



My Life  
Story

Patrick McEvoy  
1918 - 1992



The McEvoy Family  
R to L Mum, Tip, Irene, Bob  
Marj, Pop, Gert, Joe, Pat

Patrick Cyril McEvoy was born the son of Alice (nee Barrett) and Edwin McEvoy on 23rd January 1918.

The rest of his family include  
Irene (Broad) lives in Pt Lincoln  
Joe (Passed Away)  
Marj (Higgins) lives in Pt Lincoln  
Robert - known as Bob (Passed Away)  
Gert (Newman) Lives in Sydney  
Florence (Bedford) - known as Tip  
(passed Away)  
Ted lives in Adelaide  
Doreen (Kennewell) Lives in Broken Hill

This story was written in 1992

I was born at Cungenena on the 23rd of January 1918. They told me I was found hanging on Auntie Kitty's gate - that was Charlie McEvoy's wife's name. Those days you weren't to be told where baby's came from, Grannie McEvoy was the mid-wife. Mum told me when I got older that they nearly lost me. It was very hard in those days. Mum and Dad lived on a farm 5 miles south of Cungenena. Mum told me how she used to take me down to the cow yard and sit me in a horse collar while she milked the cows. There were 9 of us in the family. Irene the eldest, Joe, Pat, Marg, Bob, Gert, Florence, Ted and Dorreen.

In my early school days we used to drive a black pony called Johnson in a cart that Pop made. It had a couple of cart wheels with springs built and a flat top on it. He cut a hole in it and placed a kerosene box in the front so the driver and a couple more could place their feet in it. Marg and I used to sit on the back and curl our legs up. A little later Pop bought a big black mare from the neighbour and he got a four wheel buggy with two horses. He used Johnson the pony and the big black mare; they were a bit odd in size but

it was much more comfortable. Johnson was a bad pony. If he didn't feel like going somewhere he'd duck the head and dump the rider and take off. The McEvoy families lived about 3 miles apart, Fred was on one side and Charlie was on the other. I remember one day mum wanted to go over to see Mrs Fred McEvoy. She told me to get on the pony and bring the black mare in, which was running in the paddock with all the other horses. Everything was going good till he saw the other horses. He downed his head and over I went. Anyway I rounded up all the other horses on foot including him. Of course, by then it was too late for poor old mum.

I remember one day mum had a clothes line stretched between two trees about 20 yards apart. Irene and Joe got a tin of Pop's axle grease and ran it along the full length of the line. Of course they copped it.

I started school when I was 5. The teacher was Rita Hogan. I was a white headed boy. Miss Hogan used to take me out to her table and give me apples and so fourth. Then came Roy Parks. He was a bit strict. He used to lay us across

his knee and had a leather strap to belt the bum. Then came Merv Hynaman. He was only about 20 when he came there and had about forty kids to teach all by himself. And there were all grades. He was still there when I left school. The house on the farm was a couple of rooms of pug and pine under a government shed. They built a couple of iron rooms on for a kitchen on the front and a boys room on the back. The rooms were divided off with bags painted with lime that made them nice and white. The floors were only dirt levelled off, and covered with what they used to call Ruberoid. It was a black tarry sort of stuff.

The three McEvoy families used to kill a bullock between them and share the meat. Of course there was no fridges those days so we had to salt all the meat down so it would keep. We had a cool safe with bage or something hanging down the sides. A tray full of water on top of it would run down the side, and cool the butter, milk and cream down a bit. It was mainly kept in a bush shed. I remember one day Pop had some ration sheep in a shed. There was a couple of old ewes with lambs. Bob and I got in there one day, caught the old girl, got a

lamb and was giving it a drink. Bob said "look at its bloody tail going" the door opened. It was Pop. Our tails got warmed up.

Of course in those days there was no water. The farmers used to get it carted up by train from Port Lincoln. They'd put the horses in the wagon with tanks on, go to Cungena and get the water out of the tanks on the train. Sometimes they'd have to wait till midnight as the train would be late and sometimes when the train did get in all the water would have leaked out, so they'd have to borrow some from other chaps until the next train arrived. There was an underground tank that was built by the government, but half the time that would be empty. It had to get heavy rain to run the water in. The pipe line with the Todd water came through in about 1926. Mum had a garden where they put the water on.

Pop sold the farm in 1927 to Hugh Paterson. Of course we had to be out by a certain date and had no home, so Pop got permission from the Cungena Racing Committee to live there till he and Matt Phylant build a house in Cungena. He got a couple of rooms ready to put up, built an

iron kitchen and a girls' room on the back and a boys room and veranda on the front. While at the race course, the boys slept in the Jockeys' room and the girls slept in the tote. She was a fairly rough show. We had to milk cows to help mum out - Joe and Irene for a start, til they got a job, then Marj and I. We had about 5 cows - sometimes more. The milking went right down through the family till the last of us. Times were very tough. It was a real depression and there was not much money about. Mum used to separate the milk and send the cream down to Port Lincoln - also cases of eggs - to get a bit of money. She had a big job looking after and cooking for all us kids but did a great job as we weren't all angels.

Around Cungena there was a lot of plain country - about 400 acres belonged to the Lands Department. Pop leased a lot of it and fenced off a couple hundred acres to keep the cows in. he also bought 200 sheep. We kids used to have to shepherd them out around the place where there were no fences. That was mainly my job on old Johnson. Bob used to come out sometimes. We had a plant of tobacco up in the bushes - we got the smoke fairly flying.

There was a bad old bugger there. He had a farm just on the outskirts of Cungena. He would be watching to see the sheep didn't get into his paddock. Mum's cows got out one night into his place. The whole six of them came back - all milked.

I finished school at the ripe old age of 13. Pop kept me home to reap his crop. We had about 120 acres of wheat around Cungena. I thought I was going great, driving three horses he borrowed from Peter Crowder - Daisy, Queen and Snip. It was a 6ft stripper. I was only a shiny little bugger. I had a big job throwing up the wheat heaps when I finished reaping. I used to weigh the bags of wheat. Pop had a wheat agency for John Darling. He had to write the weight on the bag with black ink and write the weight in a book. Wheat was worth about one shilling a bushel those days, in the early thirties. If it came through that wheat went up a penny or threepence a bushel, Pop would send me out on the old pony to ask if they wanted to sell their wheat. There was an old chap who used to buy wheat for Farmers Union. I'd go down and weigh for him if Pop wasn't



busy. He used to give me a few shillings. I went to work for Ed Barrett for the seeding when I was 14. I used to drive 8 horses in a cultivator, getting 10 shillings a week.

I went to work for Charlie McEvoy when I was 14. I was really only a shit-kicker. I used to cut the wood, take the dinners out to the paddock to Charlie and the other blokes that were working there, put the feed in the manger for the horses and all the odd jobs about the place. Aunty Kitty, Charlie's wife was just like a second mother to me - she was a great lady. When I was 15 I started driving teams of 10 horses in the cultivator and of course seeding. I wasn't very strong and had to put the seed and super in a tub to fill the drill. It was a fairly big job for a boy but I got 10 shillings a week. I had to be out of bed at 5 o'clock in the mornings to feed the horses before breakfast and had to wait til ten o'clock at night to feed up again before bed. He used to carry the old Hurricane lantern around to see what we were doing. One thing - he had a great lot of horses - about 30 of them. They were always fat and shiny and good workers. He had a draught stallion and used to

breed his own horses. Then he'd take him around to other peoples places that wanted to breed their own foals. Lots of times that was my job - camp out one night and home the next day. When harvest time came along, Charlie would cut up to 100 tons of hay with the binder. We'd have to stook it and cart it when it dried out enough. We used to chaff it up to feed the horses. Charlie had 5 horses in an 8' stripper to reap the crop. He used to put in about 1000 acres. He had two strippers. Charlie would come out sometimes. Then Bob Allen came along. We would reap all the crop. Those days, most of the stumps were still in the ground. You had a big job winding the machine up and down over the stumps. Then after we reapt it, it had to be cleaned up. Angus McGuinness used to go around contract cleaning. I had the job of wheeling the bags away on the cart. Some of the wheat heaps would have up to 500 bags in them and when the wind changed he wouldn't change the winnower around and it would blow all the chaff back over me. I didn't go much on that, but he'd say it's not worth changing the machine around. He was a very hard man to work for. Charlie had a bloke come around who sewed the bags. Then of course it had to be

carted to Cungena. He had two wagons. I used to drive 8 horses in the wagon with 80 bags on and the other one would carry 100 bags with 11 horses in it. Lots of times we only used one wagon. I also used to drive the 11 horses with a 100 bags. Charlie would come up in the car and help unload it, as I wasn't very strong in those days I could only up - end the bags of wheat. Poor old Mum used to say to Pop "Tell Charlie not to let that boy drive all those horses up here". It was alright when there was a load on. The trouble was going home with the empty wagon, but I never had any trouble. Charlie had a fair bit of faith in me as a horse handler, although he was a very tough boss and I was only a bit of a kid. When the hay and wheat carting was all over we had to cart the cocky chaff and put it in a big shed to feed the horses with oats mixed with it.

Pop was a great bloke with race horses. He had one good one a grey called Bolsworth Castle. It won quite a few races but most of the others were very slow. Us kids used to ride them for him at track work. He got one mongrel. He led him home about 40 miles. When I went up from Charlie's one weekend, he asked me to ride him.

He had never been ridden. He started bucking and the old leather strap broke and over I went of course. He had him on a lead. When I went to get up I was behind him so he kicked me in the back and I put in a week at the Streaky Bay Hospital with a bruised kidney.

I bought a brown 2 year old filly from Pop - called her Nathlie. I used to ride her up home from Charlie's after work on Saturday nights which would be in the dark. Poor old Mum used to be outside waiting to hear the horse's hooves coming. In those days there weren't many cars around. There was a chap, Albert Voumard, he had a 30wt old Chev truck we used to all load up on that to go to dances, sometimes would get home about 5 o'clock in the morning ready to start work.

I left Charlie's at the end of harvest in 1935. I went down to work for Harold Broad - that was Irene's husband - in 1936 when I was 18. I got a big rise in wages - £2 a week and a share in the crop. I worked fairly hard. Harold was a great worker himself - he cleared a lot of country. We knocked down a couple of hundred acres with a log. He had a old Caterpillar

tractor one end and I had 6 horses the other end. It was a tough job on the horses - also on me. If you hit a big tree, it would stop dead. I'd nearly go over the horses head and jam my leg between the chains. Then we'd burn and pick the sticks and put it in crop. It was very rough, as nearly all the stumps were still in the ground to bump the machinery over. There was always plenty of stumps to pick and burn on the older ground. I carted 2200 bags of wheat in 1936. We had 2 horses in a rubber tyred trolley. Harold had the wheat agency for Bunge's at Condada. He used to take the scales out in the paddock by the wheat heap, weigh the bags, write the weight in a book then throw the bag up on the trolley. It carried 25 bags a load. Then I had to lump them up on the stack. It was a fairly wild wheat stack. Harold and another old bloke used to clean the wheat heap with the winnower. Harold had bought another place called Butterfields in about 1938. I went down there working that place for a few years. I was batching and used to put the crop in and take it off on that place. I'd go back up to Condada for shearing etc.

I only played one quarter of football before I went to Minnipa. They had a good team of footballers up there - Cungena and Yantanabie combined. I used to always take my boots in case some-one didn't turn up. They made me 20th one Saturday and I got one quarter of play. Of course, there was no colts or B Grade in those days. I used to ride my old horse Nathalie into Minnipa to the football, dances or anything that was on and tie her to the fence in front of the shop. I used to go mainly to the football on the back of Con Kargers truck. The horse would stay there till I was ready to go home. Sometimes it would be fairly late if there was a dance on. They used to have a lot of dances after the football in those days. I went to Adelaide in 1941 and bought a Chrysler car - a four cylinder. She was a great car - I only paid £200 for it. That saved old Nathalie a bit of work. I put her to a horse of Mick Dayley's called Navara. He was a slow race horse. We got a nice foal out of her. When she was 2 year old I broke her in and called her Tricky. She turned out a beautiful hack, she was quite fast and I won a few hack races with her at Minnipa and

Cungena when we used to hold Gymkhanas. I sold old Nathalie in 1942.

I went in the Army in 1942 and got discharged after the war in October 1945. I had quite a few shifts while in the Army. I went to Woodside for a few months, then went by train to a place called Gherany not far from Geelong. There was nothing there. The train pulled up in an open space and we had to unload and make a camp. We stationed there for about five months, then when the Coral Sea Battle started they sent us on our way up to Queensland to help stop the Japs. But we got as far as Sydney and the Yanks had blown the Japs out of the sea so we were camped at Morpetville Race Course for a few months. I got transferred out of the 2nd 48th into the 108th Light Ak Ak Regt. on Bofors guns. I went to New Castle for a few months guarding a big steel works up there, then they shifted up to the Northern Territory about one hundred miles south of Darwin to a place called Fenton Air Strip to guard the Yanks flying fortresses. They used to leave there every day - 20 of them, bombing the Japs positioned up in the Islands. We got bombed three times by the Japs while I was

there. One chap got hit with shrapnel and got the muscle blown off his arm. Then after about 12 months we shifted to Melville Bay in the Gulf of Carpentaria guarding Catalina Flying boats. I had about two years of service in the Northern Territory. I came home on a months leave, then went back up to Cara, but soon after that the Yanks dropped the big bomb on the Japs and the war finished.

I got engaged to Annie Redding while in the Army. I brought the ring one day while on leave in Newcastle. I thought we were going to get leave before we went to the Territory but they sent us straight through Adelaide so I had to post the ring and write to Bob and May Redding for their permission to get engaged - got it OK.

I put my car up on blocks in Harold Broad's shearing shed while I was away in the army. Of course it was hard to get tyres and tubes while the war was on, so Harold Redding bought them to help keep his car on the road. After the war I went to Doug Branfords and he got me a new set of tyres and tubes, put them on the old car and away she went - no worries, after



standing so long. The first year I was out of the Army I still kept working for Harold. I also got 300 acres to put in for old Bert Hardy on shares - that was in 1946. Harold bought a new tractor from Boss Black, a Fordson Kerosene job, about 30 Horse Power. It was a bad machine. I took it up to put the crop in on Hardys that is the place the boys have now at Minnipa. I used to get out of bed at 5 o'clock and start cranking the tractor with over coat and all the clothes possible on. By the time it started, I'd be stripped right off and sweating. I had a lovely crop of wheat on it - some of the old blokes reckoned it would go 12 bags. I thought I was made, but by the time it was ready to reap the rust hit it and it went 1 bushel to the acre. It was like Caraway seed, so that was a bad start after the war. We were paid 5 shillings a day while in the army so I never had much money to throw around.

I got married on the 25th of June 1946 to Annie Redding, and had about 200 pounds then. We went to Adelaide for our honeymoon on the old rail car from Minnipa to Port Lincoln and on the boat "The Minnipa", to Adelaide. We bought a bedroom suite for thirty eight pounds and a bit

more furniture. We came home and still worked for Harold Broad. We lived out at Butterfields til 1948. Janet was born on 19th March 1947, Bruce was born 9th October 1950 and Kym was born 25th September 1957. I bought a farm at Karcultaby from Mick Saris in 1948. We had a drought the first year. The old ewes were that weak they'd get down to lamb and couldn't get up - the bloody crows would pick their eyes out if I didn't get out in time to get them on their feet. I bought a team of horses, a cultivator, a combine etc. to get the crop planted but didn't get return enough for seed the next year. I had quite a good year the next one but of course things were still fairly tough. We had to cart all the wheat down to Karcultaby with 2 horses in a rubber wheel trolley. It was the same at seeding time - I had to belly the seed and super onto the trolley to take out in the paddock. If you got 25 acres sown in a day with the horse team you had a good day. I had quite a good team of 10 horses. I had to ride Tricky around the sheep. I would always hang a tin of fly oil on the side of the saddle. I had a lovely sheep dog. He would run along with me and catch any fly blown sheep. I bought my first tractor in

1950(McCormack Deering) - old girl - traded it in on a Fordson Major Diesel in 1951. It was a very good machine at the time - I did a lot of work with it.

Dear old Annie used to milk 4 or 5 cows when we went to Karcultaby first, send the cream down to Port Lincoln to get a few bob and also send eggs down packed in egg boxes. I had pigs too. There was a old house down by the railway-line, a yard down there also had an 8 acre paddock. I used to run them there. It was about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from the main road. I used to send the pigs down to the bacon factory in Lincoln. Had to load them on the train at Karcultaby siding. The train had a carriage - when it pulled up we would load the pigs while the train waited. I remember one day I put a load of 12 pigs on an old tip dray I had. Annie was holding an old horse, called Rocket. He was terrible frightened of the pigs squealing - so was Annie frightened of him. He was just a lather of sweat and froth by the time I got the pigs loaded. When I got up to drive him away he really took off - nearly threw the pigs out the back. They realized £5 a head after freight was taken out.