll probably go next year, I think for a trip.

OH: Yeah. But ten years old, you're quite young.

IZ: Yes, he was young and then first donkey he saw passing by the street, he was all happy. [laughs]

OH: Life was... [laughter]

IZ: He got on.

OH: Do you feel *veneta*?

IZ: Now, certainly, *veneta*. But I'm not going crazy for the *veneti*.

[laughter]

OH: What did you mean when you said that weren't crazy for the *veneti*?

IZ: My mind probably went back to those years when the Veneti emigrated. The Veneti worked hard in Australia and saving all the time. The Veneti in Italy used to call these poor emigrants "gli Americani" (the Americans i.e. people full of money) and took advantage from them. Quite a few of "Americanis" were cheated by their same relations. This is one of the reasons why I'm not proud to be a Veneta. Fortunately things have changed now.

OH: Irene, I really appreciate your memories and the way you've been able to talk about life was for you in Adelaide and being part of that Veneto community. Is there anything else that you like to add, that we haven't talked about it?

IZ: Well, nothing comes into my mind at the moment. I'm sorry if my English wasn't that perfect.

[laughs]

OH: Your English is fantastic. Really, I think your English is very good. Nothing else about the Veneto community? Or the market gardens?

IZ: Nothing coming to my mind at the moment. No, can't remember anything.

OH: Well, I hope that means we covered all the things that, you know, you wanted.

IZ: Yes.

OH: I'm really happy with the information and your memories. It's great.

IZ: Thank you

OH: I really appreciate your time.

IZ: Not at all.

OH: Thank you very much, Irene.

IZ: Lots of luck.

OH: Bye bye.

Interview ends.