

*Personal Memoir of  
Margaret Nepean*



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*Chapter One*  
*Personal History*



*М. Персманъ и Тара.*



## *Dedication Chapter*

1). *This autobiography is dedicated to whom:*

*My Family*

2). *Date of completion:*

*1st September 2006*

3). *Words of wisdom, favourite quote, or words to live by:*

*You are never without an arse or an elbow.*

## *Personal Facts*

4). *What is your name (first, middle, maiden name, surname)?*

*Margaret Nepean (nee Clynes)*

*92 year old war widow, two children and 6 grandchildren*





5). Do you have a nickname?

*Maggie*

6). Do any of your names have historical relevance? e.g. Grandparents name

*Named after Aunt Mag Clynes who died young. She was my father's sister.*

7). In what country, state or and city were you born? Which hospital?

*Born in Coleraine Hospital, Victoria.*

## *Family Ancestry*

8). List the names and birthdates of your mother, father, grandmother / grandfather, great grandfathers and grandmothers. What did you call them?

*Mother was Liblian Clynes (nee Londergran) (went by Lil), father was born on St Patrick's Day and he was called Patrick Clynes, Grandma Londergran came from Terang (born in Woodford near Warrnambool) and died at Coleraine, Grand-dad Londergran was unknown, Grand-dad Clynes was John and he died in Coleraine and grandmother Clynes was unknown.*





9). *Where were your mother and father born? What circumstances brought your parents to the place where you were born?*

*Mother was born at Woodford and father was born in Terang. Blocks came up for sale in Coleraine - bought it and started dairying.*

10). *Did you have any other significant family members? How did they play an important part in your life?*

*Auntie Kate was father's sister and whatever she said was law - ruled the roost in their family home at Balochile near Coleraine even though she didn't live with them. She was a maiden aunt and ran the tea rooms in Coleraine.*

*My older sister Ina worked for Auntie Kate in the tea rooms for many years. She married very late in life - he was her childhood sweetheart and married her after his first wife died.*

11). *Do you have ancestral ties to anyone famous or historical? Which country does your surname originate from? Does your surname have a special meaning?*

*The Clynes come from Irish stock. Nepear apparently comes from France.*



*Chapter Two*  
*Family / Childhood*





## *Brothers and Sisters*

1). *What are your brothers and sisters names? When were they born?*

*I had two brothers (Conway [Con] and Patrick) and seven sisters (Sabina [Ina], Kathleen, Mary, me, Lillian, Lucy, Rosaleen and Nancy.*

2). *What were their main occupations? Their interests? Where did/do they live?*

*All helped on the dairy farm.*

3). *Did you always get along as children? Sibling rivalry? Practical jokes? Who was the favourite?*

*Yes, all got along marvellously well, no sibling rivalry. There was fund when Lucy went missing one time. When father found her hiding in a tank, after she did not respond to everyone calling to her, he threw a bucket of water over her.*





4). *What do you like most about them? What annoys you about them? What talents do they have that you admire?*

*Mary was a very good dressmaker and made all the clothes for all the girls. Con and Paddy were spoilt and that annoyed all the girls. They could get away with murder. Everything went pretty smoothly for a big family.*

## *Family Home*

5). *What are the most vivid memories you have of your childhood home?*

*It was only a four bedroom place and the big family had to fit in it. The verandah was covered in to accommodate everyone. Later on another four rooms were built on. Memory of big rooms, the kitchen was enormous with two very big tables in it.*

6). *What did your home look like? House, unit block, farm? Colour? Brick, stone, wood? One storey or two?*

*The home was a white weatherboard house with green trimming which my father helped build. Joe Fox helped him and fell in love with Kathleen and later became my brother in law.*





7). *What surrounded your home? Parks, busy streets, bushland?*

*It was a farm house with a salt bush hedge around it. A dam, a well and a spring fed water into the house. It was a smallish dairy farm but it brought up ten kids mostly working on the farm.*

8). *What was your bedroom like? Did you share a room with your siblings?*

*I shared my bedroom with Lucy, Lillian and Rosaleen. Two double beds - I slept with Lillian. One day Lucy's leg went down between the beds. We thought she was OK but it ended up that she had broken her leg. My parents had to take her to the doctor's in the buggy - 5 miles - and he set it crooked and she always had one leg fatter than the other for the rest of her life.*

## *Childhood/Neighbourhood*

9). *Did you have close friends in your neighbourhood? Where did you play?  
e.g. street cricket*

*There were so many in the family we never needed to go anywhere else - we had fun within the family.*





10). *What do you remember about your friends houses and families?*

*Our friends were our cousins and on Sunday we went to each others houses for Sunday lunch after Mass.*

11). *Were you part of any local clubs? Guides, scouts, sports? What activities were involved?*

*We had a tennis court built at a neighbour's place and we spent a lot of time there. When older we went to local dances at the school and the main one was the Catholic Hibernian Dance and after the Coleraine Show there was a Scottish Night each year. Everyone looked forward to these occasions. My mother worked for the church and she ran card parties at people's homes. All the family became very good euchre players.*

12). *What were your favourite activities? e.g. football, dressing up, swimming.*

*We had cubby houses and we played shop. Would make mud cakes and decorate them with cape weed flowers. The men used to play cricket on our property but I never really went along.*





## *Favourite Home/House*

13). *Address of the home? Dates you lived there? What made the house special compared with others?*

*I loved West Preston.*

14). *What were your favourite places to relax? What were your most treasured furniture pieces?*

*Kitchen /Family room at West Preston. My china cabinet I really like.*

15). *Did you ever complete any major renovations/improvements on the house? Any funny stories?*

*Abbie knocked the wall out between the kitchen and lounge at West Present and the house didn't fall down - that was more amazing than funny.*



*Chapter Three*  
*School*





## *Primary School*

*1). What was the name of your school? How big was it? What did it look like? Was it a private or public school? Reputation?*

*Balachile State School started off as a room and a kitchen at the back where the teacher used to live. After, they took out the partition and made it into a bigger school. It was a small school covering Grade 1 to Grade 8. It was made of wood and was about a mile from our house.*

*2). Did you ride a bus, horse or walk to school? Can you think of a funny story about getting to school?*

*We all walked to school. We were forbidden to play hop scotch because it wore out our shoes - sometimes mother & father would go past the school in the buggy and catch us playing hop scotch. The boots were really big and bulky and we all hated them. No hand-me-downs as they always wore out.*

*3). What did you learn in school that you still use to this day?*

*We learnt a lot of craft that I use to this day like embroidery, darning and sewing. Work was hard for me at school - I was not a good scholar. I learnt more when I left.*





## *High School*

4). *Where did you go to high school? Describe your personality and image in high school?*

*There was no high school in Coleraine. No-one in our family attended high school. My brother Paddy was asked if he wanted to go but he just wanted to stay on the farm.*

5). *Who were your friends? Who were your favourite teachers? What did you like about them?*

*Maggie Kilpatrick was my best friend. She was off another dairy farm about two mile from our farm. Only saw her at school. She was a good sport. My favourite teachers were Mr Hooper and Mr Greenway and Miss Costello boarded with us, but I didn't like her. With all the kids at home my mother and father boarded the teacher as no-one else would take her and the school needed a teacher to survive.*



*Chapter Four*  
*Growing Up*





## *Small Town Life*

1). *What were the name, state, location and population of your town? What was the towns main source of income?*

*Coleraine was in the Western District of Victorian near Hamilton. It was a very small town as it is today.*

*Dairying and the butter factory employed many townsfolk. My father was a director of the butter factory for many years. The sheep in the district were for meat consumption not wool.*

2). *What events did the town organise for the locals? Did you ever take part in the events? How?*

*The Coleraine Show happened in September each year. A Scottish Day with highland dancing was on every year.*

*The Coleraine races were on regularly and my father was a member of the committee.*





3). Describe a typical week for you. Did you have chores? Special Sunday lunch?

Sundays we were not allowed to do anything - not knit, not anything with our hands. It was a sin to work on Sunday. We could only milk the cows. If we played up we were sent to our room to learn our Catechism. We all went to church but it had to be staggered - one lot one Sunday and one lot the following Sunday because the buggy could not carry us all nor the car when we eventually got it. Always a Sunday roast with family, cousins etc.

4). What types of food were served at your house? Was food always plentiful? Mums best dish?

Sundays were nearly always lamb roast and the vegies were always out of my father's garden which was vast. There was always enough food. Mum was an excellent cook and took prizes at the Coleraine Show regularly. Her specialities were cream puffs, jams, pickles, sponges and curried chops. My mother always made her own bread and buns. The chooks supplied the eggs. We rarely had beef, mainly had two-tooth. Sometimes fish was on the menu. Jim Burke, a boarder at home who also ended up being my brother in law, supplied rainbow trout caught illegally from the Konong Reservoir. He also went eeling and brought home milk cans full of eels. Lots of mushrooms in season.





## *Holidays and Celebrations*

5). *Which birthday do you remember the most? What were your favourite presents?*

*I got a beaded bag which I gave to my grand daughter Sarah from my Auntie Kate for my 21st.*

6). *Describe the birthday parties you had as a child? Themes, games, homemade cakes*

*We never really celebrated birthdays when we were kids as there were too many of us. We had great parties each year for Ron and Glenda - anything they wanted.*

7). *How did you celebrate major holidays? e.g. religious, national and defence related*

*It was a dairy farm - no holidays. Christmas and Easter was always celebrated with a poultry roast (goose or turkey off the farm) and a big spread. My mother was very religious and church holidays were celebrated. My mother worked for the church particularly in the Queen Carnival run by the church as a fundraiser. She always was one to avoid as she was always selling raffle tickets. My sister Lucy won the Queen competition one year -*



*Chapter Five*  
*The Real World*





## Home Front

1). Were you married to a serviceman/woman or did you have a girl/boyfriend in the service? Where did they serve? For how long?

Yes, I married Albert Nepear after the war. He served in the Middle East and New Guinea. He did the Kokoda Trail in NG. He spent five and a half years in the Army.

2). Where were you when the orders were received? How did you react?

Was separation of couples common in your circle of friends during the war

He volunteered 1945. Once he enlisted he went to Melbourne and then up to Bonagilla in NSW and Puckapunyal

in Victoria. He went overseas pretty soon after that. Yes, most of the guys from Coleraine enlisted. Albert and his brothers Tom and Teddy enlisted on the same day.

3). Where did you live? Did you go back and stay with your parents? Did you have children? Did you keep up the household by yourself?

I went to Melbourne to work in the ammunitions factory at Maribyrnong to do my bit for the war. I was there for five years and made many friends. I did not have children at this stage. I started off boarding in Essendon and then

I lived in Ascot Vale with my friend Kitty, in a house, with a room with the use of a bathroom and kitchen.





4). *Did you work? What jobs did you do?*

*I put detonators into bombs, made pellets out of TNT and put springs in things. I ended up being a "charge woman" at the ammunitions factory. Most of the women had their menfolk in the services.*

5). *Were your brothers or sisters in the service? Was your father a military man?*

*My two brothers enlisted but Paddy got out to come back on the farm. Con did not go overseas. My father stayed on the farm - he was too old to enlist.*

6). *Did all of your family and friends make it back safely? How did you deal with this at the time? Do you still think about them today?*

*When Jamie Brown died I was on a machine at the ammunitions factory (for making pellets) and I put a pin through my index finger and missed the bone because I was so upset. I also spewed. Jamie was my friend in Coleraine.*

*Most of the family made it back but my sister Lucy's husband, Reg Shine, died in Darwin from an illness not from war wounds.*





## *Careers*

7). *What was your first occupation? How old were you? How much did you get paid?*

*Working as sewing mistress at the North Konong State School. I worked with my brother in law Jim Burke and I was about 22 years old and paid 18/- shillings a week, paid fortnightly.*

8). *Describe your career in summary e.g. Bank Manager: Westpac*

- Sewing Mistress for 18 months*
- Coleraine Hotel as cook for 4 years*
- Kalimna Guest House, Lorne for a short time*
- Ammunitions Factor for 5 years*
- Relief Cook at Coleraine Hospital*
- Many years collecting rents, changing linen for boarders in a house we rented to tenants*
- Checking/Knitting patterns before in Wool pattern books for Patons - 10 years at least*
- Myers Melbourne and Myer Northland - salesperson in lots of departments - years, and years*





9). *What did you enjoy about your career most? Did you have a mentor? Do you have any regrets?*

*Really enjoyed the responses from different people from overseas when we had the apartment houses - really liked getting to know folks from Poland, Greece and Russia.*

*I just liked selling things at Myers - I was pretty good at it. I got lots of commissions. Molly showed me the ropes and we remained good friends.*

10). *What would have been your dream career if you had your time over?*

*I would like to have learnt dress making. I did go to a woman in Coleraine that taught dressmaking and I did a course with her. I went to another course in Melbourne and damn me if the teacher was not the same woman from Coleraine.*

## *Role Models and Leadership*

11). *How would you describe the parenting style of your mother/father?*

*Strict - very. Father would only have to look at us and we would fall in line.*



*Chapter Six*  
*Personal Life*





## *Favourites*

1). *What are your favourite chocolate, lolly/sweet, dessert and ice cream flavour?*

*Strawberry ice cream, Cherry Ripe, Licorice and plum pudding.*

2). *What is your favourite way to relax and enjoy yourself? Describe a memorable time.*

*Sitting on my bum in the sand in Portland.*

3). *Who were your favourite fictional characters when you were growing up? Favourite toys?*

*Ginger Megs was my favourite when growing up.*

4). *Who was your favourite pet, what was their name and what made them special?*

*My horse called Dinkum which I road when I worked as a sewing mistress at the school. Dinkum was a trotter, bay, good natured and looked great.*





## *Entertainment*

5). *What was your favourite radio or television show growing up? Which shows did you really enjoy through the years?*

*We only had battery radio on the farm. I really liked "Dad & Dave" and the news was always popular especially during the war. I hate to admit I like "The Bold and the Beautiful" and all the news programs daily. Always like Graham Kennedy and Bert Newton and even like Bert to this day.*

6). *Which performers did you see in concert when you were younger? Which were the best? Why?*

*I used to always go to the pictures but I always went to sleep during the program - without fail. What a waste I used to go to the Tivoli in Collins Street. I saw the stage show "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers". I saw Bobby Limb and Dawn Lake on stage - they had a restaurant in Melbourne.*

7). *Have you ever called a talkback-radio show or been on television? Have you or anyone close to you ever had their 15 minutes of fame?*

*My grandson Paul often gets onto the radio - mostly Coodabeen Champions program.*





8). What types of entertainment were you drawn to over the years? Live music, cinema, dancing, or opera? Describe the most memorable events.

*Stage shows were always good. I can't remember the names of them now though.*

## *Adult Life*

9). When you and your friends got together, what did you do? Where did you go?

*Lots of family and friends. Playing cards and lots of barbeques and family meals.*

10). Describe some memorable events you shared with friends?

*Had some slide nights, barbeques, cards, monopoly games, anything and everything.*

11). What music did you dance to? Which dances were popular?

*Accordian. Our song was "When you and I were young Maggie". Waltz.*

12). What genre of movies do you tend to watch? What are your favourite movies? Why?

*Romance movies. My favourite is "Gone with the Wind".*





13). *What books do you like to read? Your favourite book? What is the last book you enjoyed?*

*These days big print books Romance and detective novels. Favourite is "The Tinderbox" and read it over and over - from Coles Book Arcade - it was a big book with a hard cover and it had lots of short stories in it.*

### *Everyday Life/Habits*

14). *Which shops do you visit on a regular basis? What do you buy?*

*I don't shop anymore - it is done by others these days.*

15). *What time do you get up in the morning? What is the first thing you do?*

*8.30 a.m. - first thing I do is have a pee.*

16). *Do you have any superstitions?*

*I do touch wood now and again.*

17). *Can you think of any routines/rituals that are unique to you?*

*I'm a diabetic - I eat regularly.*





## *Appearance*

18). *Have you been happy with the way you look over the years?*

*I'm 92 and look it. I like to keep appearances up and still have my hair set and make-up on when appropriate.*

19). *If you had to name a famous person whom you looked like, who would it be?*

*The Queen Mother - Queen Elizabeth.*

20). *What are your best and worst physical features?*

*Best - Good legs according to Abbie.*

*Worst - Nothing, I'm beautiful.*



*Chapter Seven*  
*Leisure & Fun*





## *Sport*

1). *What are your favourite sports? Who did you play with? Where did you play?*

*I played ladies cricket at Wootong Vale when I was young and bowls at Portland and Bundoora when older with my husband Abbie.*

2). *Did you ever win any sporting competitions? Medals, trophies?*

*Yes, first year at Portland I won the B Grade Championships - beat Betty Herbertson who went on to play overseas. I got a trophy.*

3). *What were your favourite spectator sports? Football, cricket, drag racing. Why?*

*Liked the cricket because my husband liked it. I also liked to watch Ron play footy for the church team 4CW at West Preston.*

4). *Name five of your sporting heroes. Why? Have they motivated you in life and sport?*

*Dawn Fraser, Greg Norman, Pat Rafter, Yvonne Goolagong, Ron Barassi.*





## *Food*

5). *Do you like to cook? What has been your cooking role throughout your life?*

*Alright in the cooking department and I think others would agree.*

6). *Describe your perfect breakfast?*

*Soft boiled eggs with toast.*

7). *What is your favourite meal?*

*A roast.*

8). *What recipes are you famous for?*

*Jelly sponge.*

9). *What is your beverage of choice? Cocktail recipes?*

*Tea. White coffee with sweetener.*





## *Fashion*

10). *What were the popular fashions when you were a child, teenager, young adult and adult?*

*Child - Mum used to make dresses out of flowery material called cretonne - they make curtains out of it too*

*Teenager - Suits*

*Young Adult - Suits*

*Adult - Pant suits*

11). *Which was your favourite fashion era? e.g. 1920s, 1960s or 80s fashion. Why?*

*60's - because I was comfortable.*

12). *Where did you get your fashion ideas from? Movies, magazines. Why did they influence you?*

*I like to make my own. Everything influenced me.*





13). *What were your favourite personal fashion items over the years? Why? Do you still own them?*

*I liked a black velvet top with a black flared skirt. It was very flattering. I don't still have it.*

## *Travel and Leisure*

14). *What have your favourite leisure activities been over the years?*

*Played bowls, visits from family and friends, especially Sunday.*

15). *What is your favourite holiday destination? What makes it special?*

*I liked Queensland - Palm Beach where my sister Mary lives. I've been there 3-4 times and the bowls and pokies were good.*

16). *To what foreign countries have you travelled? Favourite cities? Why?*

*New Zealand was exotic and I loved Western Australia.*



*Chapter Eight*  
*Love & Family*





## *Romance and Relationships*

1). *Do you remember your first kiss? Who was it? How old were you?  
Where were you?*

*At a dance in Konongwootong Hall - Les McDonald was drunk and he saw me out to the car. He wanted to take me home and he gave me a kiss. He rolled his car on the way home, by the way.*

2). *Who was your first love? Do you believe you can be in love more than once?*

*Peter Spong from Coleraine was my first love - years it went on. Nothing happened.*

## *Wedding Day*

3). *What was your wedding date? Location? Bridesmaids and Groomsmen?  
How many people attended?*

*In Melbourne and only me, Abbie and Abbie's best mate in the Army and his wife and my friend Tubby. Had a meal at the top end of Bourke Street then went home to Coleraine. Went to Mt Gambier for our honeymoon and Abbie got malaria and we had to go home the next day. That was that.*





4). Describe your dress or suit. What do you remember of the decorations? What were the colours and flowers you chose for your special day? Cars?

*I got it on the black market at Moonee Ponds so I didn't have to use up all my coupons on the outfit. It was a dress with a long coat over it, blue with white shoes and bag and white hat. The bag had a spray of flowers pinned on to it. Abbie was in his army uniform.*

5). Do you remember your wedding vows? What was your wedding song? Where there any special speeches on the day?

*In a church but very quick service. The church was burnt down not long after and all records were destroyed - lucky eh.*

6). What was the most memorable part of the day? Why?

*So long ago.*

## Parenthood

7). Do you remember when you or your partner found out you were pregnant? Your reaction?

*After taking quite a time, with medical help, I fell pregnant. It was a delightful surprise, I remember ringing Lillian up about it at the Brown's property.*





8). *Was morning sickness a problem? Any crazy cravings? Strange stories?*

*Very bad morning sickness both pregnancies. My father would mix up a brandy and milk to keep the food down. I had a craving for starch - the chalky type which I actually ate, the stuff we used to stiffen the collars with.*

9). *What are the names and birthdates of your children? How did you decide on the names? Describe your childrens best qualities?*

*Ronald Laurence Nepean: 15/01/46*

*Lee-Anne, Susan and Danny*

*Glenda Maree Nepean: 25/11/48*

*Paul, Jacqui and Sarah*





10). Which hospital or place did you deliver in? Do you remember the ride there? Who attended your births?

Both at Coleraine Hospital. Dr Tonkin attended with Dorrie Rigby at the births. I was quite sick after the birth of Glenda.

## *Your Children's Home*

11). Where was the house you raised your children located? Describe

31 Grange Road, West Preston. It was a weatherboard house, painted many colours over the years - the turquoise with flame trimming was the worst. It was mostly white or cream over the years with a green tin roof. Very friendly neighbourhood with lots of kids. The garden had roses, wisteria over the front door, geraniums down the driveway, red holly bush and camellia in the front garden and vegie patch at the back.

12). What are your fondest memories of the house you raised your children in?

It was a half way house for family from the country and friends of the kids. Our fruit bowl fed all the kids in the neighbourhood.





13). *Why did you choose this home to bring your children up?*

*We used to rent this house to tenants but, when the kids began to get older, we moved from Carlton and decided to make this our family home.*

14). *Were you friendly with your neighbours? Socialising? Did your children play with the local kids?*

*We were great friends with Arch & Edna Cairns next door and lots of family bbqs and trips were enjoyed by the families. The local kids all used to congregate outside our house and play cricket, footy and rounders. Cracker night was pretty special during those years.*

## *Grandparenthood*

15). *Where you there when your grandchildren were born? Any good*

*When Glenda was in Armidale NSW and my sister Ina and I were visiting she told me she was pregnant. She thought it was the cucumber sandwiches that were making her feel so poorly. I put her straight.*





16). *Did you help out with the new baby? e.g. cooking, bathing.*

*Didn't have a lot of involvement with the first grandchild although I did get to nurse her when born. It was pretty good.*

17). *What do your grandchildren call you?*

*Nanny, Nan or Nanny Margie.*

18). *Did you ever make or give anything special to your grandchild?*

*Yes, lots of crocheted and knitted garments and lots of things from Myers baby shop.*



*Chapter Nine*  
*Attitudes & Beliefs*





## *Religion and Spirituality*

1). *What religion, if any, were you taught as a child? Was religion a big part of family life?*

*Catholic. Both my parents were Catholics. Yes, religion was a big part of my family life when I was growing up.*

2). *How has your faith or spirituality changed over the years? What caused you to change?*

*Old age has stopped me from continuing to go to church.*

3). *What are some special memories you have regarding your religion?*

*My husband was not a Catholic but he asked to be buried a Catholic before he died. He had a Catholic funeral.*

*He also brought the children up as Catholics.*



*Chapter Ten*

*The Good Times & The Bad*





## *Reflection on your life*

1). *What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?*

*Saddest - Death of loved ones*

2). *What was the hardest thing that you ever had to do?*

*Leave my home at Burdooora when I wasn't ready to do so.*

3). *How has your life been different to what you had imagined?*

*I didn't expect to be left alone for so many years after my husband's death.*

## *Questions we would rather not ask but really should*

4). *Would you prefer a burial, cremation, or something else? Do you have any special requests on the day? Favourite song or prayer.*

*Burial.*





5). Do you have any unfinished business that you want to complete before you pass on?

*Now that Ron talked to me - no. Awaiting the next call.*

## *Family Medical History*

6). What surgeries have you had? Are you allergic to anything, especially medications?

*Appendix out.*

*Hysterectomy*

*Not allergic to anything*

7). What medications did you take throughout your life? What were the conditions?

*Diabetic medications*

*Gout medications*





8). Can you think of any relevant medical history that may help your future family? e.g. genetic disorders.

*Nil*



*Chapter Eleven*  
*Images & Memories*





*Lucy and me*





*Margaret & Abbie*

