

Oral History Interview with Grant and Carol Paech

Interviewer: Birgit Heilmann

Date: 9 August 2010 (Disc 1 & 2)

Participants:

Q: Interviewer

M: Grant

F: Carol

Summary

Grant Paech was born on 5 December 1940 in Mount Barker. His father was Hermann Christian, born in Paechtown and he died in 1969. His mother was Leslie Alexandra Paech. The first Hahndorf generation of the Paechs – Johann Georg Paech with family – came on *The Zebra* to South Australia and developed Paechtown near Hahndorf, becoming naturalised in 1847.

Grant Paech married Carol (born in Adelaide 1944 of English descent) in 1966. They started the Beerenberg Farm in the early 1970s. In the interview Grant talks about childhood and teenage memories of life in Hahndorf. One focus of the interview is the dairy farm of Grant's father. The other focus is the beginning and development of the Beerenberg strawberry farm. The Paechs also talk about changes in Hahndorf and their favourite places to go.

(Start of digital file - Grant & Carol Paech 1)

(Note: Gaps in transcript due to Grant's speech not being clear)

Q: This is the interview with Grant and Carol Paech. We're in Hahndorf, the interviewer is Birgit Heilmann, today's the 9 August and it's for the Hahndorf Academy Project. To make a start, can you just say where and when you were born Grant?

M: I was born on the 5 December 1940 and I was born at the Mount Barker Hospital [...].

Q: And your parents lived in Hahndorf?

M: They built this house and they lived here on a farm on 250 acres. It has changed a little bit since then but my father had a dairy farm and mum just did the housework and looked after - I have got two sisters and us three children were brought up in this very house.

Q: And you all lived together here in the same house?

M: Yes.

Q: And also with your grandparents?

M: My grandfather – in the late 50s, no early 50s my grandparents built a flat onto our house. My mother was an only child and when they retired they came here with us. ... it's a granny flat, [...]. They built a bedroom for me, so the house really only had, it only had two bedrooms basically.

F: Really Grant's bedroom was in a sort of a small hallway so when they built on the granny flat he got a nice big bedroom so that was a big plus. That was in 1954 and also they put an indoor toilet as well.

Q: So what was before? Did you have to go outside?

F: It wasn't indoor, it was on the veranda wasn't it?

M: On the veranda, yeah that was the first toilet.

F: Because previously the toilet was sort of down the path as they were in those days.

M: Real Australian dunny. It was a tool shed for a while and then it was pulled down. The foundations for it are still there, out the back there.

Q: Out in the back but no one can go on it?

F: No, a tree grows over it.

Q: Can you remember kind of childhood memories about what did you do on a Sunday with family? Did you do something together or what was a normal Sunday like when you were young?

M: Yeah well being a dairy farm we had to milk the cows morning and night on Sunday and as a primary school child Dad used to make me help him when I was in Grade Six or Seven.

F: You would help on weekends would you?

M: On weekends yeah.

Q: You had no weekend, you had to work?

M: Well in summer time I had a friend I used to played tennis with on Sundays up at the Hahndorf Oval they had courts up there, still there and we used to play, Malcolm and myself used to play. He was a better tennis player than me.

F: He liked playing with you because he would always win?

M: I would win a few games but I would never win a set.

F: So would you have had a roast lunch every Sunday? That was something we used to do?

M: I think we had lots of roast lunches. I don't know whether we had anything special on Sundays or not.

Q: Did you go to church on Sundays?

M: There was a period when we used to go to church. My father – yeah my grandfather had a dispute with the Lutheran church.

F: That's on the Paech side.

M: On the Paech side and changed to the Church of England. The Church of England minister was my grandfather's really good friend. They used to read the bible together and things and he was quite religious – that's my late grandfather. ...but they were a pretty close family I would say. Mum and Dad used to have lots of arguments I suppose-

F: Over very, very insignificant things.

M: That was possibly normal for married couples.

F: Yeah, maybe it was in those days.

M: But Mum was a fairly good business woman in that – well don't know how good she was but she – she did the correspondence and paid the bills and that sort of thing.

F: And did she give your father some money?

M: I don't know about that but Dad was not very keen in using the telephone himself. He was a bit shy of that.

F: When did the telephone come here? When was it brought to Hahndorf because-

M: I think it was here before I was born. I think we always had the telephone. It was out in the front hall way.

Q: Your mother was more – she coordinated the business?

M: Well, in some ways Mum was quite good and she would teach Dad from her point of view [...].

Q: And who founded the dairy business? Was it your father or was it-?

M: My father, he was brought up on a farm at Paechtown, out the back of Hahndorf and so when he got the land I think he probably built the dairy and hay shed probably the same time he built the house or even maybe before so virtually I remember the dairy was a dairy – had milking machines he was one of the early people to have a milking machine so it was reasonably advanced.

Q: Did you milk with your hands? Did you have a machine?

M: Machine - always a machine [...] my father probably milked by hand somewhere. Somehow he was good with that sort of thing, but I never milked the cows by hand [...]. I have always had a milking machine since I was there.

Q: I don't really know what's going on a dairy farm. Can you explain a bit more about it? Did you help your father during the weekends when you went to school?

M: My father – when I started high school I had to help Dad. I had to stay home weekends and help with milking.

F: How many cows would you have been milking then?

M: We had between fifty and seventy. We were quite a large dairy. We had 250 acres here which is over 100 hectares and for this area it is a reasonably large farm.

Q: What is the normal day for a farmer on a dairy farm? You have to get up early or?

M: We generally get up just before light, around six o'clock in the morning – something like that, depends on the time of the year of course and my job was to get out and get the cows in ready for milking in the morning. I remember my father waking me when I slept in that bedroom – Dad used to walk out and yell out at me through the window 'Grant!'

F: A really nice way to wake up in the mornings (joke)

M: I used to get up and go out and milk then.

Q: And you had to bring the cows into the shed and milk them?

M: Yes.

Q: And how long did this take?

M: About an hour.

F: That's not very long.

M: About an hour and a half.

F: Did you put the cups on the teats – is that what your job was?

M: Yeah, well during the peak I normally got the cows into the shed. At first we had a four unit. We actually got eight cows in there and four teat cups and you would put the cups on the cow on the right side and then you'd go along to the other cows – the ones on the right side finished and then you'd have to swap over to the left [...].

F: So you would wash them with a solution first?

M: Just a rag and a bucket in warm water. We used to use – more for our sake than anything but we used to take hot water from the house. I suppose it's when we had the hot water service.

Q: So what kind of products did you get from your farm?

M: We sold whole milk.

F: Sold the milk to the dairy. The dairy used to send a truck around and they would pick up the milk in cans and it used to go off to the Jacob's Dairy factory.

M: In Mount Barker.

F: And you would get paid by the milk fat as how much the quality of the milk.

M: Well it would be tested by the fat content.

F: Butter fat.

M: And butter fat for some Jersey cows. - she might give you 5.3% butter fat and for the Friesians would have been about 3.4 something like that, but we had mainly a lot of Shorthorns, a red breed cows and they'd be about 4 % and every day when the cans were tipped [...] they were emptied into a vat at the factory. They would be weighed and mixed a bit and they would take samples to do a test called a Babcock test.

F: For butter fat.

M: And they had special little bottles with long necks and they put acid in the milk and the fat would rise and it would be measured in this long skinny neck of the thing and then they would put it into a spinner. At the factory I suppose it ... (unable to understand) and would put all these little – put in this spinner with terrific force – forced all the fat to the top and then measured it and paid you so much per pound of butter fat.

Q: So you didn't go to the market? They came to you?

F: Yes the milk cans would go straight to the factory and that's how it was in those days.

M: The truck – somebody would have a contract to pick up milk for the factory. A guy owned a truck and he used to take the full cans away and return – first of all unload tomorrow's empty cans and load up the full ones and take them away.

Q: And what about the clover invent.

F: Mount Barker clover?

Q: Yes, so did you also have some clover for the cows?

M: Yes, the pastures were Mount Barker Subterranean Clover and clover in this area and we used to plant rye grass which was a mixture of grass and clover and then a fair bit of things grown in pasture that we didn't really want and ... (unable to understand). That's called yellow for daisy flower - ... and whilst the ... - it left a bit of taint in the milk - if they are too much dandelion you could taste it.

Q: And did you have some other products besides of milk?

M: Well we had the calves, like the cows calf every year so you would keep the best of the heavy calves but you would have to sell the bull calves so that was another source of income and the only other source was selling old cows that have gone past it. They might have mastitis in a couple of teats.

F: And you would sell them for meat or for pet food or...?

M: They would be sold for meat. They were sold at the local market. A lot of the cows were bought by Jacob's – the local slaughter.

F: Meat factory.

M: Meat factory at Mount Barker and they used to call them – the ... used to sell them but didn't like people to know that they were selling them for slaughter so they used to call them Jake hopes

F: What were they called?

M: Knock this down to Jake Hubbs and everybody knew he was Jacob.

Q: Can I get back to your primary school days besides your work and having free time? Can you remember what kind of subjects you had at school?

M: Again I suppose that I think we did arithmetic, we did English.

F: History?

M: Yeah I think we-

F: History and geography?

M: We did history and geography but they were mainly English history, so it was about what King was born and what day it was – all very boring.

Q: Did you have some German at all?

M: No, no German history. It was very much – we were taught probably on a – it was probably then a bit like the British ... I suppose transplanted in Australia so we had a lot of history about English kings and queens and when they were born and I used to – I have forgotten it now.

F: A total waste of time really.

M: Yeah I suppose.

Q: And how long was school? Was it from the morning until the afternoon?

M: Sorry?

F: Was the school from morning till afternoon, from say 9 o'clock until 3.30 or...?

M: I think we had to be there at 9 o'clock and I think 3.30 you went home.

Q: And you went home by foot?

M: Well the first year I started but I had a bike – when I was quite young – I think when I was probably – from Grade Two onwards I had a seven inch wheel bike – a little one which I had got then – I only had that because Uncle Frank – his kids were a bit older and we inherited that sort of stuff.

Q: That's good, that's handy to go by bike.

F: You used to get swooped by magpies you used to tell me.

M: Yeah, that was for a period of riding my bike to school. I remember I think I had got a bigger bike by then and some magpies used to swoop me and peck my head and I remember once I went to school – I got there – I knew I had been hit in the head, when I got to school

the school teacher nearly fainted – I had all blood running down here. And she made a big fuss about it.

F: You hadn't noticed really.

M: No I hadn't.

F: It didn't bother you?

M: You don't ... under a cap - I wasn't aware of bleeding.

Q: The magpies are quite unfriendly sometimes?

F: Nasty things?

M: And then I remember a period I rode my bike to school I used to put an ice cream container over my head to protect me.

Q: On your way back did you go to some shops? Did you have a favourite shop in Hahndorf where you would go?

M: Yeah there were three shops that I can remember. There was Kramm's in the back - ... the fruit and veg man-

F: And lollies.

M: On Victoria Street and you would get lollies and ice creams there and in the main street there was Mrs Post, which is still operating as a shop today under different ownership and that's where I remember she had asked my sister Cathy whether my mother had new dresses.

F: She would find out all the gossip.

M: Yeah.

F: Very underhand wasn't it?

M: Yeah and then the other shop was Four Square Grocery Store.

F: Four Square.

M: And it became a Four Square store and there they sold newspapers as well.

F: And groceries.

Q: What was your favourite shop as a boy?

M: I think Betty Post's shop where you would get coca cola and lollies and things. That was my favourite shop and that kept going for a long time.

F: That only sort of changed when Heidi started, probably five years ago so it's not that long since Mrs Post was there. She died obviously.

M: Yeah, she died obviously and of course we had Zadow's next to that – drapery store. That I wouldn't say was my favourite shop.

F: No.

M: My mother was very friendly with Mrs Zadow. She was a nice person. That would be the main things I remember about shops and in Hahndorf – the Academy is just opposite Mrs Post's shop.

F: That's Heidi's coffee shop. That's the shop and Mrs Post lived in the back of it.

Q: And it only changed five years ago or recently?

F: It's not very long.

M: And another thing I remember doing – I remember getting up in the ceiling of the Academy. It was called – it was the old college [...]. I used to go up and walk around the timbers up the top and then you could look out through the front window there and you could look straight across to Post's shop.

F: I am sure you weren't supposed to be doing that?

M: No.

Q: In the afternoon after school?

M: Maybe something like that and no we weren't allowed to do it.

F: No.

M: I used to crawl around up there.

Q: And when you grew older was there some time and place where you could go for dancing and having a beer?

M: Oh yes, there was a dance – they built – I think the old Institute which was there all my life – the old one had – my father was on the Institute committee and he used to – they built a new Institute in front of the old one and what was the old Institute has become the present supper room.

(Interruption - someone came into the room)

M: What was I talking about?

F: The Institute and your father on the Institute committee?

Q: I understand – correct me – that was the old Institute and they built a new Institute in front?

M: Yes.

Q: And the old Institute has become what?

M: A supper room.

F: A supper room at the back.

Q: And so there you could go for some entertainment.

F: Dances and things.

M: We used to-

F: Did your parents go to the dances at the Institute?

M: Yeah, they were on the committee and mum used to make pasties.

F: To raise money probably for the Institute.

M: Half dozen ... - made pasties and sold them at the dance for funds probably for the Institute committee and I remember in this very room I used to have to turn the handle of the grinder – the mincer.

F: Here to make pasties?

M: Yes, ... (unable to understand) and I used to turn the handle and they would put through-

F: Stewing steak or something.

M: I remember vegetables. I think the meat they bought-

F: Already minced.

M: And that would be mixed up with it and they used to make the pastry – they used to cut circles around a plate—

F: A little plate.

M: A dinner plate.

F: And cut around it.

M: And then cut around there with a knife and then you would end up with a round piece-

F: And you would stuff in the middle and then wrap it up.

M: Put that down and in one half you would put the meat and vegetable mixture.

Q: And it was for the?

F: To raise money for the Institute.

Q: And did you go to some pubs as well in Hahndorf?

F: When he was older?

M: Only when I was a bit older. I think in those days you couldn't drink in hotels until you were 21, but when I was about 18/19. I used to go down to the Verdun hotel so they didn't know me there.

Q: So they didn't ask how old are you?

M: No, but I think they probably knew me.

F: In those days the wives and the females and the children used to have to sit outside in the car and the men were the only ones allowed in the bar to have drinks. It was not very good really; not very good socially.

Q: And was it still the six o'clock closing?

M: Yes but I think we had arrangements, this is when I got a bit older – about seventeen, eighteen, nineteen we used to buy bottles of beer from the hotel.

F: Hahndorf Inn or German Arms?

M: Hahndorf Inn – Peter's parents

F: Peter Kuhlmann's parents

M: Yes, and we used to go and tap on the side window and they would hand the beers through there.

F: And what, would you drive up the oval or down the street and drink your beer?

M: Yeah, I think up to the oval yes.

Q: Okay, so this was after six?

F: After six o'clock.

Q: And under 18 drinking?

F: Yes, all bad.

Q: So the oval was a kind of a social meeting place?

F: The oval?

M: Well, not really it's just that we used to go there.

F: Nobody was there I suppose. It would be a good thing to do.

M: Go there because we bumped into some other people in their cars.

Q: And was this the time you met each other?

M: No before that.

F: We didn't meet until about 1964, so were well into your twenties then.

M: Yeah, I had plenty of girlfriends before her.

F: Oh, well that's good. I like to hear that.

Q: Where did you meet?

F: We met in Adelaide.

M: At an older dance.

F: He went down with one of his friends to try and find some new girls and he very luckily met me and the funny thing was I lived at Henley Beach which was directly opposite to Hahndorf. He asked to take me home after the dance.

M: My father told me 'always ask a girl where she lives before you ask her home', but I just didn't – I said 'Can I take you home?'

Q: Did you have a car?

M: Yes.

F: That was a good question. He borrowed his parent's car because you didn't have cars in those days and he and his friend.

M: Yes I did.

F: Yeah, you did but it was hardly a car, Grant. It was a very old car.

M: Yeah, I had an old car.

F: So he had to take me from Norwood down to Henley Beach and then right back through Norwood again back up to Hahndorf and then get up at six o'clock to milk the cows so that was true love wasn't it really?

Q: Yes.

F: So that would have been about 1964 and then we were married in 1966.

Q: So then you moved to Hahndorf?

F: Yes.

M: We built a house before we got married.

F: Yes, just next door here on part of the farm which Grant's father had given to him because of SA Water bringing their pipes up to-?

M: Yeah, bringing the water mains just across the corner of our land which made the whole farm became rateable and he got advice to give me two blocks-

F: Two corners weren't they?

M: Both sides allowed to take two blocks of land and it meant that I became up for water rates.

F: Which wasn't very much.

M: It wasn't very much. [...] were not rateable.

F: So we built our house in early 1966 and moved in there when we were married in April 1966.

M: And the farm was still paying water rates?

F: Oh yes definitely.

Q: How did it feel like moving from Henley Beach to Hahndorf?

F: Yes it was quite a lot different but it was very nice. I was newly married and I used to go down to Adelaide on the bus each day to where I worked.

M: For about a year she worked in her old job.

F: For about a year and then we decided to start a family and that would have been in 1967 and our first son was born early in 1968 and then another one 1969 and then another daughter in 1971 so that was really nice and I enjoyed moving to Hahndorf but it was a lot colder than Henley Beach.

M: But those days people in Hahndorf the people would have been pretty friendly wouldn't they?

F: Yes.

M: Like I felt it would be like all country people, everybody knew each other and talked to each other in the streets and I remember once saying 'That is talk for' and she would chat but I remember when I went to high school.

Q: In Mount Barker?

M: Yeah, Mount Barker High because the bus is going past here and at the time half of the kids went to Mount Barker High and the other half went to Oakbank Area School. The bus left from the main street to go that way and Mount Barker High would go this way and I just sort of enjoyed – well it was good because there was a bit of a row for about a month at one stage I knew a couple of kids that used to catch the bus ..., then some other people came and they wanted ... down towards the other end of the street more and eventually I had to walk down. The bus went past here.

F: But they wouldn't let you off?

M: They wouldn't stop so I had to ride down in front of Haebich's.

F: Right, yes.

M: To catch the bus.

Q: So what was different in Mount Barker because you said that you were in the country and everyone talked to each other?

F: Everyone talked.

Q: Was the same in Mount Barker because I think it was also a country-

M: Well yes I suppose although my mother had lived in Mount Barker as a teenager and she was always biased with Mount Barker.

F: She liked Mount Barker.

M: And all her friends were from Mount Barker because they had all married different-

F: Grown up together.

M: Mount Barker people – so Mum was Mount Barker-biased.

F: I can remember you saying though how you would walk down the main street of Hahndorf and you would say hello to everyone and then one of the times when you were a young adult and you went down to Adelaide and you couldn't understand why you couldn't say hello to everyone and the person you were with said 'Be quiet, be quiet, don't keep speaking to people, that's silly' and you were quite shocked to think that people in Adelaide didn't say hello to everybody.

Q: Okay.

M: Yes well I was a ... - I don't know for some reason I was allowed to go to the Adelaide Show and I was put up by some people who lived fairly close to the showground and they kindly – and they had sons roughly the same age as me and we used to go to the Adelaide Show as kids and while I had been there before with my parents but we were walking to the show and I would say hello to everybody and I was told 'That's stupid, you don't do that. You don't talk to people.'

Q: Don't talk to strangers. The difference – I think it's a nice situation here – in small towns, that you have more contact than in the city.

M: So you do get a bit about the family history of everybody.

Q: And you know when someone is sick and-

F: Sick or had a baby or a bereavement or whatever.

M: Who their parents were and that sort of thing. So that's a bit of difference and they ended up marrying a city girl.

F: That was wonderful for him. He's never regretted it.

M: ...

Q: Can we talk a bit about your starting Beerenberg strawberry idea and how come that you changed from dairy farming to a different type of-

M: Well there wasn't a plan to change from dairy farming but when we got married I think I told you this last time – when they finished the house there was a lot of old bricks and lumps of wood and things lying around and we put fresh soil. We had it carted in from outside by a contractor ... and they dropped a few truck loads of good soil around two sides of the house and because – and I was a student at Roseworthy Agricultural College – well I graduated from there and we got I think the magazine was called-

F: I think it was an agriculture journal or something and it had strawberry growing in it and you thought 'This is interesting.' You were looking for some-

M: A few of the articles in the journals and I kept them for years and years.

F: They would be somewhere.

M: Probably stored somewhere and about growing strawberries using plastic film and a mulch.

F: Making a mound, covering it with plastic and then making holes in the mound and planting the plants so they keep clean and they're easy to pick.

M: And the moisture, there's lots of advantages-

F: And stop the weeds from growing.

M: We planted about-

F: Half an acre or something – oh no, smaller than that – about ten rows or something.

M: We had strawberries growing around our house.

Q: The strawberries came from where?

F: From Toolangi weren't they in Victoria. We still get the plants from the same place actually, all these years later.

M: And a scheme over there of growing a virus-free strawberry plants-

F: In the mountains and that's the place to get your strawberry plants from.

M: We still get them from there.

F: So we put in a few plants and I used to take them down to work to sell them and it sort of grew from there.

M: She was our first sales lady.

F: First sales lady, first strawberry picker.

M: We used to take down on the bus-

F: Only a few punnets. It wasn't very many.

Q: What happened next, so what was the next development?

F: Well we then the following year we planted about three quarters of an acre of strawberries and then we had to get someone to help us pick them and pack them and-

M: We paid so much an hour and that was sixty cents an hour.

F: sixty cents an hour to pay someone to pick them and at that stage we were getting someone else to sell them in the market for you.

M: Yes.

F: And then the following year I think you put in a bigger patch and so it sort of grew and grew and grew and then one day you were making a shed up on the road here to pack the strawberries in.

M: Packing shed.

F: You were nailing iron on the shed and someone pulled up and said 'Can I buy some of your strawberries?' and the lights went on in your head and you said 'I'll make a shop' so you changed the plans because in those days you didn't have to worry about council plans or anything and-

Q: You changed the plans for the shed?

F: Yeah, for the packing shed.

M: I didn't know about that.

F: You didn't have a plan really. You just made a door that made the whole front part of - the packing shed would open up and we would have a small room there which was a shop.

M: A corner of it.

F: A little corner of it and while you were banging, putting nails, building you sold a couple of trays of strawberries or so, so that was a good start for a shop wasn't it?

M: Got the idea for that.

Q: And what time was this, what was the year roughly?

F: It would be the late 60s.

M: What time of the year?

F: It would have been probably November say 1970 something like that I reckon and then the jam part of it – that was a few years after that and a fellow strawberry-grower from Adelaide rang Grant and said ‘I need some strawberries picked for jam. I have got a big order and I can’t fill this order so can you pick some of your strawberries’ so Grant sent the pickers out to pick some strawberries and one of them saw a snake or something and they’d only picked a small amount so they came back and they said ‘We don’t want to work out there anymore, we’ve seen a snake – here’s the strawberries,’ so off they went so Grant said – it wasn’t enough to take down to Adelaide to this fellow strawberry-grower so he made the first batch of Beerenberg jam on our kitchen stove in his mother’s preserving pan.

M: And I think it had a wooden spoon in there too?

F: And it all boiled over and it was a terrible mess.

M: *Green and Gold*-

Q: Did you know how to make the jam or did you need some help?

M: No I had probably seen my mother making jam in here.

F: You came down to ask her though if she would make it.

M: I thought she might. She was a widow.

F: She was a good cook.

M: And she left me sort of standing outside that door and-

F: She disappeared, didn’t she?

M: Went into the pantry and came out with aluminium pan and the *Green and Gold* cookery book and chucked it through the door to me.

F: And said ‘Here you are, make your own jam.’

M: Make it yourself, so I think I had ... didn’t I.

F: Well, you’ve got to tell it again.

Q: Oh yes, I think you told this last time but I would like to hear it again.

M: Well she gave me the pan and the *Green and Gold* cookery book and I had to go down to the local Four Square Store and buy a bag of sugar and I went back and-

F: At night, you had to make it at night. We had to make it at night because our children were all little children then running-

M: [...].

F: Well they had gone to bed you see – otherwise it was dangerous really to have spitting jam around the place.

M: Do you know about the show – 96?

F: There used to be this rather R-rated show start on TV back in 1970 called Number 96 and there was a bit of nudity in it. It was very, very different. Anyway this girl would be sort of coming nude and Grant would be making his jam and would have to run and have a look to see what was happening you know and of course he would be looking and the jam would all be flowing over onto the stove and it was a terrible mess and I had to clean up the mess.

Q: So did it taste well?

F: Yes it did and we used to put it in little milk plastic containers and well – we didn't have jars or anything and-

M: We had a-

F: We used to cool it down and then put it in there.

M: We had the shop selling strawberries, that would keep the packs up there and then we started putting second grades sort of thing – say ... ones, bruised or overripe – they would go out as jam ... - we used to sell them and I remember that where I think it was three punnets for-

F: Yes I think it was three punnets for \$1 or something. It was quite good.

M: and they were good ones ...

F: Oh were they.

M: But anyhow we were quite successful in our shop.

F: And the reason we had the cream containers – we were buying 50% cream in milk cans from Jacob's factory and this big can of cream would come home and we would tip it out and fill our cream cartons and sell strawberries and cream in our shop so that went really well so we had all these cream containers which we put jam into which we would have to label or something as well I think, so that's how we started selling our jam for the first time.

Q: Interesting, just we'll just have a short break because I have to change the disc.

(End of digital file Grant and Carol Paech 1)

(Start of digital file Grant and Carol Paech 2)

Q: Okay so we spoke about the starting days of the strawberry farm. When did you decide or when did you become the *Beerenberg Farm*, so was it from the beginning when you had a name?

M: We called ourselves *Willow Island*.

F: We had a dam up the road and it had a little island in the middle and it had a willow tree and we thought *Willow Island* would be a good idea but-

M: We went with that for maybe a year or so and had a bloke selling our strawberries down at ...

F: In Adelaide.

M: And we got a nasty letter from lawyers-

F: I don't know which company it was but it appeared that we had infringed some copyright of some big company [...].

M: [...].

F: Yes and we had to stop that name immediately which we did so Grant then decided to call our jam Hahndorf Homemade Jam – we got our labels printed up and Annie Fox who is a local artist in Hahndorf said to Grant one day 'Grant, that is the boringest name you could ever have, let me think up a better one for you'. And also someone else had started up Hahndorf Homemade Jams hadn't they?

M: Yeah, we had to change the name and she was – I think she was from Lithuania or somewhere –?

F: Yeah, Annie Fox - yes.

M: And she knew a bit of German and I said I want a name to celebrate the German heritage of what we do and the reason I asked her is because she was printing our labels.

F: Yes, she and her husband Brian were printing our docket books and labels I think in Hahndorf. They had a printing business in Hahndorf so anyway Annie came up with about six to eight different names.

Q: Can you remember?

F: No because apparently some of them were – I think they were all sort of in German and a couple of them were a little bit rude but she didn't tell us that but we chose *Beerenberg* because it more or less meant hill and berry as you would know – hill and berry– and that seemed to fit because we were growing strawberries and we were on a slight hill so it sort of had a bit of meaning.

Q: So then you produced the new labels?

F: Yes.

M: And then after a while we progressed to using colour instead of black and white.

F: Which was quite a nice label really; I quite liked that round first Beerenberg label.

M: Well Annie designed it all and the format of the word *Beerenberg* is how Annie – she ... that up and it just sort of-

F: That sort of printing type style.

Q: And what happened next – this was then in the mid 70s?

F: Yes, it would have been.

Q: And you continued to get new products?

F: Yes, we started – someone came – one of our employees said ‘We can make some pickled onions for you’ and we were growing gherkins. By this time I think we had almost sold the dairy cows in the early 70s and we sort of went to doing beef cattle to keep the grass down and the blackberries down.

M: And concentrate more on strawberries.

F: Yes, well actually no – before that we had a milk round – we were selling our milk. The milk was coming – we were selling it straight to consumers in Mount Barker and Brukunga and Littlehampton was it?

M: Yeah, we started selling it to David.

F: That’s right; we sold it to another fellow who had a milk round.

M: He went broke eventually.

F: He went broke and I had a whole room-

M: He owed us money.

F: And I had a whole room full of cheques that weren’t any good – they all bounced when you sent them to the bank so it wasn’t good, so we eventually took over his round in payment.

Q: So ... dairy farms and was your father alive?

F: No he had died by this time.

M: He died in 1969.

F: And this would have been the early 70s I think.

M: That all happened after Dad died.

F: And then Grant was actually doing the milk round which was pretty bad because he would leave home at eleven o’clock at night and get home about nine o’clock in the morning. You were so slow. By this time he had another fellow actually milking the cows for us so but you were taking a long time to do the milk round I remember, very slow progress.

M: I think we had Brukunga, Mount Barker and Littlehampton.

F: And you used to have to ladle out the milk and put it into people’s billies.

Q: You had a big container and put the milk on the door.

M: Yeah we had ten-gallon cans and then we had a carry can which I think was two gallons or something which had a lid on it and had a little rail inside that could hang a pint dipper on and you used to have to run around.

F: Trip over taps in the dark and that sort of stuff.

M: [...]. Anyhow that was good because we were selling milk for about 20 cents or in those days two shillings a gallon roughly is what we would get and then for the round we would get eight cents a pint, that's 64 cents a gallon we got.

F: That was a lot better but it was a lot more work too.

M: So it barely left an income.

F: Yes.

Q: And you didn't get any sleep at all?

F: No he was very bad-tempered.

M: I used to sleep in the afternoon didn't I?

F: Yes you did but you weren't quite right.

M: No.

Q: I think when you came home at night and in the morning you had to start your work with the strawberries?

F: Yes you had to do some work but – because I think too you had arranged for someone else to sell strawberries then too, so you had someone milking the cows and someone – but you still had to do the farm work too. It wasn't a good time.

M: This was before I was thirty and I was still pretty fit.

Q: And when did you sell the cows?

F: In '72/'73 we sold the dairy cows but we then bought beef cattle – Shiralee beef cattle and changed some of the dairy herd over to beef cattle for breeding too I think.

M: Yes so we got our dairy farm to beef cattle farming.

F: And beef cattle farming wasn't-

M: And had the milk round.

F: You wouldn't have made a living out of it but it was some way of keeping the grass down and blackberries from not growing too much, that sort of stuff so that was good.

M: I had a pretty good understanding of agriculture after going to Roseworthy. I learned a lot there.

Q: Lots of different things about agriculture.

M: They had dairy herds but they also had a beef herd – they had sheep.

F: They had chooks.

M: They had a big poultry farm. They had a bit of everything and we had a fair bit of lucerne and I think it was really – those days the water came from the mains. They irrigated the lucerne with it.

F: And also through those early 70s we grew some potatoes in conjunction with our brother-in-law. That was only for a couple of years wasn't it.

M: Three years.

F: Where we went into share-farming to grow potatoes and also you grew some swedes at one stage. You were selling and growing swedes. That's a root vegetable – I don't know whether you know swedes and that was reasonably successful too and also brussel sprouts. You went into a share-planting brussel sprouts.

M: One or two years.

Q: And where did you get the seeds from?

F: These people were growing potatoes or brussel sprouts so they did all the work but we had the input of-

M: Where did we get the seeds from for brussel sprouts? I don't know.

F: No, the grower would have planted them.

Q: Okay.

F: The grower who was growing them.

M: We would buy the brussel sprout plants did we?

F: Yes and the same with Barry – with the potatoes.

Q: So it was locally grown?

F: Yes.

M: I got to know quite a few – we used to sell things down at the East End Market. I used to have breakfast with all the growers – apple growers, brussel sprout growers – that sort of thing and I had contacts where I learnt how some things were done, but also I was a bit of an-

F: Entrepreneur.

M: A leader in squash.

F: Yes we were the first people to grow squash in South Australia or Adelaide Hills.

Q: What's that?

F: Squash, those little vegetables and also-

M: ... to fruit and veg shops.

F: And also zucchinis – we were the first people to grow zucchinis and that didn't last very long because the zucchinis were so easy to grow – every backyarder can grow them so that didn't last long and you also grew some snow peas at one stage but they were so hard to – they cost about \$10 a little punnet. You would have to sell them for – the make a living because they were too labour-intensive or something and then you tried raspberries but it wasn't cold enough and you grew blackcurrants and that had a funny story because one of our pickers had to go and pick the blackcurrants on a particular day she went over right over to the back with her container and she picked the blackcurrants and she bought them back. I think she had a tray or something – a cardboard tray and she was crossing the road and this big truck went past and the wind sort of knocked the-

M: The wind lifted it up out of her arms.

F: Out of her hands and they fell on the road.

M: And then there was another big truck coming straight after it and squashed the lot and there were blackcurrants sort of down the road and she was most distressed because this was the whole crop of blackcurrants so they weren't grown very much because it was a bit of a disaster.

Q: And did you sell all your different products only in your shop or did you have some other-

M: To start we sold them in the shop – jams but pretty soon we had a truck going to the market selling strawberries and put a few boxes of jam on the truck and started selling them down in Adelaide and they went very well, so Beerenberg products were being sold in say twenty or thirty different fruit and veg shops in Adelaide.

F: And they are still really doing that too. There's still a lot of fruit and veg shops have-

M: Still the contact there.

F: So that's good but these days we grow plums and cherries and chillies for putting in products and strawberries of course and what else-

M: Plums and cherries but we never have really been able to process cherries.

F: No. We just sell them fresh and they go over to Lenswood to be sorted and sold to other places but we do sell a lot in our shop.

Q: Where do you get the recipes from for your chutney and different – are they family recipes or is it from?

M: The first recipes I remember for jam was out of the *Green and Gold* cookery book – virtually I think the standard jam recipe was a pound of fruit and a pound of sugar-

F: And some water or something.

M: And a bit of lemon juice but we were able to find people who sold pectin and to add pectin to make it set better. We buy citric acid.

F: Yes I think so.

M: Buy dry citric acid, that's put into the jam to tone down the sweetness and fruit and sugar.

F: But most of the recipes now – like Grant used to be in charge of new product development but now we have a person that does all of that and he has got a good knowledge of recipes and you are always looking for new recipes because that's how you keep going so each year we have new recipes and new ideas for things.

M: One a couple of weeks ago – what's it called?

F: Caramelised onion and worcester relish.

M: No, it's marmalade.

F: Ginger marmalade. I think we gave you some of that but you didn't like ginger.

Q: Maybe I should try? What's your favourite? Do you have a favourite from your different products?

F: I like apricot jam and I like plum jam.

M: Probably apricot.

F: I love apricot jam. I think it's really nice.

M: Strawberry jam is quite nice but I wouldn't eat strawberry jam-

F: Because our best sellers are tomato sauce and strawberry jam but I personally like raspberry better than strawberry but I do like apricot. I like quince jelly too and we make rose petal jam just as something a bit different and I grow all the roses out the back here so that's a bit different too and that sort of thing is fairly steady for quite a few years.

M: It's a good steady time.

F: Something a bit different, people like that.

M: We make redcurrant jam.

F: And cranberries but of course-

Q: Do you have some connections to other farmers and fruit suppliers in the area? Are you having a kind of a supporting network?

F: Not really. There aren't many farmers around here anymore.

M: We do buy our apricots and citrus. They come from up the river.

F: Yes they do from around Cadell and that on the Murray River.

M: We are very loyal to anybody that supplies us. We are very loyal to the growers.

F: We did buy a few figs from a local grower but there isn't as much agriculture around here as there used to be because Grant used to be in the Mount Barker Agricultural Bureau where you would go around and look at people's dairies and their pastures and things like that. They are not there anymore – more or less hobby farms and lifestyle and that sort of stuff.

Q: I think that's a good point to ask – you're living here since the 70s?

F: Yes late 60s.

Q: And a bit longer?

F: Yes.

Q: What can you say about how has Hahndorf changed through the years?

M: Well the main change is it's a tourist thing. It's really good for us because you've got nice restaurants in Hahndorf. There is so many different places keep opening up don't they?

F: Yes.

M: We've always got a new place to go to when we want to go out.

F: Yes.

M: And it has made Hahndorf very popular so we get benefit from that because-

F: We have got over the years – when I first came here you couldn't get a loaf of bread unless you ordered it and now we've got a couple of bakeries and we've got a hardware store and we've got a new IGA store which is lovely and we've always had a good butcher but – we've got a chemist. Well we've always had a chemist but it's certainly changed a lot.

Q: What do you mean you had to order a loaf of bread?

F: There was a baker there but it wasn't for tourists. It was really you gave your order and he would just make what you want. He wasn't open every day. I think most shops used to close over the weekend so if you didn't put your order in you wouldn't get anything but I think too not long after we were married there used to be a milk delivery – not that we needed the milk because we had our own milk but there was a milkman delivering to the houses and also there was a baker delivering to the houses too but that doesn't happen anymore of course, so things change.

M: Baker used to come here didn't he?

F: Yes, that was a bit later though. That would have been in the early 80s.

M: And the fruit and veg man used to come around.

F: Mr Kramm used to come around and do the fruit and veg but he never came to us. I think he mainly came to people in Hahndorf because we were sort of slightly out.

M: No he didn't come.

F: No, he never came here.

Q: And you had your own ...

F: Well I don't know. I used to just go to the shop and buy it but for some reason – he obviously had enough customers and didn't have to come here.

M: He used to have a cup of tea with every customer apparently.

F: So we were told.

M: I don't know how you could have-

F: 20,000 cups of tea.

Q: Do you want to add something to your really interesting family business history story? Have I forgotten to ask anything?

F: Well now we sort of aren't doing the same things as we were doing and our children have taken over from us. Our eldest son Anthony is the Managing Director and he is more – I think he is probably doing a much better job than we're doing now because as you get – you have big steps and we'd gone about as far as we could go or wanted to go and also I think these days it's so much harder to do business and to build things and do things because of all these rules and regulations and especially with workplace safety and product safety and all this sort of thing. I think if we'd had all of those rules, we probably wouldn't have progressed because you didn't have that to worry about. You just did sensible things but these days there are so many rules and regulations – it's scary.

M: Probably to some extent – well I would have found it too hard for me. Carol did for us – we always found everything new hard, but eventually you get good at it and ..., but now our children are a bit educational – Carol has. I mean we have both got our Year Eleven.

F: We were fairly intelligent people but you've got to have so much more. I mean it's all about marketing and presentation and that sort of thing now I think which – you produce something and then you sold it for something and you made a profit and it was sort of fairly simple but these days selling and dealing with the big supermarkets and that it's so much more involved and you really need a person dedicated just for that. Well we just didn't have the time for all of that. We were so busy packing the things or making the things but it is just so much more complicated now.

M: The business has progressed and we have more people doing the jobs that we used to do and in one way I miss not being the boss but in another way I know I can't do it and I let Carol boss me around now.

F: So I'm the boss of him but that's about all.

Q: It's good to see that it's carrying on?

F: Yes, it's continuing.

Q: Because your children are interested in-

F: Yes and we're very thankful for that too and we hope that it continues for ever. Who knows?

M: There on the fridge you can see our grand children there.

F: So hopefully one day they might.

Q: Grow strawberries.

F: Hopefully they won't muck it up which is quite probable.

Q: The last question I want to ask you – what's your favourite place here in Hahndorf? What would you say if someone asked you, what do you like best about Hahndorf?

F: I quite like walking from here. I like walking around our farm but I do like walking down to the main street when there's not so many people around and in the middle of summer when all the trees are full bloom and that sort of thing and I really enjoy doing that on a sort of a summer's night.

Q: That sounds great.

F: And maybe going down and having a coffee or a drink in one of the cafes.

M: We never used to go out – except when we were courting many years ago – we went for years without having a cup of coffee anywhere.

F: You didn't do that then.

M: We do appreciate going in and having a cup of coffee in one of the trendy places in the main street.

F: You sort of go along the main street and go to a different one and then start again and there will be a few different ones and it's quite interesting.

Q: So which would you say that is your favourite coffee shop in Hahndorf?

F: What do you like doing in Hahndorf or around here? You like just sitting around under a tree.

M: Go and have a piece of quiche or something and a cup of coffee.

Q: That sounds good.

M: Or something on the lighter side. I remember when I was younger I used to love going to the Murray Bridge rodeos - ...

F: They used to be very, very popular.

M: I don't really like that now.

F: No because you change.

M: That was good. I remember a good eating-out place before I think we got married was opposite *The Eagle on the Hill* – the Shell Service Station.

F: The Shell Service Station at Eagle on the Hill you had a lovely view and you had steak and chips and tomato and lettuce which was – and a cappuccino and that was really wonderful but these days that would not be wonderful and it's just that things change and I think expectations change so much and I think everything is getting a little bit too much and I think they should get back to the basics a bit. That's what I think.

M: About our favourite place to go and have a cup of coffee at – I don't think I have got a favourite. I'd like to go somewhere different. Generally there's a new place or some sort isn't there.

F: Well driving around the hills is lovely anyway and seeing the apple orchards in Lenswood and the Piccadilly Valley and it's all pretty – it's all lovely.

Q: Thanks very much for the interview.

F: It's our pleasure.

Q: And all the interesting stories.

F: I hope it's good.

(Recording stopped)