



City of Port Phillip Living Heritage Project
Edited transcript – Leonard “Dugga” Beazley
Interviewees: Leonard “Dugga” Beazley [DB] and Frances Beazley [FB]
Interviewer: Cathy Dodson [CD]
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The family home

DB: Yes, well, you know we were Port Melbourne boys you know? Like, my life revolved around the Lagoon. I spent all my early years with my old man and his brother, in the boats. I was in boats right from an early age, you know, I’ve been in boats all my life. And I had kind of a bit of a different upbringing to a lot of kids. Yes, but when I was young, you know there was still a few fishermen at the Lagoon and but we were only young at the time and in 1951 we had a big storm and all the boats got smashed up in the Lagoon and that virtually wiped the fishing fleet out there you know? After it was all over there was only a couple of boats left still fishing there. Previous to that there was a few families there who had kids my age who they used to be knocking around down the Lagoon there when they were little. But after that storm they just grew away from the place, yes, but I grew up down there, you know?

CD: Was that partly because you were living close to it too, do you think?

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DB: Oh we only lived across the road from it, around the corner, in Bay St. I was born in Bay St, 104 Bay St.

CD: Let me turn then to a little bit more about your family. I was going to ask you to describe the house that you’d grown up in. Did you grow up in that one in 104 Bay St?

DB: Oh, only ‘til I was fifteen.

CD: Ok.

DB: Yes, I think fifteen or sixteen. I think we moved from there when I was – in 1955 or 1956. I think in ‘56. But it would have been when I was fifteen, I turned 16 the same year, you know? But I lived in a single fronted house round in Bay St, similar to the house that’s on the corner here. And it was as good as you could expect, but when I look back on it, after all these years it was a dump. [*Laughs.*] You know?

CD: [*Laughs.*] Why was it a dump?

DB: Well we never had much. It was two bedrooms, and it had a humpy out the back, which my old man had full of fishing gear. You know, we never had a shower. We just had to – It had a bath, we used to have a bath once a week, whether we needed it or not. [*Laughs.*] And we used to get up in the morning and go out in the side way and there was a gully trap and you’d turn the tap on and wash, have a wash with cold water, you know? There was no running hot water. There was, when I was really young, there was two rooms there. One was like a lounge room, one was a kitchen. But after we’d, oh I must have been about maybe ten I s’pose, my old man knocked the wall down. And his brother in law, Ted Chappell, he was married to my father’s sister, he was a plasterer and he come ‘round and plastered and made it in to one big room.

And that improved things a lot. We had a new fireplace in there, big fireplace. We used to have big rip-roaring fires in there. We used to go over the gasworks and get coke. I used to go over there with my grandfather. He used to have a big square box, and we'd go over there, just push the hand-truck and you'd go under there, and they'd put it under the sluice, they'd open the sluice and the coke would drop in to the truck and they would let it go until it was flowing out the sides. Two bob.

CD: Right.

DB: Twenty cents. You know, beautiful coke. You'd put it on the fire, a shovel full of coke on the fire, a couple of shovelfuls and it'd be still going the next morning. Keep all the house warm. You know?

CD: So that really added to the comfort of the house?

DB: Oh, yes, that's something you don't forget was the coke fires. My grandmother in there, she used to have a little fireplace in there with a grate, you know? She used to use – They used to call her "Cokey" *[Laughs.]*

CD: Because she always had a fire going?

DB: Yes, Cokey Bob. *[Both Laugh.]*

CD: Cokey Bob. What did she think of that name?

DB: Yes, she never ever said nothing. We used to also call her Maudie. Her name was Margaret. I never ever called her Nana or that, I always called her Maudie. It's the same here, the kids call me Dugga.

CD: Your grandchildren do?

DB: Yes, yes. Told them I don't want them calling me grandpa or Pops or all that shit. *[Laughs.]* Makes you feel old.

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CD: Fair enough. So the house, it was a weatherboard house?

DB: Yes.

CD: How many bedrooms did it have?

DB: Well two.

CD: Two bedrooms, and then the kitchen and the lounge that you were talking about?

DB: Yes. But it had, like a humpy at the back, a big room that had been built.

CD: So what is a humpy?

DB: It wasn't like a little humpy. Oh, it would be as big as this room, but it had a high ceiling in it, you know, it was actually higher than the house.

CD: So is it, really, today would we call it a shed? Or was it something different to that?

DB: No, no. No it wasn't a shed, it was actually a room, you know? Like whoever had it before us had built it on there.

CD: Right, so more like a 'lean-to'?

DB: And someone had been sleeping there, or living in there, but my old man had it full of nets and gear, you know? He used to - I remember one time there, you know, he was baiting the long-line, he had the long-line in there you know? And I was only, I don't know, very small, very young, but I can remember it clearly. I was playing with plasticine. And what did I do with the plasticine? I put it in the bloody long line basket. You know? Stuck it in the long line basket and of course when he went out in the dark in the night time, shooting the long line, it all stuck together with the bloody plasticine. [*Laughs.*] Yes.

CD: I suspect you weren't very popular?

DB: Oh, well. Yes. [*Laughs.*]

CD: And the house didn't have a bathroom? That you were growing up in?

DB: Well, it had a washhouse. But the washhouse where it had a copper in it, a wood copper, and a bath, you know, but it wasn't, you know, like a -

CD: A modern one?

DB: It was pretty rudimentary you know? It had a couple of troughs in there where the old girl used to do the, my mother, used to do the washing, you know? Line out the back, clothes line. Propped up with a lump of wood. [*Laughs.*]

CD: Yes. How big was the garden?

DB: No garden.

CD: All humpy? All taken up with buildings? Or, concrete area?

DB: No, no, it wasn't a very big back yard but it was all bricked, you know? Not concrete, it was bricked.