

Italian market gardeners oral history project

Interview OH872/1 with Giancarlo (Johnny) Marchioro

(Eleonora Marchioro, Johnny's wife, is also present and contributes occasionally)

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recorded by Madeleine Regan at Nailsworth, South Australia

on 21, 28 July and 11th August 2008

This is an interview with Giancarlo Marchioro, also known as Johnny Marchioro, recorded on 21st July in his home at Nailsworth, South Australia. Also present is Johnny's wife, Eleonora Marchioro. So, Johnny, were you born in Australia, can you tell me a little bit about your early years?

GIANCARLO: Yes, I was born in South Australia at Frogmore Road, Findon, but the hospital was at Torrensville, 17th August 1940, where I was there for nine years, in the market garden with my mother and father, that worked the glasshouses, up till 1949, and then we shifted to White Avenue, Lockleys, and we stayed there till 1965 before getting married and shifting to Port Wakefield Road, Bolivar.

And when you are a child, the first nine years at Frogmore Road, can you tell me something about the life there that you had with your family?

GIANCARLO: Well, 1945, that I remember, Dad being called up to go to the army or they were taken to Alice, he was sent to Alice Springs because of the War, I think it was 1945, stayed there for – or '44 – for one year before, the mosaic flooring company, called in that they wanted men to do cement work. And so Dad come back and worked at the Adelaide Railway Station doing – – –.

ELEONORA: Meantime your mum had to cope by herself.

GIANCARLO: Yeah, with two children, me and my brother that was two years younger. We had to milk the cow of a morning and night (laughs) – not at the age of five, but when I was seven, eight, I started milking the cow. [We'd] have our own milk and cheese and butter.

And your mum made that?

GIANCARLO: And Mum made that, yes. And I don't know what – the vegetables that we grew, how we got rid of them, but we must have had some friends that took them to market for us. And then Dad had fourteen glasshouses on the property. Then in 1947 he bought himself a new Chev truck. Before that he used to go to market with the horse and cart.

Wow.

GIANCARLO: For a few years.

And what kind of vegetables do you remember your father growing?

GIANCARLO: Tomatoes were the main vegetables and during the summer he had trombones, and I remember in summer they had a lot of trombones and a few potatoes and enough money to shift to White Avenue, Lockleys. Where at Frogmore Road we were renting, renting the land, so White Avenue we bought it freehold, and there we started working – well, when I was about fifteen I started working the land as well.

Can we go back to the Frogmore Road time and just talk a little bit about what you remember, because I understand that there were a lot of Italian families there?

GIANCARLO: Yes, there was half a dozen Italian families around the area that being small we used to go to school with them – Bruno,,, they were Adamis[?] not far from where we were living. Grade one, two and three was at the Flinders Park Primary School, first three years of schooling.

And had you learned English before you went to school?

GIANCARLO: That I remember it must have been broken English first year, but after that I don't remember having difficulties at school.

But you would have spoken Italian at home.

GIANCARLO: At home it was always Italian, yes.

And in the community that your parents belonged to?

GIANCARLO: Well, the children my age, we all started speaking in English, so that made it a little bit easier, but for the first four years where I was home all the time there was no prep or kindergarten (laughs) at the time, we just – well, we had to speak Italian all the time. Until we went to school.

Can you tell me a little bit about your parents and when they came to Australia? Maybe if you started with your dad?

GIANCARLO: Yes, with my dad, he come out he said 1927, because his friend, he had a friend that his brother was in Australia and his friend said, 'I'm going to Australia', and so my dad said, 'Oh, I'm going to come, too'. So in about six months he'd made his papers and he was on the boat as well, come to Australia. And I think started off in Hindley Street, because my auntie – no, in Currie Street, Waymouth Street – and then they come into the land, in 1930s I think my uncle was in the garden and Dad come to help, and so until 1937, Dad wanted to get married and probably letters were only written once a year, (laughs) and he wrote to Italy to his sister in Italy and said that he wanted to get married and my auntie in Italy mentioned that this young girl that was working with her, she wanted to go to Australia. Then my mother – or to be my mother –

ELEONORA: Got married.

GIANCARLO: – came to Australia and they got married by proxy. And they a good – –

ELEONORA: Mum had to go and live with his family for six months while she was in Italy.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: Soon as she got married.

GIANCARLO: Yes. She got married before, by proxy, but without seeing my father, and they lived together (laughs) for the next sixty years.

And the area in Italy that they came from?

GIANCARLO: Was Vicenza, suburb is in Monte di Malo, yes, and Mum come out in 1938 I think it must have been, '37, '38.

And how old was she?

GIANCARLO: She was about twenty-two, twenty-three.

And your dad?

GIANCARLO: Dad must have been – he was born in 1906, so [in] 1938 he was thirty-two.

And when they arrived, or when your mother arrived, your dad was already living on Frogmore Road?

GIANCARLO: Yes, with my uncle and auntie.

And were they in a house?

GIANCARLO: A tin house, yes, a tin house. Yes, they borrowed the money to make an extra room for my mother, by the Italians, they were Crottis and Bailettis, they were well-known in Adelaide.

ELEONORA: They lent him the money.

GIANCARLO: Lent him the money.

ELEONORA: Lent him the money to build an extra room for his wife.

Wow. So they lived there in that house for ---.

GIANCARLO: Until 1949.

So you grew up in that house?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

So two families living ---?

GIANCARLO: No, my auntie shifted into Pierson Street, Lockleys, after a couple of years, so I must have been two, so they must have shifted.

Can you tell me a little bit about what that are looked like, because the area we're talking about is Frogmore Road on the west?

GIANCARLO: To Grange Road, yes.

Grange Road on the north –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– Frogmore on the west or east?

GIANCARLO: That was, yes, north–south, and then there was a the River Torrens at the end of Frogmore Road, there was a wooden bridge to go across that, and there was all boxthorns to the east, was all boxthorns about twelve foot high, and we used to have a little track, dirt track, to go into next door's of a night-time. I can remember Mum going there after tea and talking with the ladies, because at that time Dad was in Alice Springs. And on our way walking to these houses she'd say, 'The moon'll see Dad in a couple of hours' time', she used to tell us, the same moon. So not every night, but we used to walk over, there used to be, say, half a kilometre of a night-time.

ELEONORA: Who did you use to go and see?

GIANCARLO: There used to be ands, they used to live in a tin house as well and they'd bought a train with all these little compartments that they – four children, three boys and a girl.

ELEONORA: Who used to live in the train?

GIANCARLO: Oh, probably the younger ones use the to live in the train, till they got married.

And in your estimation, Johnny, what size land are we talking about?

GIANCARLO: Oh, Dad had seven, eight acres where we were, and then it was divided up till Findon Road where Robinson used to have a trotting track on the corner, Grange Road and Findon Road. And I think used to be Harris Scarfe's owned the property and they leased it out to all these market gardeners in the area. They all had ten-acre allotments for a long time, and then 1950, when we'd already shifted to Lockleys, it got sold to the people that were occupying that piece of land and we missed out. (laughs).

Who went to your land when your family left?

GIANCARLO: One of the boys of the Tonellato, got married that year, so he shifted into our land and he's still living on the property.

ELEONORA: The family.

GIANCARLO: The family, yes. He's passed away now. But he continued market gardening –

ELEONORA: His wife's still alive.

GIANCARLO: – market gardening until seven or eight years ago, ten years ago. Yes. And that was a dead-end road, it was only asphalt up to our property and then there was just a track that went into the river. Valetta Road, that's a main road now, wasn't even there (laughs) then, back in the '40s, it was a track but not a proper road.

And I've seen some of the photos where the separation between the owners was with bamboo.

GIANCARLO: Bamboos and boxthorns, yes. And that was the separations.

And, Johnny, in 1950 when your family moved to Lockleys, can you tell me something about your memory of that?

GIANCARLO: Well, there I was a little bit older so I can remember a little bit better, that we shifted fourteen glasshouses from Findon to White Avenue, and there we had three

acres – there was a five-acre block, but my auntie that had lost my uncle wanted some land, too, so Dad let her buy two acres and we had three acres, and then the next-door had another five acres on the top, next door, because that land that we were on was about a metre higher than the rest of the area, because it was taken out in the '20s when the River Torrens was cleaned out, and so we had a metre of topsoil, so it was good for gardening. Right on the river, we pumped out the water out of the river with a motor for all our glasshouses. And we worked until I got to sixteen and then every year we bought another couple of glasshouses until we had twenty-one glasshouses on the property and worked them. And Dad and myself at the time we used to go to the market and sell our own vegetables every morning.

That was the East End Market.

GIANCARLO: At the East End Market, yes. But then it was three o'clock in the morning and come back home and start working again.

How many days in the week would you go to market?

GIANCARLO: Well, summertime or since September till February, be three times a week, up at three o'clock in the morning. And the East End Market was good then because the growers had to park outside on the road on the Rundle Street and East terrace, and the shopkeepers account buy off of you until the siren used to go and then we'd all rush in, get our spots, and the shopkeepers come and buy off of us then. But we weren't allowed to deliver until about six o'clock in the morning where the shopkeepers use the to come and pick up their vegetables, until they changed the law that we had to deliver the vegetables. It made it harder for us. Plus growing the vegetables we had to deliver it to them, so it made it a bit harder.

ELEONORA: What was it that you used to grow at Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Oh, at Lockleys we had like beetroots, onions, bunched onions, because our next-door neighbour had a lot of bunched onions and he'd give us a lot of plants for ourselves because at times I used to help him, Saturdays and Sundays I'd help him, so to repay me he'd give us some onion plants for us to grow. And they was a hard job because you had to put them in one by one and first you had to go with the horse to make the furrows and then we had to rake them to make it nice and fine and then we'd plant the onion on top. And (laughs) then we'd start picking in September and pick the larger ones and every morning you'd have to pick those of the right size and take them

out onto the track with a hose and wash them one side and then the other side, and then put them on the truck and get them ready for market.

And did you group them, did you bunch them?

GIANCARLO: You put them in fives, yes. And then we had beetroot to do the same thing, but then beetroot was sown into the rows, and then with had to thin them out, go down on your hands and knees and thin them out.

Where did you get your seed from?

GIANCARLO: At the market there used to be Holbrook's & Son, and fruit growers, but mainly Holbrook's, we used to buy off of him because he'd come around of a three o'clock before market start and with his little book and go around to all the growers and ask them if they wanted manure and string and all garden materials, you know. Every morning he'd be there, the old Mr Holbrook come along with his pencil and pad. And then after market at eight o'clock they'd come out to deliver, put it on your truck before you go home.

Ah, so you got your seeds that way.

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes.

And what did you grow in the glasshouses then?

GIANCARLO: Well, in the glasshouses mainly tomatoes. We used to make our own seed by at the end of the season squashing our tomatoes, our nice – we tried to pick the perfect ones – squash them; and with the rest of the tomato we'd make sauce; and make our seeds and dry it off and ready to plant in January, in February, sow it and start off again.

And what varieties do you remember?

GIANCARLO: Well, that was a Chinese variety, they used to say. It wasn't a hybrid seed because you could make it yourself. And it used to be a semi-dwarf and it used to be a flat tomato where there used to be some crinkly ones and they were sold at half price. You used to have your customers that wanted only the cheaper variety, and you knew who they were so you'd keep them to a side for them shopkeepers, and the better shopkeepers'd buy the first-class tomato. And that's what we done for a long time.

And twenty-one glasshouses, that's so many.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: And no tractors.

No tractors.

GIANCARLO: No, no Dad never did have a tractor at the time.

Would it be possible to describe what an average day would have been – say, I know it would depend on what season, but maybe if you chose a busy season and describe – – –.

GIANCARLO: Busy season, Mum and Dad and myself would have to start at six and finish at six and not much time for stopping or anything like that, you know? But it was long hours – that's without going to market, market days was three o'clock.

ELEONORA: But he used to deliver even at the Central Market Thursday night, he used to take – – –.

GIANCARLO: Of a Thursday night we used to deliver bunch stuff –

ELEONORA: In the Central Market.

GIANCARLO: – at Central Market. There used to be one good shopkeeper, Eddie Smith, he'd only take good vegetables, and he'd come around of it Friday – yes, Friday morning – the week after with a kit bag full of money, going paying all his growers. There'd be two of them: one of them with a book, writing down what you'd given him the week before, and the other one taking out, giving you the money. And that happened for I don't know how many years; it was a long time he used to come round and do that.

If you think about your days beginning at six and ending at six, can you tell me what kinds of things you were doing in that day?

GIANCARLO: Oh, well, in the morning we'd always pick our vegetables first because it'd be in the cool and you could be in the glasshouses till lunchtime, and you'd pick them and get them ready for market; and after there'd be watering or hoeing and kept going that way. And did the repairs to be done – not on machinery because there was no machines (laughs) – but on your glasshouses, and hoeing grass because with no tractors you'd have to have your gutters clean because we'd get the water out from the river and we didn't have pipes to go into all our patches of vegetables. There'd be they used to call it a gutter, you know, just a big furrow, dirt furrow, and you had to keep it clean because if it'd get clogged up with grass the water wouldn't go through. So you'd have to keep that clean. And on the pump every now and again – there used to be like a belt, about forty-foot-long belt, from the top to the bottom, and that'd slip off at times when you're looking at the water again in your glass and you saw no water. What happens, the belt's fallen off the pump, so you'd have to run down the river and put some – used

to be a bit of tar to make it stick onto your motor and that, and start off again. Lot of running.

So you were very fit.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And did you say that your mother worked with your dad?

GIANCARLO: Yes, because in the market garden by yourself you can't do much, especially in glasshouses. The ladies go quicker pruning tomatoes. (laughs)

ELEONORA: And pick beans.

GIANCARLO: And pick beans, yes, because we planted beans the second crop around. First we'd have tomato and then you put your second crop in and they'd be beans in the glasshouse. They used to take a long time to pick, used to be – we used to have a good variety of stick bean and they'd be nice and long. And you have to pick it properly to sell it, your vegetables had to be picked properly to be sold at a good price.

And you continued to work – you finished school at fifteen –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– and up began working with your dad and mum.

GIANCARLO: Yes, I had a couple of jobs in between but I wasn't very put into it because I was always thinking about Mum and Dad working by themselves. And I done a bit of shop work for six months but never put my mind to it because I was always thinking about them. And so when the time came that Dad said to work at home I jumped at the idea and I know it probably wasn't the best idea, but after that with haven't had any – since after we got married we've had a pretty good time working in the garden. So at the beginning I shouldn't have, but after that I don't find any regrets in working the land.

Why do you say that maybe you shouldn't have?

GIANCARLO: Oh, well, it would have been a lot easier to have an office job or (laughs) other jobs. We worked hard in the land, but on the long run it paid off for us.

When you were a young man you played football.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Dad never stopped me from playing sport. At school I was captain of the cricket team and the football team at thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, my last year at school, and then decided to play football for West Torrens and winning the McCallum

Medal in 1957, '59 I played my first league game for West Torrens and till '63, then I wasn't quite good enough, so (laughs) played a couple of years in the country and '65 got married and that was the end of my football career.

How did you manage to keep football going with that very busy focus in the garden?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Well, that's why probably – when I was young I was fast, and after that, when I was nineteen, twenty, I started probably getting a little bit slower where I should have been getting faster if I had an easier job. But in the glasshouse we had to dig our – not all the time, but I remember digging some whole glasshouse with a fork, me and Dad, by hand. Like the fork was the ordinary fork they use in the garden: yes, we had to dig – – –.

How long would that take?

GIANCARLO: Oh, it'd take you three hours.

Two men.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Yes, because it was a hundred and twelve foot long and you had to dig all of it, it was fifteen foot wide and a hundred and twelve foot long. So you didn't have time to say, 'Oh, I'm tired'. (laughs)

So that's half a day.

GIANCARLO: Oh, you don't get up early. You're five o'clock until nine o'clock, then you had to level it off, too; you just couldn't leave big lumps on there. And in the later years, to drill our rows, I'd pull it with a rope and Dad'd hold this little scarifier and we'd do the rows in the glasshouses, up and down, up and down. (laughs) So that'd keep you fit, but probably didn't keep your muscles for your football career properly, you know, they'd keep them strong but not elastic as they should be. So I had nearly ten years of good football career.

ELEONORA: Do you reckon?

GIANCARLO: In the juniors and a couple of years in the A grade.

So how was your week, then, like how did you organise time?

GIANCARLO: Well, I used to throw everything down at about four o'clock Tuesdays and Thursdays and play Saturdays, so a little bit of the work got left for my father and mother to do extra. And for a while that's what it was, you know. Probably work a little bit harder when I wasn't at the football to make up time, because the vegetables still had

to get into the market. And at the time there was the captain, old captain of West Torrens, Bob Hank, he was in the market garden too, so he said his brothers used to do a little bit extra, so somebody has to do a bit extra when they're not there.

And did your brother work ---?

GIANCARLO: No, my brother at the age of ten got polio and so for six months he was in hospital and sick, but he was –

ELEONORA: He was in isolation.

GIANCARLO: – in isolation there at Northfield for three months. But he was strong, too: instead of being tied up he was always on the loose, and after one year he was back at school. And he done carpentry, so he done – there used to be there at Torrensville Carpenter & Suttons Furniture.

ELEONORA: He wouldn't have been able to work the garden because he had the polio ---.

GIANCARLO: Yes, and three acres, we had three acres, there probably wasn't enough land for the four of us. So he did that and he done a carpentry job until he got married, and he worked on that bridge on the Findon Road, there was the bridge in between Rowells Road and Findon Road – I think they must have fixed it, they done a new bridge in 1966, '67 – and he fell and broke his leg, and so his father-in-law told him to work with him at the Barbecue Inn in Hindley Street.

ELEONORA: Because he owned it.

GIANCARLO: Because he owned that Barbecue – and he's still got his own barbecue shop down Jetty Road at the moment. So that was the end of carpentry for my brother.

And going back to White Avenue and the time that you were growing up there and living and working, can you tell me what it looked like, what White Avenue ---?

GIANCARLO: We, White Avenue had from Pierson Street or halfway up Pierson Street to the end of White Avenue there was a row of bamboos there as well to separate little properties. On one side there was bamboos, on the other side there was lemon trees. Yes, all empty, no houses there. In White Avenue we had the first – '49 till '55, so for five years we were in a tin house, big shed sort of thing.

Cement floor?

GIANCARLO: Two rooms they put timber on the floor and two – kitchen and that – there was bricks laid down flat. And we lived there for five years. And then Dad built the new house, brick house, on the property.

He built it himself?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

As well as doing the garden?

GIANCARLO: Well, subcontracted, yes, because we were still living in the tin house until – it was right next door – until we pulled down the tin house and got left with a brick house, that's still standing.

And you were almost at the end of White Avenue.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And if you think about White Avenue going south to Henley Beach Road –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– were there many houses or was it all market garden?

GIANCARLO: There was all market gardening there, 1949, '50. Yes. Not up till Henley Beach Road, but five hundred metres before Henley Beach Road, there was a few houses there, but there was still market gardeners back then. They used to grow even outside tomatoes, them years, with sticks.

ELEONORA: We used to grow – – –.

GIANCARLO: Well, there was Huelins and Frys and who else was there? used to have potatoes and onions on his. And then 1960 Baulderstone's bought a lot of land there where John Martin's have got their bulk store now, and for ten years they had cabbages and celery and cauliflowers, and they had about fifty shopkeepers that used to come there Tuesdays and Thursdays and pick up vegetables, used to pick it up at home. And all those that used to be – they used to call them hawkers at the time because they used to go from house to house selling their vegetables with their truck covered over, and for about ten years they sold all their vegetables there. And he wanted some of our vegetables so we'd give it to him as well. Some would go into market but a little bit went to this Baulderstone, Charlie Baulderstone.

And in that area, did most people grow the same kind of vegetables?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes.

Seasonal?

GIANCARLO: Yes, glasshouse. But back then a lot of them that didn't go to market used to send their tomatoes to Melbourne, so they'd pack them up and they'd have an agent that you could just put a stamp on and take it to the Mile End railway station and they'd go to Melbourne. Well, Dad was always lucky that we always sold most of ours here at the East End Market. But a lot of growers that grew tomatoes sent them all to Melbourne, because the Adelaide market wasn't big enough for all the growers that were here. And even the celery, those that – even Findon Road they used to grow a lot of celery, they used to send it all to Melbourne then. Now Melbourne sends it to Adelaide.
(laughs)

And was it the same kind of money, if you sent it to Melbourne? Or I guess you were paying extra costs.

GIANCARLO: You'd have to pay extra for cartage and new boxes and lids and they had to be rowed and graded, you had to pack them as well, where here you'd just put them into the box and as long as the box was full the shopkeepers were happy.

Are you talking about the half-cases?

GIANCARLO: Half-case, the wooden half-case. Used to be twenty-four pounds at the time – they used to call it in pound weights – used to be twenty-four, twenty-five pounds. Those that probably wanted to sell their tomatoes more they used to put extra, (laughs) so the shopkeeper'd see, 'Oh, there'll be extra tomatoes in that box', so they knew what they were doing, you know.

And do you remember how much it would cost to sell or buy a box?

GIANCARLO: Oh, in the beginning they were pounds, even if you could get a pound, twenty-four shillings, twenty, thirty shillings, that was good money then because the empty box you used to buy them second-hand from the shopkeepers, used to give them back tuppence or threepence. Yes. The pound notes were then till 1967, so even beans you used to get thirty shillings a dozen, used to be in bags, used to weigh them up in like ten-kilo or twenty-four pounds, and that was good money at the time. Where now, still getting two dollars a kilo, three dollars a kilo for tomatoes where it's ten kilos it's not too good. A lot of expenses have gone up now.

But yes, all back in the '40s where Dad had twelve, fourteen glasshouses, he could make a living with the whole family. Now you need thirty glasshouses to make a living.

I remember you telling me a story about your parents, how they had made some good money when they were living at Findon and something dramatic happen to that money. Can you tell that story?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Dad had made enough money to buy himself a truck, but before that in 1945 he bought a second-hand one that was breaking down all the time and he wanted a new truck, and he had three hundred pounds – don't know where, under the bed somewhere – and my uncle was sick, so it was 1945, he used to go and see my auntie from Frogmore Road to Pierson Street that used to be a couple of kilometres away, of a night-time after work he used to go and see my auntie that had three daughters, and come home and the house was all upside-down and they said, 'Oh, thieves, the thieves', and being small I did not know what thieves were – (laughs) but yes, he looked for his money and it was all gone. So that was the end, so they had to wait a bit more longer time to buy his new truck. That's why Mum didn't like to live at Frogmore Road any more, because of that, and the first chance that Dad got to buy his own land he shifted.

And what would you say that you learned from your parents, Johnny?

GIANCARLO: Well, from my parents I've learnt that they've been honest and they've been well-respected by all the Italians at Lockleys, I don't think Mum and Dad had many bad words with any of their friends. And I tried to do the same, and lucky to get married in 1965.

And your parents liked your wife?

GIANCARLO: Probably did. (laughter)

But you would have learned a lot about hard work, too.

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, hard work never bothered me. And then, because when I took off and my dad helped me to shift the glasshouses, I started off with fourteen and every year we put on two till I got to twenty-one glasshouses at Bolivar, and yes, our summertime was putting up glasshouses and shifting, because the side rows were only four foot high and so every year we'd try to lift them up to at least five or six foot high so we could get in with a tractor proper and do it easier work. When I got to Bolivar I got myself a tractor and a rotary hoe and it was a little bit easier. But we still had – every tomato plant that you have to put in the soil you have to look after it every week for three months. And then what I found out by going to market myself with the vegetables, if you had good quality, you never had any trouble selling it, and that's what I found by going to market for the last thirty years. You have your same customers and

not to put rubbish down the bottom because the next day they'd give it back. So we never did any of that.

So quality was ---.

GIANCARLO: The quality, yes. And now that I've retired I look at the fruit shops and they've got these flat beans and I think to myself, 'Jingers, I couldn't sell them if I had to sell them beans in the market myself the way they are, presented at the time, well, they're not like now'. But yes, we had – how many years, '65 to ---.

ELEONORA: Thirty-eight years for sure for working.

GIANCARLO: Yes, thirty-eight, forty years, in the glasshouses.

ELEONORA: It's only the last three or four years that we slow down, we've stopped.

So you got married in 1965.

GIANCARLO: '65, yes.

And you immediately –

GIANCARLO: '66 we started working at Bolivar.

At Bolivar.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

So your dad helped you move the glasshouses.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And you had a new house.

GIANCARLO: Yes, we put up a new house.

ELEONORA: Had a new house with nothing on the floor, no television, we were still happy. We had a new baby straight away. (laughs)

GIANCARLO: Yes. That made it a little bit harder, for the first year. We were still learning how to live by ourselves for the first year, but after that we soon ---.

ELEONORA: Well, how many months before you collected any money?

GIANCARLO: Well, when you plant stuff you can't collect straight away, so from January we never collected till August because –

ELEONORA: First year.

GIANCARLO: – by the time I put the glasshouses in and put our first tomato plants in in May, so it took us five months to put fourteen glasshouses up ready for market, so put them in and started our first tomatoes, money was in August. But in between I was helping Dad at Lockleys and he was paying our groceries and a bit of expenses. So it's after that we started by ourselves with our own.

ELEONORA: Yes, well, the first vegetable that we grew at Bolivar wasn't very good.

GIANCARLO: Well, we had to work hard to get the ground in proper condition because it was new ground but it was very clayey and we had to put in a lot of loam and fowl manure and cow manure for the first four to five years, we put in a lot of manure.

This is into the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Into the glasshouse, yes.

And that was done manually?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, with a wheelbarrow and spread it out by hand. (laughs) Then after that I got a tractor to put in with a scoop and put seven, eight scoops of manure in, in the glasshouse. But then we still had to spread it by hand with a shovel, me and the wife had to do it.

What had the land been used for before?

GIANCARLO: It was nothing there. It was barren land, it wasn't worked at all.

And how many acres did you buy there?

GIANCARLO: Dad bought seven acres at the beginning, but then they took one acre off for the highways – two acres – so we got left with five, and so we worked five, for forty years we worked with five acres. But then after last twenty years we put some artichokes in, that comes in July, August, September. But the first years we used to plant a few cabbages because I'd sell them at the market with my tomatoes and beans –

ELEONORA: That was outside.

GIANCARLO: – outside, yes – and then we used to have broccoli, just to keep my shopkeepers going, and zucchinis, plant zucchinis for a long time as well. [When] they were in season you have to cut them every day because you had to have them the right size, because if you had any that'd get left behind they'd go over size and they weren't any good. So the more harder you worked and kept to the right size the less wastage you have, and so that's where you made a bit of profit, you know. Like even with the

tomatoes, we never threw one little tomato away because I always had a shopkeeper that wanted the small tomatoes, and sort them out properly, and they'd ask, 'How many smalls you got today?' I'd say, 'Four, five'. And greengrocer would buy the lot. So that was tomato growing.

And when you were at Bolivar, how long did it take you to female like it was a going kind of business then?

GIANCARLO: Six, seven years. To have everything really going to order, yes. But the first five years we got things going properly.

ELEONORA: Yes, but it still took you six, seven years to get a really good crop out of everything.

GIANCARLO: Yes, but in the land you can never have a perfect year because there's always ---.

ELEONORA: Oh, not perfect, but still we got better at it.

GIANCARLO: Yes, we're getting better every year.

But that's quite a long time. A lot of work.

GIANCARLO: It takes a lot of work.

ELEONORA: Oh, yes.

Like absolute focus on –

GIANCARLO: On growing.

– getting things right.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: Yes, but because I was learning because I didn't know anything about market gardening, so by then it took me five or six years to be able to help him properly.

Yes, and you had two children in that time.

ELEONORA: I had two children. (laughs)

Yes. And your dad sometimes helped you?

GIANCARLO: Oh, yes, they used to come up market days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, to help us to pick in the morning. They'd be there at six – from Lockleys they'd be there at six o'clock in the morning to pick tomatoes because in the winter we wanted to finish a bit earlier; in the summer time you had to be out of the glasshouses because of the hot

weather, you know? And so we'd have to have them picked by ten o'clock and then you'd have sorting them, getting them ready, putting them on the truck, and then you'd do a bit of watering, and then you always had beans to pick as well, always had beans, and they'd take twice as long as your tomatoes to pick your beans. Used to be in the morning from six o'clock till twelve o'clock picking beans.

ELEONORA: That was a hard job, picking beans, it's a hard job. Time, a lot, it took a long time. But my father-in-law used to like picking beans.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Mum did.

ELEONORA: Not your mum, but your dad did.

How old would your parents have been when you moved to Bolivar?

GIANCARLO: When we moved to Bolivar, '65, so Dad was sixty. Dad was sixty. And for how long, for twenty years?

ELEONORA: They used to come up all the time.

GIANCARLO: Every year for twenty years twice a week.

ELEONORA: In the winter it was only once.

GIANCARLO: Probably once in wintertime.

ELEONORA: Yes. In the summer twice a week.

GIANCARLO: Twice a week.

ELEONORA: But they used to like it.

GIANCARLO: Picking, to pick the vegetables.

And when did your dad and mum finish their business at Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Their business there finished about in 1968, '70, because by himself he couldn't do the job properly. So he got rid of the last glasshouses to me so I got twenty-one, and he finished up that way. So it would have been 1970, would have been '65.

ELEONORA: Yes, that's it.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: That he stopped.

GIANCARLO: Working for himself. But he still worked another twenty years coming up to Bolivar.

And did he sell – did your parents sell land as they finished working the business?

GIANCARLO: Yes, they had to sell their land because at the end they didn't have enough money to continue on and there was no pension money if they kept the land at the time, so they had to sell their land to keep going.

ELEONORA: So they could get a pension, otherwise they didn't have enough to live on.

GIANCARLO: It was the wrong time, really, because after that the land went up, skyrocketed. But at that moment that was the going price.

And the rest of White Avenue, when did that start changing in terms of building?

GIANCARLO: Well, when Dad sold, the next-door neighbour had already sold, he sold when we left, didn't he? He'd already, '65 our next-door neighbour that had five acres, he was the one that build all these houses, so that would have been – yes, and so we kept it until they were building houses and so that's why Dad finished up selling. When they'd finished building all the houses on that block they come over to Dad's. My auntie that had the two acres near the river, it was all taken by the council, there was no land left for them to build, so that was all taken; but they got compensated by the council. And my cousin, they still had a little bit of room to put two houses on there from two acres of land.

So things changed a lot in White Avenue in that last part of – – –.

GIANCARLO: '65–70, yes, all houses. Because even before that, they were sold before.

Yes. Well, thank you, Johnny, that's the end of this first interview. So thank you very much.

GIANCARLO: We're right.

End of interview

Interview 2 with Giancarlo (Johnny) Marchioro

Recorded by Madeleine Regan at Nailsworth, South Australia on 28 July 2008

This is a continuation of an interview with Johnny Marchioro. It's the 28th July 2008 and I'm interviewing Johnny at his home in Nailsworth. Also present is Johnny's wife, Eleonora.

Johnny, we're going to talk about the market garden area in Kidman Park. That's the right suburb area?

GIANCARLO: Well, back in 1940 I think it was named 'St James' –

St James.

GIANCARLO: – and then it got changed to Frogmore Road, Findon. But before that in a lot of papers Dad's got it's got 'St James'.

Okay. That's interesting. So we're going to talk about the 1940s. You were born in 1940 and your family left that land in 1949. And I'm just going to ask you if you can describe this area that we're talking about, the boundaries.

GIANCARLO: Well, most of the boundaries in that area were made up with boxthorns, hedges, and bamboos, from one garden to another. And our land I think it was about ten acres that Dad used to have about fourteen glasshouses on there.

And we're talking about the area that is – you know, those boundaries there?

GIANCARLO: North of the Grange Road, between Valetta Road South, Frogmore Road's west and Findon Road was to the east.

Right. And you were saying that you thought that the total size was quite large, in today's language about one and a half kilometres by about three kilometres.

GIANCARLO: Yes, that's from the Grange Road to Valetta Road, I think it would be three kilometres, and from Findon Road to Frogmore Road would be one and a half to two kilometres. So there's all vacant land between there, and I remember going to school we had to cross Findon Road. There was no roads to get onto Holbrooks Road that's further towards the city, and there was all bike tracks and just tracks to get to Holbrooks Road from Frogmore Road. Because even Frogmore Road was halfway up the road it was bitumised and then it was just ordinary dirt track up to Valetta Road. Valetta Road wasn't made properly, either, back in the '40s. So it was most of them all market gardens and I remember Dad said he used to plant even outside tomatoes and for

the frosts, there used to be a lot more frosts than years, they used to have buckets – cut up a four-gallon bucket in an angle and put it over the top of the plant and put a stick in there and put the bucket over the top of the little tomato plant for a month so it'd take off, and that was a lot of hard work, doing that.

Individual plants?

GIANCARLO: Yes, one by one. That's the stories that *he'd* told me, I don't remember seeing it. But I remember the buckets on the back of the fence because at the end of the season you'd put them up against the boxthorn fence or bamboo fence.

So each – – –.

GIANCARLO: They were a season crop, they'd be planted in September to start picking Christmastime for outside tomatoes; not in the glasshouse. Glasshouses were planted in February/March so you'd have them for winter.

And the land, you said before that it was divided up with boxthorns and with bamboos.

GIANCARLO: Bamboos, yes.

How large were the blocks of land?

GIANCARLO: Oh, most of them had about ten-acre blocks, because I remember there's about seven or eight families in that area. Dad had even a few acres of wheat because it wasn't planted all with market garden, but he did have wheat on there and there was a lot of bull ants, and near the house me and my friend, we thought we'd put in matches in the bull-ant hole and all of a sudden a big gust of wind come along and burnt all Dad's wheat that was ready to reap. (laughter) Not for himself; you know, for the horse and cow and that. And I don't remember getting spanked but my friend that was a couple of years older said that his father chased him round the table until he caught him, and he hasn't forgotten that. But I remember running with a jam tin trying to put this fire out until it got away from us, and then we were in trouble. Lucky it didn't do more damage, because the houses were only tin houses, galvanised houses, at the time; it wasn't brick houses.

Can you describe what your family's house looked like?

GIANCARLO: Yes, the kitchen was, I think, brick on the floor in the kitchen part and then timber in our bedroom – not very big bedroom – and the bit of a laundry was about twenty feet away. But then Dad had a big grapevine on the side of the house and it was made like a pergola, and that was a big area, say twenty foot, pergola with posts and the

grapevine going over the top. And even then I remember one day he come in for lunch with the horse and plough and then all of a sudden the horse took off with this plough behind, and lucky it didn't do a lot of damage because the area was large and not much around, you know? The horse just took off until he got caught in some vine or something and stopped all of a sudden.

So you would have had two bedrooms in that house.

GIANCARLO: Yes, two bedrooms, and that's it – and kitchen. And, like I said, the toilet would have been outside as well.

And did you have electricity?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Yes, we did have – I think we did have electricity.

And your dad would have built that house?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Because Mum arrived in 1938, I think, and Dad had got these couple of rooms ready for her because my auntie lived in the same block, I think, with my uncle, Dad's brother, but he started working in the cement, doing cement work, so that's why he didn't work the garden, he left to work in the cement. But my auntie still kept on working glasshouses until my uncle passed away in 1945, so he was young, and so he would have been just forty years old when he passed away.

And did your uncle and aunt also have ten acres?

GIANCARLO: No, I think they were working together with my father, because my dad was single at the time and he was working with my auntie together, I think they were, because like I said my uncle was working cement work. And then they shifted into Pierson Street, Lockleys, my auntie, and that's where my uncle died, on Pierson Street. He was living at Pierson Street at the time.

And, Johnny, what about you as a child in this time, 1940–49, what was your life like? Were you working with your dad and mum at times?

GIANCARLO: I remember not doing too much work at the time (laughs) because I was small. But yes, I remember when I was seven, eight, I started milking the cow, that was one job that I remember doing, and probably around the glasshouses – they were all single glasshouses, only fifteen foot wide and a hundred and twelve foot long – and to keep the glass clean you'd have to hoe all around them, so that was a full-time job. Us being small – well, me; my brother was too small, he being a couple of years younger – but hoeing round these glasshouses kept us busy. And then of a Sunday afternoon my

dad and his friends used to go and play bowls down at Rosewater and us kids would be playing and working – I know my friend had a horse and sledge and they had to go and pick up the wheat and the sweet corn for the horses, and this day there was three of us on this sledge going up the paddock and we hit a trench, and this sledge flipped over, and the eldest one – he was driving, he would have been ten – was caught underneath the sledge because the sledge had a foot, boards on there so we could load this sledge up. The sledge was about six foot long and about three or four foot wide. And me and my other friend were trying to hang onto this horse that was coming back onto this sledge. (laughs) We were pretty worried at the time. But we managed to – I don't know how we did it – push this sledge back on its track again and pick up all the damage that we'd done and put it back on the sledge and take off again. That was our Sunday afternoon pleasure time. (laughs) So we didn't have no TVs and things like that, then.

And I understand that when it was hot you did different kinds of things?

GIANCARLO: When it was hot, yes, we'd do pushbike riding at the time, because later on we used to go to the beach but I was too small then.

Was there a waterhole near you?

GIANCARLO: Dad had a bore and a well that when it was real hot they used to go and cool down in this well.

Would your dad have built that well?

GIANCARLO: I'm not sure if that was already – because that's a long time that they had that. Because we had bore water for the glasshouses and – – –.

ELEONORA: How did you sit in the well?

GIANCARLO: The well was about a four-foot hole about twenty foot deep and it was padded up with timber that went down there, and then it went just dirt, so I don't know how they got that done back in the '30s.

So the timber went all the way down, about twenty foot?

GIANCARLO: At least twenty feet, yes. And then there was a pump down there with a pipe that come up to the top, got the water out.

And we'll talk about the other people who had blocks of land in a moment –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– but do you think every family would have had a bore to water their vegetables?

GIANCARLO: Yes, they had to have a bore because your tap, mains water – would have been dear at the time, too – but you wouldn't have got enough water to water these acres of your glasshouses and outside vegetables. Yes, they all must have had a bore at the time.

Your family had a cow and a horse, and did other families also have these large animals?

GIANCARLO: Yes, they all had their horses to go to market and most of them had a couple of horses and all had a cow for the family to make their own butter and cheese. That's what the ladies used to do. (laughs)

Your mum would have made.

GIANCARLO: Mum, yes, for sure. Yes, I remember her just making this butter. We used to give her this big bucket – – –. When we used to milk the cow was in like a four-gallon bucket and after a couple of days they'd put the leftover milk together and stir it up to make their butter and put it on the side.

Keep it cool.

GIANCARLO: Keep it cool, yes. The ice man used to come around with the blocks of ice during the summer, that was in the icebox to keep things cool.

And you would have had chickens.

GIANCARLO: We had chickens roam, yes, they were the free-range chickens for sure, (laughs) because chickens and eggs, the fresh eggs – well, we used to grow even some lucerne for the cows and for the horse and the chickens were loose so they'd be on there straight away, too, getting the good proteins out for the eggs.

And did your dad also grow vines, like did he have vines to make wine?

GIANCARLO: No, no, I think they used to go to Reynella and get their grapes for the wine. He made a cement tank and when the wine season was – back in would have been April, May – used to get it and we used to squash it, jump in the barrel and squash it by foot, and they'd make our own wine. Yes, that was like a seasonal thing. Like you'd make your own tomato sauce and the wine time came you'd make your wine, and wintertime you'd make your own salami, too, for the family.

Did your dad kill a pig each year?

GIANCARLO: Yes – well, there used to be one that was pretty good at it and so he'd go around from family to family to make the salami, yes.

Did your dad keep the pigs or buy?

GIANCARLO: Couple of times we kept pigs but it's a full-time job, keeping a pig to make your salami. After, we bought our own pig, yes. We used to buy it a month before and give it wheat, just pure wheat, to make the meat more suitable for salami.

So it's kind of a busy life around food and producing food and making.

GIANCARLO: Yes. And working, and that's most of the things that were going on from family to family. Of a night-time they used to congregate, and Friday nights it used to be card night and so they'd get four or five families be playing cards of a night-time, so that was one of their outings.

And, Johnny, if we can talk about the other families that you remember being market gardeners in this area in the 1940s, perhaps you could tell me a little about each of those families, maybe if you named them?

GIANCARLO: Well, not far from where we were there was Piovesans and Tonellato, and the Piovesan family had three boys that were nineteen – they were three or four years older than what I am, and the Tonellatos, they were – well, 1949 when we shifted from Frogmore Road, the oldest Tonellatos went into our house, and so the Tonellatos, there was (counts) four boys and one girl living on this – they had a tin house as well. But with the Piovesans they sort of worked together a little bit and they spread out – well, not far from there, just on Findon Road and Frogmore Road, and they were all around the place working part of the land as well. They took pieces of the land that their fathers were working, they started working it for themselves, so that's how big it was.

And always growing the same – – –?

GIANCARLO: Tomatoes was the main thing, yes. Tomatoes and probably beans, the second crop would be beans.

And other families?

GIANCARLO: Well, right on the corner of Findon Road and Frogmore Road there was another, Ursino, he was from the South of Italy. He started working glasshouses there, I don't know how many he had, but he had the corner block that finished up when he sold it he sold it to the PMG,¹ so he done well there. And between Frogmore Road and Findon Road there was Ballestrin and Zalunardo, they were brother-in-laws, and they

¹ PMG – Postmaster General's Department.

used to grow beetroots and onions and a lot of bunch stuff, plus the glasshouses, and that's what they were doing.

You told me that on the corner of Findon Road and Grange Road there was a trotting track, is that right?

GIANCARLO: Yes, and I think it was Robinson's, Reg Robinson used to have a trotting track on there. That would have been a good ten-acre block of land as well. For years and years they were there. So they would have been just the track and all paddock all around it, no vegetables on that block of land. (laughs)

And then there was?

GIANCARLO: There was an Australian family up between Grange Road and Valetta Road and they were Tilleys, and I think they used to grow carrots. But you couldn't see inside their property because they had it all with about ten-foot-high bamboo fence all around it and it was all sort of – there was no gaps in their property, it was really fenced up well that it was hard to see inside. Well, being small, we were. And pretty sure they had carrots in there.

And would they have sold at the market?

GIANCARLO: Yes, they would have sold to the East End Market in town, that was the main market. The Central Market was – a few of the greengrocers was in the Central Market, but the main market that all the growers used to go to was the East End Market, that you'd sell all your vegetables. And later on in the '50s, '55, they used to give it to the merchants and then they wouldn't pay you until eleven o'clock so you'd have to hang around in the market until eleven o'clock before they'd made their accounts ready to pay, so Dad and all his friends would have a good breakfast (laughs) before they'd go and collect their money and come home with their horse and buggy and later in the '50s it was trucks, trucks started, because we got our first truck in 1947, so yes, most of them would have been at the same time, '45 to '50s, have their own truck. So things started looking up a little bit.

Progress.

GIANCARLO: Progress.

Johnny, you know this land that we're talking about –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– you know, from Grange Road up to Valetta Road and then Frogmore on the west and Findon on the east –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– what do you think that land would have been used [for] before say people like your dad and his brother went there?

GIANCARLO: I don't know because I just remember that Dad said there was a fair bit of leavening when they got there, that they had to get this horse and they had to scoop to level the soil up. So I don't know exactly if it was just empty land. I used to get – yes, then one of the Ballestrins that lived there, he said that they used to get flooded out from the Grange Road right down to Henley Beach, it used to get flooded out and it used to come – before it got down to Tapleys Hill used to spread out and some of the water used to come back to West Lakes, used to be all flooded out at the time.

It was quite marshy in that area.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

I remember.

GIANCARLO: And I don't know what year it was, but when we shifted to White Avenue we were a good metre above all the rest of the land around there and they said that that ten acres was filled up by the soil that they took out the river and they put it on this block of land. So that would have been the government that did – horse and drays that they used to clean the river out.

ELEONORA: It was all in flood.

GIANCARLO: Yes, so clean up the river. From Tapleys Hill down, water used to go anywhere.

Was it good land that all these families were working?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, that was very good land because they did market gardening until 1990, I think, still glasshouses there.

How would you describe that soil?

GIANCARLO: It was a nice, dark soil. It wasn't clayey and it wasn't sandy, so it was just ordinary black soil there, nice loam. Because on that White Avenue, when we shifted to White Avenue, that was sandy soil, (telephone rings) because of being the topsoil that was washed down from the Hills, and that was sandy loam; but on Frogmore Road and there it was all dark soil.

So really good soil for vegetable-growing.

GIANCARLO: For vegetables, yes.

And on the western side of Frogmore Road there was another block of land or blocks of land with Italian families?

GIANCARLO: Yes, on the sea side of Frogmore Road I remember there was family named Piro, Fazzalari and Tropeano, they were all on the sea side of Frogmore Road, and they all had gardens, and they all shifted – Piro I don't know exactly, but Fazzalari and Tropeano, they shifted out to Salisbury in 1955, '60, they shifted out to Salisbury way. And at the back of their land was all sand, sand hill. Onto the Grange Road the Housing Trust had a lot of land, they bought a lot of land and built Housing Trust houses.

And when do you think that would have been?

GIANCARLO: It would have been before 1950 because 1949/50 another Piovesan shifted on Frogmore Road and he grew potatoes on there, and that was all sandy soil, and his father put his house up in 1940/50 he put a brick house, one of the first brick houses that were built, because he said there was not much cement and they had to wait for the cement and they had to make their own bricks, so they made their own cement bricks for the house because there was not much around. Well, Hallett's, I think, was around at the time, but probably things had started moving and they had to make their own bricks for the house.

They *made* their own bricks?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

Wow.

GIANCARLO: And I know the chappie that's in there, the Piovesan, he remembers helping his father making these bricks that he would have been twelve years old.

Long process to build a house.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: That house is still there.

GIANCARLO: Yes, still there, on there. Yes, but out the back there was all sand hills up to Tapleys Hill Road. I know where we used to go, four or five of us young boys would just track off, up sand hills and down and just run and fall over. (laughs)

In the land that we're talking about – you know, Grange in the north, Valetta Road, Frogmore Road, Findon – do you remember the other families' houses? Like would they have been similar to your family's?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

You know, the corrugated iron.

GIANCARLO: Yes, would have been all corrugated iron houses, because next door there was another family, Destro, but I don't remember them doing gardening, so there must have been a little strip of land that – he was living with – Destro and Laio, Fred Laio, were living next door to us, and I don't know what they did then. There was another house in between and he was an Italian man, but I remember him always working in the cement so going, doing cement work; and he'd married an Australian lady, he married an Australian lady then, because when I was baptised (laughs) she held me for the christening.

ELEONORA: Your godmother?

GIANCARLO: Godmother, yes.

So their block would have been like a house block rather than a ten-acre or half-acre block, maybe?

GIANCARLO: Yes. They might have had a couple of acres in between, because – yes, there would have been – there was a tin house, even there; and Piovesan that were in the middle, they said that they had a train, an old train that Mr Tonellato bought –

Like a carriage?

GIANCARLO: – like a carriage and split it up and had rooms in there, so the boys, because they were a lot older, they were sleeping in there. And so it was a quick way of having rooms for the family. And after, in the '50s, when people started coming out from Italy again in 1949/50, some of them were living in that carriage until they got their own house, like they were boarding in there.

Interesting.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

When you think about those families who were there say in the early 1940s –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– can you tell me, or can you remember much, about their coming to Australia? Like would they have come in round the same time as your father or your uncle –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– and what part of Italy did people come from?

GIANCARLO: Well, Piovesan and Tonellatos and Zalunardo, Ballestrin, they all come from the North of Italy. Dad come from Vicenza and they come from Treviso – that’s, I don’t know, about twenty or thirty kilometres away – and I know that Piovesan for sure and my dad come in 1926/27, and I don’t know if the Tonellatos – well, my uncle come, he came in 1924, so the rest of them would have come from 1924, from the ’20s to, yes, before ’28 – ’26, ’27 most of them come. Because they stopped for a few years, and Mum come in – – –. Oh, no, Frankie’s mother come in 1934, he reckons.

ELEONORA: Ballestrin.

GIANCARLO: Ballestrin’s family come in 1934, and Mum come in – – –.

ELEONORA: Didn’t your dad and the Piovesans went to work in a mine for a while?

GIANCARLO: They went working in the mine because that was in the wartime, that was 1944/45.

But they were like interned, weren’t they?

GIANCARLO: Interned, yes.

For a period.

GIANCARLO: Yes, because Dad had his naturalised papers in and they were sent back because he just kept them at home and probably he had to wait a month before he could go to town or to the post office and that, and when he put them in they got sent back because of the War starting. So those who were naturalised were stayed on their land; because they were market gardeners they had fruit and veg for the people. But those that weren’t, they got sent to Alice Springs, Darwin, and like interns. They were all – not locked away – well, Dad wasn’t locked, he was working for somebody that was already in, that was naturalised, and so he went into the mines for one year until they called him back because they were short of labour and come and did cement work at the Adelaide Railway Station doing the terrazzo floor. They got him polishing the terrazzo floor. So that would have been ’39, ’40, ’45, them years.

And meanwhile your mum was managing all the garden.

GIANCARLO: The garden, what she could – she had to do it by herself because we were only little. Yes, I don’t know how she did it, but she must have got a little bit of help to

got rid of when she had to sell her tomatoes and that to get somebody to pick it up and sell for her. And of a night-time we would both of us, me and my mum and my brother, would walk to the family, the Piovesan family and Tonellato families, and tell her, 'There's the moon that's going to see your dad in an hour's time' or whatever, that's what her story was, walking along this boxthorn fence from one family to another.

In 1949, Johnny, your parents moved and they moved because your mum felt that it would be safer in another place and you moved not that far, and I remember you telling me that you took the cow, is that right?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, I had to take the cow. One of the last things we took the cow to White Avenue and being a silly boy, little boy, I suppose I took this twenty-foot chain and tied it around my waist and when we got onto Pierson Street near to the end of White Avenue the cow started – I don't know, a dog jumped out or something – started running, (laughs) and I got dragged about a hundred metres along this cinders, it used to be cinders, a lot of cinders, and had both sides of my trousers were broken off and just raw skin, and that's one thing that I remember about shifting from Frogmore Road to White Avenue.

And you told me that not long after your parents moved the land in that particular area was sold.

GIANCARLO: Sold, yes.

Can you talk about that?

GIANCARLO: And all the people that were in that area bought their piece of land that they were working and made good from then because everybody was leasing that land.

And you think that the owner was – – –?

GIANCARLO: Well, I thought it was Harris Scarfe or Coles that had land there, but somebody reckons Robinson, he had the trotting track, but the owners, I think they were still Harris Scarfe's and Coles.

ELEONORA: Didn't you say Britten-Jones?

GIANCARLO: No, Britten-Jones was on the [eastern] side of the Findon Road. He had I don't know how many acres along there, Britten-Jones. And then there was Keele, they were on that side of the road, too. They were Australian old family, Keele. Yes, so that's one thing about the people that were living there, done well because of having their own market garden freehold – well, when they paid for it.

And do you remember how long that area would have been worked as market gardens?

GIANCARLO: Well, Dad was in there like 1930s, from '37, '38, until he sold it – well, he *didn't* sell it; we left and went to White Avenue – he left it to Tonellato, and he worked it until –

ELEONORA: Ten years ago.

GIANCARLO: – ten years ago, yes, so it would have been 1998.

The ten acres?

GIANCARLO: Yes. With glasshouses, because he had a son that helped him to work his glasshouses and the wife, because the wife's still alive.

ELEONORA: In the '90s people started selling, in the '90s.²

GIANCARLO: Yes. Albert Tonellato, that was on Findon Road, he sold it twenty-five years ago because he went into another business. But the others started selling a portion of it, a little bit at a time, because they'd build – Frogmore Road was bituminised properly right through and then they started building houses along there.

When would that have been, do you think?

GIANCARLO: Well, the first houses in the [1960s and bituminisation of Frogmore Road in the mid-1960s].

Okay.

GIANCARLO: So I think that's how it started. They didn't sell all their land because they all kept pieces of it to work, and then they were selling bits, a bit at the time, off before the market gardens was all finished. And [on the corner of] Findon Road and Grange Road, behind Robinson there's another chappie named Cirillo, but I don't know what year he would have started there, but he's still got two acres of land that's still empty and not worked and he's still got a few artichokes on there now. But he has it just for home, but it's still about two acres of land he's got there, Cirillo.

And you told me about another Italian man, Guido Rebuli.

GIANCARLO: The Rebulis, yes, they were up the end of Frogmore Road next to the river, and his father passed away in the 1940s as well, and they bought – had a delicatessen on the Grange Road and he used to go and pick up orders, they used to go and have home deliveries, groceries, so he did that for ten, fifteen-odd years. And he

² The last of the land was sold in the 1990s.

would have known all the families around Findon, Flinders Park, because of picking up orders of a Monday and then delivering on a Wednesday. So with his grocery, Italian continental food. And his father come in the 1920s as well, but he was on – I don't know exactly if he was always on the end of Valetta Road or where he was.

Were there market gardens between Valetta Road and the river?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Close to Valetta Road, there was. And up the top end of Findon Road there was Ballantynes, they used to have celery, they used to have celery right next to the river, they used to get the water out of the river. That was in the '40s and '50s as well. They were right next to the river. And Rebulis, he was up the other end on Frogmore Road on the river, and yes, so I don't know how much land he had, really.

ELEONORA: What about Recchi?

GIANCARLO: Oh, Recchis was after that, I think.

So people who were close to the river would have been able to just draw river water?

GIANCARLO: River water, yes.

Like you and your dad did when you went to White Avenue.

GIANCARLO: Yes, for White Avenue.

And there were no restrictions?

GIANCARLO: No, no restriction on that water, no. We didn't have a bore but there was no restrictions. Although it used to dry up during the summer, used to get a bit slow of water, but they used to put the pump on – there was holes, little bit deeper holes that the water run into overnight and you'd always get enough water. Because on the other side of the river from where we were, Flinders Park, there was Gaskins and Jarmans and they all had potatoes, acres, they had big blocks of potatoes and celery.

So that's north of the Torrens.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Between like Findon Road and Holbrooks Road, Holbrooks Road in between there, there was a lot of – on the river, a lot of gardens there, too.

And you were going to tell a story about Ron Gaskin.

GIANCARLO: Well, one of the Gaskins took off of his brothers and when the tractors started coming along I think a David Brown Tractor used to go from the houses to do grade, levelling off the soil and do ploughing, and that was most of his – he nearly had enough work to keep him going for the whole year.

Just in that local area?

GIANCARLO: Yes, all of Lockleys and Findon, yes. He done that for a long time until he went up to Virginia and continued up there.

And he was a returned soldier, is that right?

GIANCARLO: Yes. He was a returned soldier, yes.

From World War Two?

GIANCARLO: Two, yes.

And he would have had how many tractors?

GIANCARLO: Oh, he only had – yes, he had two, because always had them going. Most of the work he used to do himself; when he'd get busy he'd get somebody to help him with the other tractor, but he was the one that was doing most of the work.

So the arrangement would have been that your dad would have contacted him.

GIANCARLO: Contacted him, yes – I don't know how because there wouldn't have been too many telephones – (laughs) but word would get around and he'd come around and do the ploughing or whatever he had to do. Yes, disk and plough and rake, that was his main three jobs that he used to do.

And this would have been outside the glasshouses.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And inside the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Inside the glasshouses used to be done by fork or with the Tonellatos and that they used to get the horse with a long chain and the horse'd start from outside the glasshouse and they had this hundred and twenty-foot chain with a plough, and dig inside the glasshouse; and at the end of the glasshouse would put it on their shoulder and carry it back and start off again until they did their – I don't know how many glasshouses they'd do in a morning, because they used to start early in the morning to do that sort of work.

And the front of the glasshouse must have come off for that to happen.

GIANCARLO: Yes, you'd have to take all your front off for that.

And how high were the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: The middle of the glasshouse would only be about six foot six and the side'd be about four foot six. So that'd be every two years they used to pull them down and shift because better crop, less disease, so for a few years Dad said he done that, and then after we started fumigating, in the '50s fumigating started, so at the end of the season you'd clean up your glasshouses and when they were all nice and worked up used to ---. We used to have a by-hand stuff for -- do the fumigation of the soil, DDT, used to put it in this little pump, every foot used to press it down. For a few years we did it by hand until the little Ransom tractor started and they'd go up and down twice in a glasshouse, four times in a glasshouse, and do the fumigation.

And did the fumigation mean that you didn't move the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Well, yes, we didn't have to move them -- for ten years you didn't have to move the glasshouses. But after, with the stronger fumigation, we had to get a hose and -- that's with tap water -- used to water them, keep the gas down, because otherwise if the soil was a bit dry and you'd fumigate, the gas would go into the air and you'd lose it. So you'd have to put a crust on the soil to keep the gas down so it'd work at least for two days, two or three days you'd have to keep the water on, two or three times a day. That was a big job. When we shifted up from -- 1960, '65 we shifted to --

When you went to Bolivar?

GIANCARLO: -- when we went to Bolivar, and we done that for thirty-five years, fumigation. That was hard work because it was the summertime, thirty-five-degree heat and lunchtime you'd have to start watering, water -- we used to do about six glasshouses at the time.

ELEONORA: The hoses.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Inch hose. It wasn't easy.

No. Back here, when you were a kid and your dad had -- how many glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: I think we had about fourteen.

Fourteen -- do you remember what he would do if there were frosts at night in the glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: No, I don't remember that. But at White Avenue we started putting fire in tins, we used to get a bucket, four-gallon bucket, and fill them up with timber and put a bit of rag at the bottom and put them in the glasshouse and keep the heat in, light the fire up and ---.

ELEONORA: Three o'clock in the morning you'd come to light them up.

GIANCARLO: Yes, you'd have to get up three o'clock in the morning and put your fire in the glasshouse and then you'd have to go around, look if all the tins were alight. Yes, that was from August, end of July, August.

ELEONORA: Used to be three or four times a year.

GIANCARLO: Yes, three or four times a year we'd have to do that. But, that's right, before that we started putting tins of oil, because the glasshouses were single at the time, and outside there was a four-foot break from one glasshouse to another, we'd put three buckets of tins of oil and then light that, and that was – you'd come out (laughs) all full of soot.

ELEONORA: That was easier than the wood.

GIANCARLO: Yes, because it was outside you're doing it and wouldn't have to go inside the glasshouse. But that got banned. And then we started for a few years put tyres, start burning tyres, and that was – up at Bolivar there you couldn't – used to be all black, couldn't see anywhere up that side of town, it was tyres.

ELEONORA: Till it got banned.

GIANCARLO: They were banned. But then we still kept going with the timber, inside, in the bucket. And I'd put the kero in there or the wife'd put the kero and I'd put the match and run onto the next one (laughs) at four o'clock in the morning, and put our heads in the glasshouse, see if all of them were alight, and then we'd go back and go to bed for an hour, and then at eight o'clock you'd have to pick up the buckets, take them all outside and fill them up again. So you couldn't work inside the glasshouse much because if you touched the plants with the frost you'd damage them. But we'd have a full-time job filling up buckets full of timber again.

And I imagine that your dad and the people who were on that land – Frogmore Road, Valetta, Findon Road, Grange Road – would have had that kind of practice as well.

GIANCARLO: Well, that's where we learned it from, so yes, they must have been doing it, too.

Yes. And, Johnny, thank you for that description of the work and the land in that particular area, is really helpful to have that.

GIANCARLO: That's quite all right.

Is there any last thing that you might like to say about – – –?

GIANCARLO: At Frogmore Road – White Avenue I remember a few more things because I started going to market with my dad in White Avenue and getting up at three o'clock in the morning and going selling our tomatoes, and from then on I kept up until 2000 I kept selling my own vegetables, and from the shopkeepers that I'd started with I never lost many customers because my vegetables weren't good enough for them. So at times I didn't have enough for them but they still looked after me when I did have vegetables.

So you had a long history.

GIANCARLO: A long history with shopkeepers and I don't think I had any bad words with them and losing any money because of bad vegetables. So that's one thing that I like having done all these years, being in the garden.

And beginning with your dad.

GIANCARLO: Starting with my dad, yes.

That's lovely. Well, thank you very much, Johnny.

End of interview

Third interview with Giancarlo (Johnny) Marchioro

Recorded by Madeleine Regan at Nailsworth, South Australia on 11 August 2008

This is an interview with Johnny Marchioro recorded on 11th August 2008 at Nailsworth, South Australia. Also present is Johnny's wife, Eleonora Marchioro.

Johnny, we're continuing to talk about your life as a market gardener and this interview is really going to look at your life from 1965 to 2007, when you were doing market gardening at Bolivar. And I wonder if you could start with talking about how you came to be at Bolivar in 1965.

GIANCARLO: Well, it started in '65, yes, I got married in August '65 and was working with my father at White Avenue, Lockleys, with twenty-one glasshouses. And eight of them were mine, so Dad had this piece of land at Bolivar, and at White Avenue, Lockleys, there was three acres of land; it wasn't enough for two families, so me and my wife decided to go to Bolivar.

And you were telling me that your father had bought that piece of land – I'm not sure how big it was – – –.

GIANCARLO: It was supposed to have been seven acres in 1956/57.

And a number of Italian market gardeners had bought land there.

GIANCARLO: Yes. The Ballestrins had already moved to Bolivar and Santins moved to Bolivar, Piovesans moved to Bolivar.

ELEONORA: Zalunardo.

GIANCARLO: Zalunardo moved to Bolivar. They were all in just off of Frogmore Road or round Frogmore Road, Findon Road. And Zerellas, they were at Findon too, they went to Virginia, they'd bought sixty acres at Virginia, and they are big carrot growers at Virginia at the moment.

And why had people decided to buy and move to Bolivar?

GIANCARLO: I think because the land was cheap at the time and they thought that there was going to be good prospect for their children, and it was cheaper land and it was getting a bit squeezey at Findon and Lockleys, so they just sort of bought it for investment. But then when we got married we decided to – 1964, to build a house on the block and put a bore down for water.

And did you do that yourself or did you get somebody to come in?

GIANCARLO: We got somebody, a contractor, to put the bore down. At the time I think it was about a thousand pounds for it so it was a lot of money then, in 1964. But you needed water. We had tap water for the house – when I built the house we had tap water, but it was the government tap water, but water rates had to be paid. And so 1965/66, when Dad's crop had finished at Lockleys, we started shifting glasshouses.

And tell me, how did you actually move them?

GIANCARLO: Well, Dad had his truck and so one glasshouse at the time we'd take it off and then drive up to Bolivar and unload, and put it down. But the land was bad at Bolivar so before that we had to level it off and I put about six inches of topsoil – it was Gawler River loam – and we put it all over this block for twelve glasshouses and got that all level. But it was still pretty hard, when the soil got mixed up it was still pretty rough, for one year, couple of years, it was still very rough, the soil.

The glasshouses, like how long would it have taken you to move that many glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Well, for twelve glasshouses it took from Christmas till April, May, beginning of May.

To move all of them.

GIANCARLO: To move twelve of them.

Because you had to dismantle them –

GIANCARLO: Dismantle them.

– put them on the truck, take them to Bolivar, get them off the truck and then erect them.

GIANCARLO: And erect them.

And you did that with your dad?

GIANCARLO: Me and Dad, yes.

How old would your dad have been at that time?

GIANCARLO: Well, 1966 he was sixty.

ELEONORA: Yes, he would have been sixty.

GIANCARLO: Yes, because he was born in '06, so he was sixty. (telephone rings) And yes, he done a lot of work, too, at that age.

Yes.

GIANCARLO: I thought he was very old, but (laughter) he done – because a box of glass weighs, it would weigh about forty kilos, and we used to get one on each side with a bar in the middle and lift them up and load them onto the truck. They were very heavy. We needed twenty-five to a glasshouse, these boxes of glass. And the rails were twenty-five-foot-long Oregon, and we used to have our timber man on the South Road, B.J. Walters, we used to get all our glasshouse timber off of them. They knew what glasshouse timber needed and so we'd go there every year and get our timber, repairs and that. But yes, and so from Christmas it took us till 25th May before I put my first crop of tomatoes in.

And at what time had you prepared the land?

GIANCARLO: Well, just a couple of weeks. It was all in a hurry because time was flying and we weren't getting any money, so I did it as soon as I got four glasshouses closed up with the ends and all in and I planted four in the one day, and then after,

during the week or the next week, I planted the next eight. But the first day we planted four glasshouses.

And the dimensions of the glasshouses were -- --?

GIANCARLO: They were a hundred and twelve foot long and about fifteen foot wide.

And the height was?

GIANCARLO: And the height wasn't very high at that time, it was only about six foot high, goes down to about four foot high, so they were pretty low. And with a post in the middle, so it was very hard for a tractor to get in, so for the first five years – the next couple of years I put another two, but I used to make them with a frame, steel[?] frame with no post in the middle and put them a little higher so I could get in with a tractor. I bought a tractor after a couple of years that we were at Bolivar; before that I used to get a contractor to come out and rip the soil and rotary up so it was nice and fine to make the furrows.

So 25th May 1966 was the first year.

GIANCARLO: The first year that we grew tomatoes at Bolivar.

And your daughter was ---.

GIANCARLO: Just born. (laughs)

Yes, so it was kind of busy time.

GIANCARLO: So it was a big day. I had to plant them in the morning and come back to Adelaide to see my wife that was having this – well, we didn't know what they were them years, but we found out it was a baby girl.

ELEONORA: At the Memorial Hospital.

GIANCARLO: At the Memorial Hospital.

Must have been a really exciting day.

GIANCARLO: It was.

And a hard working day for you, too.

GIANCARLO: It was a long day for me, yes. (laughs)

How long did it take to plant tomatoes in four glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: Well, I was lucky that my dad come along with me as well, so it used to take ---.

ELEONORA: Half an hour, two hours. About an hour and a half for you two.

GIANCARLO: Two of us it would take us an hour and a half to plant four glasshouses.

ELEONORA: Oh, no; longer. Two hours.

GIANCARLO: A couple of hours.

ELEONORA: Two hours, yes.

GIANCARLO: Because in the morning we'd have to flood them, used to be all full of water, and then we'd have to wait for half an hour for the water to sink down, and then we'd go in bare feet, put in one by one. So it would be eight rows to a glasshouse, and the first years we used to plant –

ELEONORA: Planted a hundred plants a row.

GIANCARLO: – used to plant a hundred plants a row, so there'd be eight hundred plants in the glasshouse, and one by one we had to put it in in this mud, so it was not just putting it in the mud, it was when you'd pull your foot out you'd slip, (laughter) you'd sink down nearly to your knee. So we used to get the hose after that and have a good wash.

And did you have wires up for the tomatoes?

GIANCARLO: Oh, yes, we'd have to put a row – every row of tomatoes there'd be a row of wire on top so we could put the string on, so every tomato plant had a string. After two weeks they were planted, we'd have to put all these strings on. That'd take another hour a glasshouse, to put strings in the glasshouse.

ELEONORA: Then they'd be actually tied up one by one.

GIANCARLO: Then after, when the tomato plant got to six, seven inches, eight inches high, we'd have to – from the top to bottom we'd have to tie it up, every plant, so it wouldn't fall down. And then after that every two weeks we'd have to twirl it around till it got up to the top, take the shoots off – – –.

So how long would it take so that it got to the top?

GIANCARLO: To the top?

ELEONORA: Three months, I think.

GIANCARLO: Couple of months, couple of months, yes.

So that would have been the end of July.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And then the growing period... then?

GIANCARLO: And then we'd start picking in –

ELEONORA: October.

GIANCARLO: – October, probably the first – – –.

ELEONORA: When you planted later, it's cold and take longer to come ripe. In the summer it wouldn't take as long.

So you had two crops a year.

ELEONORA: Yes.

Johnny, I'm observing your ledger book there for the year 1966.

GIANCARLO: '66, so these are still from White Avenue, '66, yes. I think we started picking in October '66. They were our first tomatoes.

ELEONORA: So you haven't got the price here.

GIANCARLO: No, I haven't got these. 'Sixty-six, in September they were four dollars –

ELEONORA: A box.

GIANCARLO: – four dollars four shillings a box.

Wow.

GIANCARLO: In September.

And that would have been your first crop.

GIANCARLO: Would have been the first tomato pickings, yes.

And would that have been a good price at that time?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes, because bag of manure was only a couple of dollars as well. 'Sixty-six, that's when the dollar changed –

That's right.

GIANCARLO: – from pounds, yes – '65 there was the pounds, '66 there was dollars, yes. So it was changed into the dollar.

So all that, the figures here, the three-forty – – –.

GIANCARLO: Yes, they were dollars, three dollars four shillings.

ELEONORA: No, three dollars forty, wasn't shillings.

GIANCARLO: Yes, forty – pence.

Three dollars forty cents for the box?

GIANCARLO: First-class box of tomatoes.

Okay, and did you always grow first-class?

GIANCARLO: No. In say sixty boxes I used to have twenty-three first-class, twenty-one second-class, they'd be just a fraction smaller, and you'd get twenty cents a box less for them, and then you'd get your third-class tomatoes that used to be a dollar a box or a dollar twenty a box less for your third-class tomato.

ELEONORA: So out of sixty-four boxes, you only had twenty-two boxes that were first-class.

GIANCARLO: First-class, because –

ELEONORA: The others were second and third.

GIANCARLO: – first year the tomatoes were a little bit smaller, but after that they got better but if you sorted them properly, into their proper grade, it was hard to get sixty boxes – you couldn't get sixty boxes of first-class tomatoes.

And did you and Eleonora grade them?

GIANCARLO: Yes. We'd go early in the morning to pick and then when it was eleven o'clock we'd be in the shed sorting, and have them ready, put them on the truck ready for market – that was at the East End Market – and used to leave about half-past two –

A.m.?

GIANCARLO: – a.m. in the morning, and because the Adelaide market, there was no gates, there was a lot of entrances all around the market, and so you'd try to get there early so you'd get ready to go in when the siren went. And so we'd be there at three o'clock. And then some of the shopkeepers used to come pretty early, too, to order their tomatoes, and then after, as soon as I got to know them properly, telephone come along and I used to ring them up of a Tuesday night and Thursday night to get their orders in and so I'd put them to the side. When I'd stack the truck up I knew that so many boxes were for one shop and so many boxes for another and I'd have them all up in front of the truck so they were sold already, and I'd put the ones that had to be sold at the front of

the truck so shopkeepers come along and pick what they wanted from the back; but the ones at the front were already gone.

And how many boxes are you talking about like picking and selling?

ELEONORA: In November/December we were picking a hundred.

Hundred boxes?

GIANCARLO: Boxes.

ELEONORA: Twice a week, two or three times a week.

We're talking about half-cases?

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: Yes.

A hundred?

ELEONORA: Yes.

So that's twice a week, so two hundred -- --?

ELEONORA: Oh, twice – even three times, sometimes.

GIANCARLO: In the season, in the tomato season that you got from October.

ELEONORA: You know, in November/December, that's when we were really –

GIANCARLO: Full.

ELEONORA: – picking.

It's a lot of tomatoes.

ELEONORA: Yes.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

So this is from four glasshouses?

GIANCARLO: No, no, no, no, this is after.

ELEONORA: After, when we'd got about twenty glasshouses.

GIANCARLO: When I finished, after. Yes.

ELEONORA: No, ten glasshouses you wouldn't get -- --.

GIANCARLO: Ten glasshouses, was only the fifty at the most, you know.

ELEONORA: Yes, at the most.

GIANCARLO: Twice a week.

ELEONORA: As we got more glasshouses we got more crop.

Well, if we go back to 1966 and that first year –

GIANCARLO: Yes.

– so you had your first crop of tomatoes for sale in October.

ELEONORA: October, I think it was.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And then can you tell me what your life would have been like? Like so you had that crop in, and were you doing other things as well at that time?

GIANCARLO: No, because we were still young and –

ELEONORA: First year.

GIANCARLO: – first year we were getting things ready. So we'd made enough, a bit of money to buy another couple of glasshouses the year after, until we got to twenty-one glasshouses. So it took us another – – –.

ELEONORA: Yes. But then the next year we started planting them in February so that we could get two crops out of them.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: The first year we couldn't; we only got one small crop.

GIANCARLO: Because the glasshouses weren't up.

No. And you started at the end of May.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And the new baby.

GIANCARLO: Yes. So by Christmastime that year we cut down the tomatoes because we thought Christmas was around and none of the shops wanted any more, but we made a mistake because after two weeks everybody started ringing up for tomatoes and I'd already cut them down. So that was the first year that I made a blue, but we didn't make that any more.

Was that different from how you and your dad had operated at Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Because at Bolivar I did it for myself and I wasn't in charge at White Avenue, my dad was still the boss. I still done a lot of the marketing, but he had the main say. So when we got to Bolivar it was my idea or both of our – me and the wife – and we started working a little bit different.

ELEONORA: And a little bit harder, too.

GIANCARLO: Yes, so we started having tomatoes all the year round. We'd plant some even outside, for the first ten years we planted tomatoes outside in October so they'd come for January when the glasshouse ones were finished, so it'd keep going till –

ELEONORA: Keep the customer going all the year.

GIANCARLO: – till April and June until the glasshouse ones start again. So for about ten years we had our tomatoes practically all the year round.

And you had clients who were – – –.

GIANCARLO: Yes, the shopkeepers, the local shopkeepers here in Adelaide, knew that we had tomatoes. I wasn't a big grower, but the few shops that I did have, tried to keep them going.

And did you always have the same variety of tomatoes?

GIANCARLO: For about ten years we did, and then after that the hybrid seeds started coming in and they wanted the round tomatoes, the shopkeepers wanted them round because they looked nice. Before, we had the crinkly one, it was a Chinese variety, and there was a lot of crinkly tomatoes and when you'd pick say fifty boxes there'd be at least half a dozen boxes of crinkly ones, but they had to be sold at half price. So with the round tomatoes you didn't get much of that so it made it a little bit better.

ELEONORA: They wanted them so they'd last longer in the shop.

GIANCARLO: Shopkeepers wanted them – well, the housewife wanted them, to leave their tomato in the kitchen for a week and have it nice and firm; but with the old variety you needed them pretty – they'd have to be picked and sold in a week, otherwise they'd go mushy.

ELEONORA: Yes, but they tasted better.

GIANCARLO: Yes, they still – even now they say there's no taste in tomatoes, but because it's the varieties there's all these hybrid plants.

So in '67 you increased the number of glasshouses by how many?

GIANCARLO: Two or three, three that first year.

And the same method that you had to get the land, the soil kind of ---?

GIANCARLO: Yes, we'd get it ready with sand and loam to make it nice and fine.

Because that would be quite clayey soil at Bolivar.

GIANCARLO: Where we were it was clayey, yes. But it was better than Virginia soil because Christmastime they'd be still green, the plants would be still green, they didn't get affected by the hot weather because the roots would be down and there's always moisture there, where Virginia had their - come quicker, but then they'd die quicker.

ELEONORA: In the sand.

GIANCARLO: In the sandy soil. So we always had - they lasted till we cut them down, always green, our tomato plants. And the quality was pretty good.

And did you diversify and grow other vegetables, like so '67 you've got how many - twelve?

GIANCARLO: '66 we had twelve, then we had fifteen.

Fifteen.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And then you increased again.

GIANCARLO: Next year another two, seventeen, nineteen, twenty-one, so that would have been another five years, we got '66 till about '70, 1970 we had our ---.

And were you only growing tomatoes?

GIANCARLO: The first crop would be tomatoes and then we'd put beans in.

So after the tomatoes finished in ---?

ELEONORA: Ten glasshouses.

GIANCARLO: The month before they'd finish we'd put the beans in underneath the tomato plant, and when we'd put the bean in, soon as the bean come up, every day we'd go in and see each plant if it had any tomatoes on we'd leave it, if they had no tomatoes we'd pull it out, take it out and let the bean grow up the string. So every day we'd go through making heaps and taking them out. My wife would cut the plant, the tomato

plant, put it in a heap, and I'd be taking it outside and taking them in a heap to burn or to bury.

And how long was the season for beans? Like from the time you grew?

GIANCARLO: Well, like if we planted in –

ELEONORA: In July.

GIANCARLO: – in July –

ELEONORA: We started in October.

GIANCARLO: – start picking in October, so the tomatoes in there'd be finished. I'd leave an odd plant still in the glasshouse, they'd still be left behind if it had tomatoes on there, but otherwise we'd start from – in October/November till –

ELEONORA: In December.

GIANCARLO: – till January.

ELEONORA: With the beans.

GIANCARLO: Till Christmas, because everybody wants –

ELEONORA: Beans for Christmas.

GIANCARLO: – yes.

ELEONORA: And then we had ten fresh tomatoes coming in, that's the fresh crop. That's the one that we used to pick a lot because when you get the crop in the springtime that's when you get a lot of nice tomatoes.

GIANCARLO: So November and December we were really on the run because we started with picking beans and we had the other ten glasshouses full of tomatoes that we'd have to pick three times a week then, and beans.

ELEONORA: Beans you have to pick every second day.

GIANCARLO: Yes, because they – – –.

ELEONORA: They got fat, if it's hot they got fat.

GIANCARLO: If you got good stuff you could sell it; if you didn't have good vegetables you couldn't sell it. So I was pretty lucky that I didn't waste any vegetables. Then in 1974 we come up with the idea that – because going to market and selling your own tomatoes, Monday morning they wanted them nice and green because they'd last for the whole week; Friday you'd go to market and they wanted them red because they wanted

to sell them that day. So 1974 I put a little cool room in that could hold a hundred boxes or a hundred and fifty boxes of tomatoes, so we'd pick Saturday morning.

ELEONORA: Made it easier for us.

GIANCARLO: Put them in the cool room for Sunday, Sunday afternoon to sort, and so they'd be still nice and firm for Monday morning's market. And that's what we had going for a long time.

ELEONORA: It was good.

That was really efficient way of using time and – – –.

ELEONORA: Oh, yes.

GIANCARLO: Keeping – time, yes.

ELEONORA: Because we didn't have to pick on Sunday and sort on Sunday; we could pick Saturday and sort Sunday.

GIANCARLO: But leaving them, picking Sunday, during November/December, they'd come ripe, too, because of the hot weather – it'd start to get warm. In the glasshouse, we used to put chalk on top to keep it a little bit cooler, but the cool room would be a lot better than in the glasshouse, so we'd pick them Saturday morning early and put them so they'd be nice and fresh and keep them there till Sunday, and Sunday sort them and put them on the truck. So by Monday there'd be some ripe, but three-quarters –

ELEONORA: You sorted them properly.

GIANCARLO: – yes, sort it. Three-quarters of them'd be nice and firm, for sale.

ELEONORA: But then the children started to help, too, a little bit.

GIANCARLO: They'd carry the bucket.

ELEONORA: They'd take them to the other side.

GIANCARLO: Carrying the bucket.

ELEONORA: Help with the boxes, put a stamp on the boxes – yes, the children helped.

And what about the chalk, how did you put the chalk on?

GIANCARLO: I'd be driving the tractor and the wife had a little compressor with a big cylinder and we used to get a bag of chalk, about twenty-five-kilo bag, and mix it up with water and I'd fill up this tank with water and chalk, with a bit of lime to make it

stick more, and I'd drive the tractor and the wife at the back with a hose spraying on top of the glasshouse.

ELEONORA: Sprayed all the glasshouse.

And that would give a kind of a layer –

ELEONORA: Yes.

– that meant that the sun's rays weren't so strong?

GIANCARLO: On the tomato plant, yes.

Is that an old, traditional thing?

GIANCARLO: Oh, no. (laughs) Before that there used to be mud, and I remember Dad at Lockleys get a bucket of mud and with a little tin, jam tin, throw it on. But they were a lot lower then, the glasshouse, so it was a bit easier. But yes, he used to get a jam tin and mud. (laughter) Even with the chalk, though, every drop of rain came you'd have to go over – you'd have to do it two or three times a year because every time you get a shower it'd take all the chalk off. The lime would stay on but the chalk would come off, so you'd have to do it all again.

So did you come up with that idea, to put the chalk on?

GIANCARLO: No, it was a Virginia idea, I suppose.

ELEONORA: Yes, they're still doing it now the same way.

GIANCARLO: Yes. The Bulgarians and Greeks.

ELEONORA: Because by the time winter comes you don't want any more chalk on, it has to come off, for the sun to come in.

The winter is a different issues, isn't it –

GIANCARLO: Yes, they wanted the warm.

ELEONORA: That's right.

– because you used to do something –

GIANCARLO: They wanted the warm.

– when there were frosts.

GIANCARLO: With the frost, yes. Then we'd have to put – we had three buckets of timber and, with a hook, shift the tomato plants, move them over a little bit and put these tins in the glasshouse, and get up in the morning, see if there was ice on the glass. And

sometimes we'd get up at say two o'clock, 'Oh, no, there's no ice – yet', so'd go back to bed; then after another hour we'd get up again and have another test on the glass with your fingernail, see if there was any ice. 'Yeah, there's ice on there', so get up – me and the wife.

ELEONORA:

GIANCARLO: We'd be ready with our little bottle of metho –

ELEONORA: No; kero.

GIANCARLO: – kero – was it kero?

ELEONORA: Yes.

GIANCARLO: And every bucket had a little bit of hessian bag, so put the kero on the bag and then she'd – the wife – would put the match in and go to the next one. Three buckets in a glasshouse, so there was twenty-one to do, so (laughs) it took us a good hour. But then after, when we'd go through the lot, we'd have to sort of check them so we'd just put our head through the door and see if all the fire were going, and if all the fires were going half-past five we'd go to bed for an hour. Like a – what do you call them? – chimney sweeper. (laughter) All full of black soot. Then seven o'clock you're up again, just check up.

And would the fire still be going?

GIANCARLO: Getting to the end, yes. Be getting to eight o'clock it'd probably

ELEONORA: Finished.

GIANCARLO: – be nearly finished, all the timber. Used to get jarrah timber to put in there, pieces, and a little bit of fine timber so to get going, bit of straw and a bit of paper at the bottom of this four-gallon tin, and then our job was to take them out of the glasshouse, put them on the tractor and go into the woodheap, fill them up with timber again, take them back – – –.

ELEONORA: Because you'd never know if the next day you would have got another frost, so you need to be ready.

GIANCARLO: Yes. Used to get three or four days straight when that happened.

And how many frosts a year would there be?

GIANCARLO: Well, them years there used to be two or three every year.

ELEONORA: You might have had a couple of years that didn't have it. If you got a lot of rain, there was no frost. When it's dry, you get a lot of frost.

GIANCARLO: Yes, for about ten, fifteen years I reckon we did it.

ELEONORA: Yes, for sure.

GIANCARLO: The last ten years there hasn't been much frost.

What was the climate like in comparison to Lockleys?

GIANCARLO: Well, the smoke used to keep the frost from hitting the glass, and so that was nearly good enough to keep the frost away – even it's three degrees warmer inside the glasshouse it was good enough.

ELEONORA: The plants wouldn't get burnt.

GIANCARLO: It still affected the flowers, but it wouldn't burn your plant and not even your tomato, it still could be sold.

At Lockleys would there have been frosts?

GIANCARLO: At Lockleys they had frost and they used to put oil, tins of oil, outside the glasshouse because all the glasshouses at Lockleys were single, where here at Bolivar we'd put – oh, no, the twelve at the beginning were single; but after that they were double, we started putting double ones up. The new ones that I was putting up were always two together.

And was that because it was easier to just work continuously?

GIANCARLO: Yes. And put them up higher and go in with a tractor, so it was a lot easier.

With twenty-one glasshouses, how much of your seven acres at Bolivar was covered?

GIANCARLO: Oh, only just over an acre, because out of the seven acres the Highways took an acre to build the double – because there was only a single, Port Wakefield Road was only a single road, and so they took more than an acre for the double road.

And when would that have been?

GIANCARLO: That was in 1958 I think they bought it, '60. Before they built the – – –.

ELEONORA: Before we built the house.

GIANCARLO: No, the house was already there when they put the double road on, so it would have been '65. They come around early to buy the land but until '65, when we'd

already had our house on the flat, it come to be about three foot lower than the highway, without telling us. We got left behind then.

Had your dad used that land at all in the time -- --?

GIANCARLO: Before, no. It had never been worked. He had it for that many years but not worked at all, he never planted nothing at all, until we went up there. And then we started putting outside some lettuce and onions and –

ELEONORA: Beetroot.

GIANCARLO: – beetroot.

ELEONORA: Cabbages.

Was that for sale, too?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes. With the tomatoes, my customers, any veggie that I had would take on. You know, we'd ask, 'Would you buy some lettuce if I grew it?' and they sort of said, 'Yeah', and you'd just grow it – just as long as I had it for them. They'd still have to – you had to let them know, and yes, we'd plant a bit of lettuce and a bit of broccoli, after.

How would you know how much to plant so that you would make it worth it?

GIANCARLO: Well, you had an idea of what your shopkeepers would buy and the tomatoes, there'd always be probably one week that you'd get stuck, that there'd be a glut all over Adelaide, and that's when the cool room come handy, so I'd have the firmer ones – try to sell me riper ones first (laughs) and the green ones, sort of held them back. But after that you'd always sort of slow down because you can't have a full crop every week, so after a couple of weeks you'd slow down and you'd catch up on your tomatoes for your shopkeepers.

And did you enjoy having other crops as well as the tomatoes and beans?

GIANCARLO: Yes, but no, tomatoes and beans was the main vegetable that we really stuck at. And I had one good shopkeeper had a semi-trailer that used to go to Port Augusta and one to around Jamestown and Clare and used to have another truck go there, and so we'd have to go up to Inglewood instead of going to market, before Tuesday's lunchtime I'd get all his vegetables ready, I'd ring up eleven o'clock and have a quick bite to eat and take it up to Inglewood, what he wanted. Say he wanted twenty boxes of tomatoes and ten boxes, a few bags of beans and lettuce, I'd shoot up there and deliver them Tuesday afternoon so I'd have me truck more better in the morning because

we used to deliver them to the shopkeepers so there used to be one good load, twenty or thirty boxes, off my hands by delivering them on Tuesday.

ELEONORA: too much for the truck

GIANCARLO: Yes, because I only had a two-ton truck and then twenty, thirty boxes that I'd deliver before, was a lot easier in the morning for me to ---.

ELEONORA: Because they used to be wooden boxes those days, they were heavier to --

Like the half-cases.

ELEONORA: -- half-cases, they were heavier to lift and everything.

GIANCARLO: Yes, half-cases.

I have a picture of really hard, physical work.

GIANCARLO: Well, yes, because sometimes there'd be shopkeepers'd be a hundred yards away and you'd have to put two boxes in your arms and carry them to his truck, then run back because there'd be other shopkeepers coming, and you had to be running for two hours all the time. In the market it'd be just one race, because you'd have delivery to do and then you'd wanted to sell and if you had a few boxes more to sell you'd have to stay there if somebody come around for you to buy, you know? If you're not there, shopkeeper'd go to somewhere else, so you'd have to be quick to come back to sell your tomatoes. But lucky I by phone I've just done a lot of the work.

So you had a good relationship with the shopkeepers.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

And they knew the quality of your produce, too.

GIANCARLO: That's right, yes, so they never queried about that.

I have this picture of everything of your lives being physical, hard work --

GIANCARLO: Yes.

-- very organised.

GIANCARLO: For fifteen, twenty years it was pretty on the run.

ELEONORA: Yes, well, if you picked a hundred buckets of tomatoes you had to put them on the tractor, take them home, then put them on the bench to sort, and then you put them in the boxes and then you have to pack the truck up, so you're lifting the same box of tomatoes three or four times. And it was all done mainly by hand.

GIANCARLO: And I've still got the little hand truck that I'd put on twenty boxes and run down East Terrace and (laughs) Rundle Street.

ELEONORA: We were pretty lucky we had the tractor. Some people didn't even have a tractor, they had to even carry it from the glasshouses, they had to carry them home with a trolley.

GIANCARLO: But at the market I had a hand trolley. There used to be a big ramp that you'd put up on the top in the East End Market. You'd leave it there, you'd pay so much a year – I think it was about thirty dollars or more – to keep your hand truck up at the market, and at six o'clock when the whistle blow you'd run up, get your hand truck and load your tomatoes that you had to deliver, and it'd be eight o'clock before I'd come home.

And then it wasn't a rest.

GIANCARLO: And then an hour's sleep and ready – especially summertime, you'd have to start getting ready for Friday's market Thursday – this is Wednesday; you'd do the watering and things that you had to do, and then Thursday morning you'd be up again for Friday's market, and it was just one big round and round that went on.

Then after, at the end of the year, at Christmastime, January, then you'd have to start cleaning them out. You'd cut them all down, open all the ends up, go in with the tractor and drag them all out, drag all the dead plants out, and then I used to call and a chappie used to come with a ripper and rip down about two foot deep, and so then with the tractor again I'd put in eight scoops of cow manure and with a shovel, one on each side, we'd have to spread it out.

This is you and Eleonora.

GIANCARLO: Me and Eleonora, yes, with a shovel each.

Wow. Where did you get your cow manure from?

GIANCARLO: We used to get a contractor to deliver cow manure and sheep manure. And then, when we had a bit of spare time, we used to go to the chicken farm at Two Wells and get a little two-ton truck of fowl manure, then we'd clean up the sheds and put a plank and go up with a wheelbarrow, unload it, come down this plank.

ELEONORA: Because we didn't have to pay for that manure, but you had to do all the work.

GIANCARLO: We had to clean it up, yes, clean the sheds up for them. And then for about two years, after market, I used to go down to Morphettville to get the horse manure and get a half a load³ of horse manure. After market town, go down to Glenelg, get this half a ton – because it was nice and sandy – horse manure, come up to Bolivar, unload and I'd have a – after market, because I always used to get my own boxes back, most of them used to take my own boxes back so I'd be paying, instead of paying full price, I'd only pay a quarter, third of the price, so I'd have boxes on there and this horse manure. (laughs) So we'd unload it. I used to have about a fifty-foot strip that I used to park the truck next to, I'd just push it down a couple of times a week or once a week at least with this horse manure. Done it for three or four years.

ELEONORA: Yes. It was enough.

GIANCARLO: After market. Yes. (laughs) So after starting at two o'clock, sell all your veggies, and go down Glenelg and Morphettville and load up. So the old Chev truck done a good job.

ELEONORA: A couple of times you got sick, Frankie once come and help you a little bit when your dad was sick. A couple of friends they come and help a little bit, but not – --.

GIANCARLO: Every now and again I used to get a backache, couldn't hardly walk. But I'd still go to market and still with me fifty boxes of tomatoes I still had to unload them and deliver them too, even with a sore back. When I'd come home I couldn't walk much, so that was extra -- --.

And what would you do?

GIANCARLO: That was extra work for Eleonora, used to do all of it.

Wow.

GIANCARLO: I used to probably still be in the shed sorting a little bit, but most of the picking she'd do.

What were some parts of the job that you really liked, you know, what did you really enjoy?

GIANCARLO: (laughs) I suppose coming home.

³ From market I'd go to Morphettville and pick up half a load of horse manure and take it back to Bolivar. I already had empty boxes on the truck, and I would fill up the other half of the truck with horse manure. – JM

ELEONORA: Yes, when you sold all your vegetables.

GIANCARLO: When I sold – that was a big – – –.

ELEONORA: He was proud because he sold it all.

GIANCARLO: Come home with nothing.

ELEONORA: Some people couldn't sell all the vegetable, even those days, because it wasn't that easy to sell all the ones, all the vegetable you grew.

GIANCARLO: And to add up all your bookwork and see how much money you'd made.

ELEONORA: (laughter) That was the good part.

And you did all the bookwork, too?

GIANCARLO: Well, that's it, yes.

When did you do that?

ELEONORA: Sometime when you used to ring everybody up, that's when you'd write everything down.

GIANCARLO: But that was for the orders, but for the money part it didn't take us long to do the bookwork. After market.

And you've always kept really good records, you know, like that book that you've got there in front of you –

GIANCARLO: Yes, this book.

– has got records from when?

GIANCARLO: Well, this one's mainly from 1958.

From 1958.

GIANCARLO: Yes, when there was pounds. Two pounds eight shillings back in June 1958.

And that was when you were working for your dad at Lockleys.

GIANCARLO: Yes, at Lockleys.

But you always kept records?

ELEONORA: Yes.

GIANCARLO: Yes, the number, amount of boxes and the price. I've always got – – –.

ELEONORA: But even all the ones at Bolivar you've got.

GIANCARLO: And even at Bolivar, after –

ELEONORA: He's got all of them.

GIANCARLO: – I'd put down, because there'd be a market price was one price and what I collect was always a couple of – well, say dollars, be always a dollar less than what the market price, so I'd put that on the side, I'd put that down as well, what you collect, not what the market was, because, being a grower, you'd never get the top money. The merchants, when they sold it to the shopkeepers, they used to charge the top money, but the growers always had to get twenty cents less. So I'd put both prices until I finished.

ELEONORA: Until we finished.

And when would you say the best years were for you?

GIANCARLO: The best years was 1973 to 1980, they were the best years.

Can you say why they were the best years?

GIANCARLO: Well, because there was no Queensland tomatoes, because the month of October you always used to be short of tomatoes here in Adelaide. Then the merchants thought that they'd do a good thing and get tomatoes from Queensland, but for four or five years they done it on the side because they had to be gassed because of fruit fly, no vegetables could come into South Australia because of the fruit fly. Then after that they changed the law, the merchants changed the law, that they could get tomatoes from Queensland and that's when things started slowing down a little bit because you'd have tomatoes all the year round because they could buy semi-trailers full and keep them in their cooler.

ELEONORA: And used to grow them outside and use the machinery.

GIANCARLO: Yes.

ELEONORA: In the glasshouse we can't use machinery.

GIANCARLO: But then they could keep them for as long as they wanted when the new varieties started coming in.

And that affected what you grew and what you earned?

GIANCARLO: Yes. Then from 1980 – then the new market opened in 1987, I think.

At Pooraka.

GIANCARLO: At Pooraka. And the merchants started to have the big say in the growers. The growers were sort of kept to a side, and that's when things started slowing down. The tomato price hadn't gone up – it goes up – in 2006, 2007, went up to fifty dollars for a couple of markets when nobody had them, but they had them in the cool room, so they're the ones – they had Queensland tomatoes.

ELEONORA: Like the last ten years tomato growers can't make any money in Adelaide.

And that's about a bigger kind of situation, isn't it? Like can you say a little bit about what's changed?

GIANCARLO: Well, I think supermarkets have taken over, because the little greengrocers – when I started in Adelaide there used to be at least fifty to a hundred little trucks with a van and they used to be called hawkers, they used to go from house to house in their district and sell their veggies or had them ordered and that. Soon as it come to the Pooraka market they were sort of cut out, and so that's fifty little shops or more that us growers, as little growers, didn't have the sale for because they disappeared. And every year after that the little corner fruit shop got cut out and so they made it harder for us growers, until 2005/2006, they've cut half of the growers' shed, that used to be three hundred-odd growers, cut it down to a hundred and fifty, two hundred, because they put merchants in there with big cool rooms in there, and all them growers – a little bit they've stopped going to market because they didn't have sales, a lot of them were old Italian growers and Greek growers that were getting old and so they stopped, and now 2006/2007 there's half of the growers' shed is closed down, that there's no growers in there.

So food is being grown by huge companies.

ELEONORA: Huge, big company and delivered to the stores.

GIANCARLO: Woolworth's and Coles got their own growers.

ELEONORA: So they cut the little shop and the little growers out.

GIANCARLO: Woolworth's and Coles have got their own growers in Melbourne, Queensland, all around Australia, and they've got contracts with them, and so it's affected most of the growers here in Adelaide – there's potato growers and cauliflower growers, they have to give them all to the merchants because there's not many little shops around, where twenty years ago there used to be every truck had his own customers with cauliflowers and the other one had cabbages and they'd sell all that to

local shopkeepers, where now Woolworth's and Coles have got the lot. So then growers have –

ELEONORA: Disappeared.

GIANCARLO: – yes, they've gone, too.

What about the influence of say the Vietnamese and Cambodian?

GIANCARLO: Yes, well, they've taken over Virginia with the tomatoes and cucumbers, and there I've noticed that there's half a dozen Vietnamese that come to market and they get all the tomatoes from their friends or the local ones that are close to them and half a dozen of them have done real well because they go to market every day of the week. And so the few shopkeepers that are there, they go to them because they've got tomatoes every day of the week. But it's not all their grown – they've grown all them tomatoes, because they've got them – their friends that all – – –.

ELEONORA: It's like a co-op.

GIANCARLO: Yes, bit of a co-op, that they get so – they've done well there, where years ago every grower sold his own, and the last ten years that hasn't happened, that, even in the growers' shed.

ELEONORA: But even the Vietnamese now they're slowing down. The couple of Vietnamese that we knew, they've stopped growing, they've bought shops.

GIANCARLO: I don't know how they make a good living, any rate, with growing tomatoes.

You have had an arrangement with some Vietnamese growers on your property at Bolivar, haven't you?

GIANCARLO: Now, the last four or five years, I've had one Vietnamese that grew capsicums and cucumbers, and he'd have a good crop and then he'd have to give it to his local friend and he'd get no money – and work all the time, you know? So he done it for three years and then he gave it away, and now there's another Vietnamese that's got six glasshouses and he's growing only Vietnamese vegetables, and I don't know how he sells it but he's only got little bunch stuff that the Vietnamese, mainly the Vietnamese eat.

And, Johnny, you and Eleonora made a decision a couple of years ago to wind up your market garden at Bolivar, didn't you?

GIANCARLO: Yes, yes. We're getting on in age.

You're only – what?

GIANCARLO: (laughs) Sixty – when did we start, about '65, I suppose? So I've had –

ELEONORA: Forty-three years.

GIANCARLO: – forty-two years at Bolivar and the rest, over fifty years, since fifteen, in the glasshouses, so I've had a long time. Not that I regret it, but the wife wanted to be close to her children and that's what we decided to do is to move. Because while I was working it was good because you'd get up in the morning, even six o'clock, five or ten past six you'd be on the job, where living at Nailsworth you'd have to get in the car and go up the Bolivar. That's not a good idea. (laughs) So we decided to give it all away now.

ELEONORA: He's sixty-nine – – –.

GIANCARLO: No, sixty-eight this year.

And you're growing vegetables here (laughter) in your front *and* back garden?

GIANCARLO: Front and back yards, so don't want to lose the idea of growing my own veggies. We had a few plants of zucchini, I planted them in about August last year, and we had all zucchinis until February/March, so I've still got me hand on the vegetables.

That's great.

End of interview