



## Trevor Guy

---

*Trevor Guy was born in Launceston in 1917. His first job was with the Agricultural Bureau in Tasmania, but he soon left there and joined Holyman's Airways, where he rose from office boy to Airport Manager. After nineteen years in the airlines business he left and became a commercial traveller, selling television sets for AWA around country NSW. After another nineteen years he left AWA and with two others began Rank Arena in NSW, where he stayed until his retirement in 1980. He now lives at Umina with his wife.*

---

My Dad was a state and federal politician, and finished up as a Senator. James Allan Guy. His grandfather, James Guy, was the first Labor man ever elected to the Senate from Tasmania. In those days - 1914 - it wasn't a party ticket that you voted for, you voted for the individual, and enough people had faith in him to vote him in as a Senator, despite the fact that in those days Labor people weren't very highly thought of. They were, you know, thought of as anti-social by most people. My grandfather died of cancer in 1920. My father took his seat, filled the vacancy left by my grandfather when he resigned to go for the Senate in 1916. He carried on in that seat till 1929, when the Labor Party were anxious to get rid of the Bruce/Page government. People reasoned that Allan Guy and Joe Lyons were pretty strong in Tasmania and that each could probably win a federal seat, so they approached my father and Joe Lyons to resign their state seats and stand for federal office. I was old enough to understand what was going on, and I can remember my father saying, "That's all very well, but I've got a safe seat here for the rest of my life. If I resign it and go for the House of Reps and I lose, then what have I got? Nothing! I think I could probably win the seat, but at the same time, I've got a wife and family to look after." So they took out an insurance policy for 850 pounds if he lost. I don't know if that sort of thing happens these days, but if

they do, they don't happen for 1700 dollars! So he won the seat of Bass, Joe Lyons won Wilmot, and Labor won. In 1931 Joe Lyons and my father resigned from the Party and formed the United Australia Party in 1932. They went on till Lyons died in 1938. Dad stayed in politics all his life and died in 1979.

I was born in Launceston, Tasmania on December 30, 1917, and as you can see I grew up in a very politicised household. I went to school there. In those days there was only one high school in Tasmania - it was in Hobart. Lyons was Premier of Tasmania before he stood for the federal. He had a motor car accident and was in hospital for nine months, and my father was Acting Premier while Joe Lyons was in hospital. During that time he set up a high school in Launceston, so that made two. You had to pass a qualifying exam to go there, and I was lucky enough to pass it at the age of eleven, and I was twelve when I began at Launceston state high school.

Not long after starting high school I contracted sugar diabetes, and they took me away from school for six months. I had to treat myself with insulin, which had only been around for about five years, and in those days they didn't give you all that long to live once you started taking insulin. It was probably more shattering for my family than it was for me. But that was 64 years ago. I'm almost 78, I'm still alive, and I'm still taking two doses of insulin every day, which adds up to almost 46,000 during my lifetime.

After the six months off school, it was too long a break and I couldn't get it together when I when I went back. I'd lost it. It was a long time. The teachers contacted my parents and told them that I'd never regain the lost ground. So my father sent me to a business college where I learned to do shorthand and typing. When I finished the course I got a job at the Agricultural Bureau of Tasmania, and I stayed there for fifteen months till they closed down owing to lack of government funds. I was out of work for about a fortnight, then I got a job with Holyman's Airways Pty Ltd. That was in January 1936. They're still going, but they're just a shipping company now.

They were struggling. There was only one plane a day between Launceston and Melbourne, and one plane a day between Melbourne and Sydney. It used to carry six passengers - a little DH89 Rapide. It would leave Sydney in the morning at eight o'clock, fly to Melbourne via Canberra, leave Melbourne to come back in the afternoon via Canberra again, and that was it for the day. Now you've got jumbo jets going out every half hour! (*Laughs*). The fare was six pound ten single and twelve pound return. I was more or less the office boy when I started with Holyman's. Holyman's Airways joined with South Australian Airways and West Australian Airways and formed Australian National Airways in 1936. They brought the Douglas DC2s out to replace the De Havilland 89s.

Aviation just boomed when the Douglasses came out. The Douglas DC2 ran second in the London to Melbourne air race in 1934 - with a full load of passengers. It would have won the race only bad weather in Melbourne forced it to emergency land at Albury Racecourse and it finished up in a bog and they couldn't dig it out in time to win. After that they brought out the DC3s - half as big again as the DC2s - and after that aviation just skyrocketed.

I was there for nineteen years, nine months and three days. I started as a sort of office boy, but by the time I was in my early twenties I was in charge of the airline for the whole of Tasmania. All the business decisions were made in Melbourne, but as far as traffic to and from the island went, I controlled it all from the

Tasmanian end. Hobart used to ring me up for instructions about how they were going to get over problems in the smaller islands, say, like King Island or Flinders Island.

Holyman's Airways was Australian National Airways by this time, and they had an operational agreement with Airlines of Australia where they used to fly to Brisbane. ANA didn't go further north than Sydney and Airlines of Australia didn't go any further south. They were separate airlines, but eventually they joined together. Then of course, Ansett came in and made the whole airline business much more complicated. They tried to buy him out but he wouldn't sell, and eventually he bought *them* out!

It was 1955 when I left. The reason I left there in the finish was mainly because things were changing. When I started there as an office boy you got to where you wanted to get only on your own skill and honest work. But then the college boys came in and they got all the top jobs, you know. I rose to be a Branch Manager, which is about as high as any one of my social calibre could get to.

I saw a job advertised in the paper for a commercial traveller, of all things. I applied for it and got it. It was with Noyes Brothers. They also had a couple of agencies on the appliance side like AWA and Pope washing machines. They employed me as a traveller on the appliance side of the business. Television was approaching, and Noyes Bros thought that they couldn't possibly handle such a big agency, so they relinquished the agency. AWA, in their wisdom, decided to open up their own branches in Tasmania. They sent a Melbourne fellow down to be Tasmanian Manager in Hobart, and I was appointed the Northern Tasmanian Manager based in Launceston. The job with AWA went on for another nineteen years! (*Laughs*).

After some years I was transferred to Sydney. I was travelling all the time, except for the last couple of years. I used to do the southern part of NSW - Wagga, Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera - all through the Riverina. And then they sent me up north, to do the north coast. Tamworth was headquarters and I used to go right up north to Tweed Heads, Moree, Narrabri, Boggabri - all up through there. Then I came back down to Sydney and worked out of Sydney, doing out round Bathurst and all that middle part. I saw most of NSW. The only part I missed out on was the far mid-west - I didn't go to Broken Hill or out that way because it was quicker to service them from Adelaide.

I got married in 1946. I've got four kids. I was away from home every week. Sometimes I'd go away for a fortnight at a time, and occasionally, when all the country towns had their spring shows on, I'd be away for three weeks. Say you went to Tamworth. Well our agents at Tamworth would put up a stand at the Show and you'd be expected to help them man it, answer questions, and that sort of thing. I didn't mind it. But in a normal week I used to fly out first plane on Monday morning and fly back in last plane on Friday night. I'd leave my car in the bush. Say on a Friday night I might get back to Wagga, leave the car there and fly back from Wagga to Sydney. Fly back out to Wagga first thing Monday morning, pick up the car, and carry on where I left off. So I was really only home on weekends.

Anyway, towards the end AWA set up an arrangement with Thorn in England to assist in the manufacture of colour TV sets for them till they got their own operation under way in Australia, and me and a couple of other fellows didn't think this was a good idea, and we left. The three of us set Rank Arena on the

map in NSW. We started up the TV side. They were already big in music, but they wanted to get into television. Between the three of us, we knew every electrical retailer in NSW. Some were known to all three of us, but at least one of us was known to every retailer from Bourke to Byron Bay and down to Eden. I answered to Graham Bird (who's now in Western Australia and retired). He was my boss... well, he was more than a boss, he was a mate. The three of us were all good mates. The word "boss" didn't come into it. Brian Fitzgerald was the other fellow.

I was there till I retired in 1980 - six years. I got to 1980 and Rank bought out a small refrigeration outfit and started to get into whitegoods. Then they bought out controlling interests in HMV and General Electric. By this time I was getting a bit sick of it all. Over a period of a few months or so all these three firms were joined together. The other companies had a lot of young travellers who had gone to work for them without knowing that the amalgamation was going to happen. They were young, maybe had just bought a house, and were paying it off and needed jobs - all that sort of thing. They said to me that I didn't have to worry about being kept on because my figures were so good and I was so well-known around the place. But I went home that night and thought "What about those other young fellers, with all their commitments" and I decided to resign - three years before I *had* to, and made one job available. After I resigned we lived in a big house over at The Entrance for fourteen years. It had a big garden, and as we got older the house never got any smaller, so we came and bought this house here at Umina almost two years ago.

---

I was brought up in a hard school in the airlines business. You never questioned what time you had to start work or what time you finished at night - and I did it gladly. Some of the others used to growl, but I so loved aeroplanes. I loved them! Before they started flying on a Sunday I used to get bored being at home, and I wished planes flew on Sunday so I could go to work! I loved them so much! I knew from an early age that I couldn't fly, because of my diabetes. A diabetic would never get a pilot's licence. Even if I hadn't been a diabetic I don't know if I would have had the intelligence anyway. I got through school all right, but I was never particularly brilliant. And in those days - and now, too, of course - you've got to be pretty clever to fly an aeroplane. I know it's mainly pressing buttons now, but in those days you really had to fly then - you had to take them in your hands.

(When I applied for the job with Noyes Bros I said that although I didn't have direct selling experience, what I had been selling was an intangible object - service and honesty in the airline business. And I thought that selling something intangible which you couldn't display or see like that was much harder than selling something like a television set. And that was true, and saying that was what got me the job.)

One of the proudest moments of my life came when I was working in the airlines. Every aerodrome on the eastern side of Australia was closed due to bad weather, except Launceston. I was ANA Airport Manager at Western Junction Airport in Launceston at this time. The weather wasn't that good in Launceston either, but at least it was open for landings. One aeroplane that was supposed to go from New Guinea to Adelaide finished up in Launceston. I had twenty one aeroplanes under my control. That mightn't sound like much, but I had to park every one of those, and in the right place and the right order. It was no good me parking one

right out the back if they want him out first. It's not like a car that you can just back out - you have to taxi forward. I didn't know which planes would be wanted first till the next morning when they put out the list, so I had to park them in such a way that they all had a way out if they were called first.

And it was right in the holiday period - women and kids and everything everywhere. I don't remember how many hundreds of passengers were stranded there. And most of them wanted to be in Melbourne, or Sydney. They were there till the weather got better, and they couldn't sleep in the aeroplanes all night. They had to have toilets and, you know... Luckily we found enough hotels with room that we could accommodate the ladies. The men had to look after themselves. I decided to run a passenger bus into town, which was only seven miles away. The pubs shut at ten o'clock, so we ran one bus at half past ten to come back to the aerodrome, with another one leaving at midnight for those who wanted to go to the pictures and maybe have a bit of supper afterwards. I had to think of all that, of ways to help pass the time for the people who were held up there.

About that time we were shipping a lot of bales of wool out of Tasmania. Shipping was so irregular that they were sending it out by air. Although it cost them more money, at least they got them there in a hurry, rather than have them laying on the wharf for weeks costing money. There were hundreds of bales of wool in the freight hangar just waiting to go out the first time a freighter came in, and people were sleeping overnight on the bales of wool everywhere. We didn't even have enough seats in the lounge for over a hundred people! We only had a very small waiting room. So you had to have initiative.

In the holidays, all the people come down to Tasmania, and they all want to get back. Once, through the war years, the night before the boat was due to sail back to the mainland two German mines were washed up on the shore, and the boat was cancelled because they didn't want to take a chance on more mines being in Bass Strait. So everybody rushed round to the airways. We only had two planes a day - and one of them was a special plane that we'd put on for the busy Christmas period. One in the morning and one at mid-day. They were booked out for ten days in advance. And all these boat people turned up banging on the door to try to get on. I started work early on the Saturday morning. The little plane that should have gone to Flinders Island the night before couldn't go for some reason and it had to go early on the Saturday morning. I think there was only one passenger on it, but I still had to get out to the airport and weigh his baggage and do all the rest of it. I didn't bother to have a shave, or breakfast, or anything. I went in, then all this crowd appeared. It had been in the paper and on the radio, but I hadn't heard anything about it, and all these people turned up wanting to fly out. They filled up the office! And I was the only one there to deal with all these people!

Well... what could I do? We had nothing ready. And the same thing was happening in Melbourne, but they had about four or five clerks there, while I was on my own. People were all at me: "We need to get back" "You've got to give us priority" and all that. I said to them: "Look. Don't blame me. I didn't put the mines in the Strait." So I wrote down all their names and where I could get in touch with them. I said we would put some special planes on, but since I'd only known about all this for ten minutes I was going to need some time to get things organised. And this is on a Saturday. I was just about to go home for my breakfast at twelve o'clock when the train arrived from Hobart with another lot of passengers who were coming to catch the boat. So *they* all rushed in then and I got it all over

again! I did the same thing with them, and I got home for breakfast at four o'clock in the afternoon! Anyhow, I got on the phone to Melbourne and eventually got it all sorted out. I worked all day Saturday and all day Sunday, because the planes started to come in on Sunday morning to start taking everyone back again.

Now our Managing Director, Captain Ivan Holyman, (later to become Sir Ivan Holyman) had a holiday cottage at Low Head, right at the mouth of the Tamar River. He didn't know about the thing either, and he heard all these planes going back and forth, and he knew there weren't supposed to be that many. There should have only been two, and there were about fifteen or twenty! So he came up to work on the Monday morning, and on his way in he asked me to follow him up to his office. "Tell me what happened." he said, and I told him. "Well, thank you very much, Guy. You did a marvellous job." (*Sincerely*) Geez I was pleased! All the hours I'd put in were worth it. No money... but he recognised what I had done! You say that he might have given me a bonus or something. We got a bonus every Christmas, an extra fortnight's pay, but no overtime. But you didn't ask for money then. I didn't. I was part of the company, and I was so proud.

---

I liked the travelling job, too. It was interesting. You'd be pitted against... in the airlines, well, OK, it was written down in the Manual what you did. Aeroplanes would come in, you'd fill them up with passengers or freight, out they'd go - it was more or less laid down what the procedure was. But in the country... see AWA used to send their best men to the country because out there you're on your own, and you can't ring up the boss all the time for advice. You've got to work it out for yourself. You're on your own, and you're calling on some very experienced retailers who've been in the game for years and years. They knew what was good and what was bad, and you had them to convince.

For example, in the early days of setting up Rank Arena with the other two mates who had left AWA with me, we were planning how we were going to introduce this new product. Graham suggested that I take the sales pitch and try it out on Don McKinnon. Don McKinnon was a real shrewd electrical man. He'd been in the business for years and years. He managed the Clef Retrovision Store in Wagga, and he was a shrewd, honest to goodness businessman. I had to ring back and let them know how it went, and till I rang nobody else was to see any customers in case they had to change the presentation in any way as a result of my phone call. Don McKinnon gave me a good hearing, and when I'd finished he said he thought it was bloody beaut. I went straight to the phone and away we went. If it worked on Don McKinnon it would work on anyone.

It wasn't a particularly lonely life. When you think about it, most of the big country towns in NSW are only forty, fifty, sixty miles apart. It doesn't take that long to go from one to the other. After you got established with customers it became more of a friendly call, because you called once a month. When I first took on the job, my boss said to me, "I don't care if you don't bring an order in for three months. You've got to get the confidence of the people that you call on. But from then on..." They used to like me to bring in 33 times what it cost to keep me on the payroll - that's wages, cost of motor cars, travelling expenses in motels and all that sort of thing. I'm not boasting when I say this, but my figures were never down. At the monthly sales meetings all the salesmen had to put in their figures, and when they were read out mine were always top. I enjoyed selling. It was a challenge.

I was always proud to get good figures, too. I went in to a fellow one day who used to buy a bit of stuff off me. I used to see him every month. He said he didn't need anything, but I pointed out that a couple of sets had gone from the wall display, and got him to order some more. You had to remember what you saw. One bloke told me that things were really tough and that he hadn't sold anything for months. I told him that he must have sold something because I could see the spaces on the floor in the dust. Little things like that you have to have in your mind all the time.

---

I wasn't tempted to follow in my father's footsteps and go into politics. I saw enough of the seamy side of politics. The dirt was just starting to come into it. In those days politicians were honest men. You might laugh at that, but in those days politicians were respected - not like they are today. But I stayed interested in politics, naturally. I joined a union once, when I came to work in Sydney with the airlines, but that was only for a pretty short time, though. I was just a member, and I wasn't militant or anything.

I never looked on myself as an exploited worker, even though I used to work some pretty long hours. In the airways, after the passenger service got pretty good, the freight started. They started to air freight all sorts of stuff across Bass Strait rather than wait for the shipping, which was so irregular due to strikes. We used Bristol Freighters. Patons and Baldwins used to ship every bale of knitting wool by air rather than wait for the boat. They wanted to get their stuff to the market and sold. So the long hours just had to be done, and that was all there was about it. To me, the recognition that I had done a good job was worth more than money.

When I was working in the airline business, if everything went right you started at seven thirty in the morning and finished at seven thirty at night - that's if everything went all right. But if a freighter was a bit late it might be ten or eleven thirty at night before you'd knock off. And you'd still have to be back there at seven thirty the next morning to meet the first plane of the following day. We'd do that for ten days straight, then we'd have two days off.

See, I was Airport Manager, and I had six or seven other people working out there with me. At that time the Western Junction airstrip was a grass one and it used to get real wet in the wintertime, so they concreted it. The fellers working on concreting the strip were all getting many times as much per week as we were getting, and they got paid for every second of overtime they worked. We were working twice as long as they were each week, yet they were getting twice as much money as we were. I used to point out to my men that they would get a bonus at Christmas and the other blokes wouldn't, but even so, they were getting a lot more than we were. So I had to try to keep those men loyal, because it was hard to get staff in those days - just after the war. You've got no idea how hard it was to get men to work - especially the conditions we were working. But I did it all gladly. I didn't mind. I was proud to do it. I felt part and parcel of the business.

When the last plane left at seven fifteen at night we'd give it thirty minutes till it would have gone past latitude 40 south and be nearer to Melbourne than to Launceston. But it didn't always work out that way because the last plane at night would often get away at any old time, and you might work fifteen or sixteen hours a day.

You see it wasn't just a job to me - it was a career. These days most fellers only work for their wages. They've got no interest in the firm they are working for, they couldn't give a damn about the welfare of their fellow man at all. That wasn't the case with me. I was part of the business of civil aviation. I liked it. I was interested in it. I was going to say I would have worked longer hours than I did, even, but I couldn't have done much more than I did anyway. I did work twenty six hours straight once. I started at half past seven one morning and didn't knock off till half past nine the next day. That was the time when I had the twenty one aeroplanes and all their passengers to look after.

There was often a lot of heavy manual work to be done at the airport, too. Once there we had a whole lot of bales of wool that had been bought at the Launceston wool sales by overseas interests in Italy. They couldn't wait for a boat and flew them out. We had 850 big bales of wool, and another feller and I had to lift them up into a DC3 Airfreighter and we weren't allowed to use a bale hook. (This was over a period a several days, not all at once.)

But I never noticed the hours. I used to get tired, but...*(pause)* I never missed the family life, though I think my wife did. We had four children and she had to bring them up all on her own. Because I was a diabetic, three of my four children were diabetics as well, and she had to cope with that on her own because I was away from the home all the time. It was probably hardest for her when my son (we had three daughters and a son) was seven, and she had to give him his insulin because he was too young to do it.

I've always said that if you've got to get a bad disease, the best one to get is diabetes, because you can control it and you can live with it. But you've got to learn to treat yourself. I've been treating myself for 64 years, but I've lived a pretty normal life. I drink. When I was a commercial traveller I used to drink seven days a week. I was required to. It was part of the job, you know. There was always a pub nearby in the big country towns. I usually used to stay in the same place each time I was in town. My favourite one was at Parkes. I got very friendly with the proprietor and his wife there - it got to be like a second home away from home for me. She used to do my washing for me of a weekend - the odd bit of dirty linen or what have you. You form those sort of friendships when you're on the road like that.

When I was Airport Manager at Launceston, I wouldn't expect other fellers to have the same attitude to the job as I did, because I had a job I liked - I loved it. Unless you had that feeling you couldn't have done what I did. I just loved aeroplanes, and I admired the man I worked for, almost as much as my own father. Sir Ivan Holyman...he was a man and a half. *(Chokes up slightly with the memory)*.

I liked the job, as I say. And occasionally something important would crop up. One day it was my day off, and the phone rang. "You'd better get down to the aerodrome, quick. One of the passenger planes has overshot the runway, and has finished up in the paddock next door." I got a taxi down there, saw the plane, and got to it just as the passengers were getting out. We had a little Jeep there, and I got one of my boys to ferry the passengers back to the waiting room and give them a cup of tea there, then I got a taxi out from Launceston to take them to the city. The paddock next door to the aerodrome was owned by a Mr Hogarth, and as it happened, one of his champion sheep had been hit by the plane when it came to a halt there. When I'd got the passengers fixed up he came over to me. "Gee," I said, "this is a bit of bad luck Mr Hogarth." (I wasn't going to say any

more than I had to, thinking of the sheep.) “Well,” he said, “what about my sheep?” “Well, as I say, it’s a bit of bad luck.” I replied. “With aeroplanes the way they are these days you can’t blame the pilot. The aerodrome is slippery, the grass is wet. It’s an act of God.” God knows what he might have been thinking of suing us for, because those prize merinos can be very expensive.

Here’s an example of how expensive they can be. Each year the Melbourne Sheep Show would come on about a fortnight before the Melbourne Show. And Tasmania was a great place for merinos. The best merino rams in the world were bred in Tasmania. So all the owners and growers would send their sheep across to the sale, and finish up at the Melbourne Show. A fellow called Reg Taylor had been written up in the papers for having sold a ram for 30,000 guineas, and he was freighting it and some other sheep to Melbourne. The morning the rams arrive at the aerodrome we’ve got the plane all ready with straw, and we put up bins - that sort of thing, to make them nice and comfortable. We got them all aboard - shooed ‘em all in, and Mr Taylor was there to see them off. I called out to him: “Would you like to come up and see that they’re all nice and comfortable, Mr Taylor?” I put my hand down and pulled him up into the plane, and he had a look around at them. “Oh yes, they look lovely. They’ll enjoy this little trip.” I said to him: “Just as a matter of interest, Mr Taylor, which is the one that you sold for 30,000 guineas?” “That one over there,” he said, pointing to one. Taylor’s foreman was up in the plane too, and he corrected him. “No, it’s this one over here.” They had an argument about it, and finally solved it by checking for a chipped tooth that they both knew the champion ram had. It turned out that the foreman was right. Mr Taylor didn’t know his own prize ram!

We had a plane take off from Melbourne one night to go to Hobart. It was supposed to go straight through to Hobart and call at Launceston on the way back. He gets half way across the Strait when the weather closes in in Hobart - and when the weather closes in in Hobart it really closes in! You’ve got no idea! But the pilot decided to go and have a look at Hobart anyway, and when he found he couldn’t land there he came back to Launceston. By this time the weather was beginning to close in at Launceston, too, and the plane was getting low on fuel. He didn’t have enough to get back to Melbourne, and he had no alternative but to land at Launceston, whatever the conditions. It only takes about half an hour to fly from Hobart to Launceston, and soon we could hear him, but we couldn’t see him. He’d come down low, then fly away again. He couldn’t break through the cloud cover at all. Then he went away, and he was away for about ten minutes. We were wondering what had happened to him when we heard this scream of engines and he broke through the clouds sideways, sideslipped in, straightened out, and did a complete run round the aerodrome about fifty feet off the ground and came in from the bottom and landed. He taxied in, one of the boys brought the steps out, and I went up and opened the door for the passengers to come out. The hostess said “Whew!” and wiped her brow at me as she handed me the passenger list. Then two women got out. “Where are we?” asked one. “You’re in Launceston, Madame.” I replied. “But we payed to go to Hobart! How are we going to get there?” the other one said. I told them that we’d run a bus down for the passengers. “But I paid to go there by plane...” and off she went, complaining on and on. I thought to myself, “If only you knew how close you were to being dead you wouldn’t argue!” And the pilot came down, doing his jacket up, laughing and smiling all over the place. (It happens that he was the brother of Paul Brickhill, the writer.)

It had its ups and downs as a job, but it was a bit glamorous in it’s own way, too. And it was satisfying. I worked twelve hours a day and when I went home I was

satisfied. I'd done a good day's work. I felt that the sales job was satisfying too, but for different reasons. I was doing a good job, I was bringing in good sales figures. If I sold some goods to a retailer and he rang up and ordered some more before I came back to see him on my monthly visit, then that sale would be credited to me, even though I didn't actually do the selling in person. He was my customer. It was the same for all the travellers.

---

When I retired, it didn't take me all that long to adjust to a life where I didn't have to work. I felt satisfied with what I'd done with my life. I got a lot of pleasure out of thinking back. I still sit down sometimes and think about various little things that I did that gave me satisfaction. I'm not swollen-headed or anything, but I did know that I'd done a good job. The results were there.

I didn't have any hobbies or belong to any clubs or that sort of thing. I didn't have time for that, though I used to play cricket when I could when I was working at the airport. And besides, the little towns I lived in - like Evandale, which was a glorious little town - there's nothing much there, apart from the pub on the corner. At Evandale, on pay night the wages would come out in one big envelope and I'd take all the money down to the pub and pay all the boys their money, then I'd go home.

We worked under hard conditions, but the blokes that worked there could have gone somewhere else if they'd wanted to. But I used to try to think of the men and how I could make things better for them. We had slack periods during the day in between planes where we would have nothing to do, and they'd just sit around. So I hired a half-sized billiard table from the local publican for a shilling a year, and they used to play billiards while they were waiting. And I got a dart board - you know, little things like that to keep them occupied. They used to complain that the concreters got so much more money than them, but they never left. If they had left I would have had no-one. There were seven on the staff - eight including me. But there were two off every day, which brings it back to five or six.

But this Sir Ivan Holyman - he knew what I was going through. Quite early in my career there he said to me, "You know, Guy, I'd like to appoint you to my private staff. You'd go on world trips with me, to England and all that..." I told him, "No Sir, I can't. I've got diabetes." So then he offered me a job in the Melbourne office, but I turned that down too. But I was pleased that he had enough confidence in my ability that he thought I could do those jobs - especially the private secretary one.

You ask me if I would change anything if I had the chance to do it all over again. You know, I don't think I would. No. When I left school I'd try to get a job in the airlines - though it wouldn't be possible today, of course.

I think that there has always been a class structure in Australia, and sometimes I wonder if it is better or worse now than it was. Sometimes I think it's worse. I think the way workers are protected today by awards and industrial courts and all that sort of thing - I think the boss is entitled to a little bit more out of life than the others because he provides the money to provide the work for them, otherwise they wouldn't have a job. The boss takes the risk that the venture is going to be successful, and if they didn't do that unemployment would be worse than it is now. I heard on the news this morning that Telstra workers are going to get an

extra eleven percent, provided they lift their productivity a bit and agree not to strike. To me that's bribery. It's money that makes all the difference as far as class is concerned.

On the whole I've been very satisfied with my life. I've been successfully married, I have a lovely family (even though three out of the four kids have diabetes we've got through OK - they're happy and seem to be contented), so all in all I'm very happy with my life. And I can look back on my working life with a good deal of satisfaction.

---

*(Towards the end of the first interview, Trevor's wife Margery joined the conversation briefly, and I took the opportunity to ask her a few questions about how she viewed her husband's working life. The conversation went as follows:)*

*Trevor said that you used to work for Holyman's Airlines. Is that where you both met?*

More or less, yes.

*Did you miss him, being away so much?*

All my life he's had jobs where he's away a lot.

*Do you think it might have kept the marriage stable, the fact that he wasn't here to get underfoot all the time?*

Yes, I do really. I think it gives you time to be on your own.

*And you might have married him for better or for worse, but now you've got him for breakfast and lunch as well, is it all right now that he's retired?*

Well, I think that in retirement we need a little bit of a spell from each other which we don't get at all now. No, I do think that you need a little time on your own.

*Would you say that was one of the hazards of retirement?*

Yes, I would. I certainly would.

*Did you work at all when you were bringing the kids up?*

No. In our day you didn't. You just stayed home with the family. I don't think we were as well off as the young ones are these days. With the two working they've got a little bit more money to do things.

*(Trevor):* When we were first married I earned thirteen dollars a week. By the time we'd paid our rent (which wasn't very much, admittedly - two dollars a week for a brand new five roomed house) and bought our groceries there was three dollars left over for enjoyment and everything else. I had a little car, and petrol for the car had to come out of that. If I felt like going for a couple of drinks with the boys after work, that had to come out of it too. If the wife had to get her hair done...

*[(Margery) I didn't have my hair done then.]... but it all had to come out of that three dollars. I think it made better people out of us. We've learned not to waste anything. I don't waste a cent. I'm not mean, but I don't waste a penny.*

---

*(Recorded September 19 and 26, 1995.)*