

Diamantina Health Care Museum Assn Inc – Oral History Project

This transcript is a slightly edited version of the original tape.

Researchers interested in the fine detail and vocal nuances of the interview are encouraged to listen to the aural version.

Interview with: **JACK CROOK** on: 20TH September 1999

Interviewer: **Sue Pechey**

Place: Princess Alexandra Medical Library.

SP: How old were you when you came here?

JC: 15.

SP: What had you done before that?

JC: I left School at Scholarship and I worked for three weeks at Tickle's as a Storeman and I worked there for three weeks and this job came up and I applied for it and I was put on as an Apprentice Pastry cook.

SP: Let's just go back a wee bit. Where and when were you born? Can you tell me something about your family life?

JC: I was born in Annerley, in a Private Hospital along Annerley Road somewhere and I have lived all my life in Brisbane. I went to School at Junction Park School, most of my family went there and my father went there when he was a boy so Junction Park School has been there for a while and we were one of the locals. Dad was born in the house at Annerley and he died in the house at Annerley so the house had some history. It was in Gustavson Street, down Ekibin Road. They took the house and moved it to Manly so it's become a Phoenix.

SP: How many brothers and sisters have you got?

JC: I've got four brothers and three sisters; there were ten in the family.

SP: And where do you fall?

JC: In the middle, so I've got my older brother Kesten, my eldest sister Jeanette and my eldest brother Walter, my eldest sister Olive, then myself and

there's Margaret and my brother Donald and my brother Peter. I was meant to be the last and I was born in 1946.

SP: So you were 15 in 1961 when you came here. Do you remember what sort of ad it was? Why you applied for this position?

JC: It wasn't an ad really – I think in those days people knew somebody and my father worked with Malcolm Morley's father – my father worked in the Post Office and Malcolm was the Chief Cook here and he must have been talking to him and that's how word got around that they needed apprentices here and I came along and I got the job.

SP: What sort of a conversation took place between you and the chief cook?

JC: It was whether I wanted to become part of it as first apprentice pastrycook and my father told him that I was interested in cooking – I wanted to be a pastrycook but it was hard to get into an apprentice. I was trying to get an apprenticeship somewhere and in those days apprenticeship was the thing, you took up a trade.

SP: Do you remember your first day at work here?

JC: Not really. It was overwhelming anyway, let's put it that way.

SP: Was the kitchen very big?

JC: Huge as kitchens go and the equipment and the ovens were fairly large too. I was only small in stature and so that I could reach up to the top of the second oven, they made a stool so I could reach up into the oven – it had to be especially made and after that they adopted the same stool so that people who were smaller could get up and stir the boilers which were fairly high too. No, I didn't fall in – no one went for a swim!

SP: Were you familiar with kitchens before then?

JC: No, I was only familiar with Mum's kitchen at home. I used to help Mum in the kitchen and that's where I got some tips because she was a good cook and she was good at baking and I got interested at home. I hadn't been in a kitchen before, I'd seen a couple of kitchens my cousin who was a pastry cook up at Annerley Junction 'Over the top' by Lund – he worked in that shop so there's a history there. When he came over from England Mum put him up in our house

until he could get a job and he was offered as job as a pastry cook at Lund's Bakery so I used to see that bakery but nothing the size of this kitchen.

SP: So what were your tasks as a first year apprentice?

JC: First Year Apprenticeship was a lot of cleaning – every person got a cleaning task and I was just shown following the boss, the Pastry cook, what we were going to do and as I showed a bit of promise I could do jobs on my own – I think I quickly took to it and showed some promise.

SP: What sorts of things were left to you then?

JC: I could make the cakes and the dough and as I showed more promise I could be left by myself and they could go and have a bit of a chinwag somewhere else and leave me knowing I wouldn't muck it up.

SP: Were the recipe books you followed for quantity?

JC: Yes, we used to cook for not only the Hospital itself and that was about a 1200 Bed Hospital at that time, but the dining room as well for all the Nurses, Sisters and Doctors who lived in. We had the dining room going as well. We only cooked cakes and that for the dining room and the Intermediate patients. We didn't cook for the public as far as cakes it was a class thing – intermediate and public but on special days like Good Friday we had to cook buns for everybody – that was memorable, coming in and making the dough and rolling and rolling because we had no machinery to roll the buns, they were all hand rolled.

SP: So would it be like 2,500 buns?

JC: Yes and Shrove Tuesdays we made pikelets for everybody and there were some occasions – huge days.

SP: Where the pikelets made by hand?

JC: Yes. There was a grill, a flat top about 2/3 meters long and 1 meter wide. It was two half grills and you would go along one side and another person the other side and by the time you get to the other it would be time to turn them over. And you would have to be quick. We had special spoons for pikelets so as to get the right quality and you had to bang the spoon on the grill so that it came out quickly and get back and let it raise and no drips.

SP: Those were the days when pikelets were pikelets?

JC: Yes, those were the days when you had trays on trays, over two dozen to each tray and you'd be piping things and making sausage rolls we had a bench longer than this and we made sausage rolls on this and we had an electric break which means you put the pastry through the roller and you had it on a big roll and dowel and you had to roll it down the table and a measuring stick to measure the right length and run the knife down and run the knife down again and then you piped the sausage down the middle and then egg wash all over and cut them onto trays and wash them again and into the oven so we did it from scratch from making the pastry to making the mixture, rolling, cut them and cook them. Later on with cakes we introduced some cake mixes – packet cake mixes but before that we made all of our cakes from recipes so many quarts of eggs and so many pounds of sugar, which equals two pints to a quart and then measure it all so you had to measure it into a bucket and get scales and weigh it off – the margarine, sugar and flour and have mixing bowls over a meter round. We had an electric mixer; a whisk, a paddle and dough hook for mixing the dough.

SP: I spoke to a baker last week out at Augathella and he used to mix a bowl that big by hand and he'd come from Shearing to pastry cooking.

JC: Yes and he had the action. Mixers you see now in the shops, they have an action like this and that's the action you needed in the bowl. I sometimes mixed by hand.

SP: When you changed over to packet mixes for cakes. Why did that happen?

JC: I suppose with some of the mixes, a finer grain of cake – it was just a trend. We'd have these big packets of cake mix and you'd get more variety – they could be done in a hurry – I suppose it was in pastry cook shops it was to save on labor and all these different packet mixes. At Christmas we made our own Christmas cakes. We'd make one for each Ward, depending on the size of the Ward, and then for the dining room we made a three-tier cake, and we'd made dozens and dozens. We had pillars for the tier cake and we'd put meat skewers right through the cake the bottom and it was cut off at the top so there were six pillars and then the next tier went on and it was sitting on six little

wooden skewers and it was like bridge building – load bearing and I made a lot of the Graduation cakes here in 1961 – each year we had graduation cakes. It was a graduation cake for the whole class – a huge cake and then sometimes we'd have another cake out the back and we'd cut the cake out the back pre-sliced and cut up ready for them but then the other cake disappeared Everyone who couldn't attend was sent a slice - Matron used to get a piece and someone else got their piece.

SP: So there was a lot of attention to detail in those cakes? What about ceremonial cakes like Christmas cakes and Graduation, they were all especially iced?

JC: Yes – they were all iced and we had to make special fondant icing and we had to decorate it with royal icing and the Senior Sister used to come up with a theme for what they wanted that year – sometimes they left it up to us but we usually used the theme that they came up with.

SP: Can you remember any of those themes?

JC: Oh, there was one, which stuck in my mind. There was a horn of good plenty; so as the horn of good plenty, instead of fruit etc. their horn was a horn of books, so they showed me the books they had in the class that year and I had to make little miniature books out of marzipan and fondant and I made the Horn of Good Plenty but it wouldn't stay in the right shape and it wouldn't perform for me – it was an ugly looking thing and Matron ended up going to a shop and bought a crystal one and put a crystal one in front of it and the books coming out of it. The weather was a bit dicey and the weather plays up with fondant icing and I've had quite a few experiences with that when making wedding cakes and to make the fine lace and let it dry to put on the wedding cakes and then if it rained, the lace just collapsed and it was not a good experience!

SP: Making a Graduation Cake does require a great deal of time, so you were released from other tasks?

JC: Yes, I was released from other tasks – money wasn't much of an option then like it is now – there was always room for a little bit of scope then if they wanted something done, they could release somebody to do it.

SP: How many people would have been working then in that kitchen around you?

JC: There was one Chief Cook and three Second Cooks and another 15 or so cooks and so many Kitchen Hands and two apprentices so there was a lot of people around me. We had butchers, the meat came in and butchers cut it up and distributed it and somebody looked after the vegetables, they peeled all the vegetables, we had a rumbler (a large abrasive peeler) and we would throw the carrots in and potatoes which went into big tubs. Pumpkin was cut up with a meat cleaver and it was a specially shaped one like a Chinese Chopper and we chopped all the pumpkin skin off and chopped it all into bits and cut the cabbage up and a lot of those things needed to be done and then there was all the meat that needed to be cooked. When I started here it was all fresh food and then in 1984 we changed over to frozen food so I've seen the full changes and then we might see it change back again in the new Hospital – the Frozen Food Contract is up from renewal at the end of this year and then we might change back to mostly fresh, so I've seen a full cycle of things from fresh to frozen and back.

SP: What did the changes mean to the staff?

JC: Less cooks – you didn't need as many cooks, a lot of things come frozen from Wacol Factory and it's all transported down to us frozen and packed and then reheated into the ovens. Along the way there was making the sweets, salads, sandwiches, cooking the eggs and all those things in the background and then all the special diets and they couldn't be frozen. We used to send fresh food up in hot boxes and stainless steel containers in the hot boxes were wheeled up and they were dished up by the Sister and when we changed over to frozen foods, we went to centralised system so it was all prepared and it was dished up onto trays and then taken up to the patient on a tray so it was a complete change for the patient even – they got their meal on a tray instead of being dished up by the Sister on plates. In 1984 on 12th August we changed over to frozen food and the night before myself and the Chief Cook and Catering Officer wheeled all the old equipment out and in the morning we changed over to frozen food so it was horrendous – it was a huge task of amalgamating – the

women that worked in the wards, Pinkies, they worked up in the Wards and then we had to bring them down and amalgamate them with the Kitchen Staff and work as a Team so we had two unions, men and women and all trying to work as a group to get these meals out and it was organised chaos but it worked well but it was just pulling them all together and making them work as a team.

SP: You touched on two Unions. Can we talk about Unions in the Kitchen?

JC: The Union was strong in the Kitchen. When I joined it was the Miscellaneous Workers Union – it was called something else before that. We went through so many amalgamations along the way – I think that's why the name is Miscellaneous Workers Union because they had from Grave Diggers, Leather makers to Cooks and Kitchen Hands, so I was a Misso and all the women were AWU so we had Misso's and AWU and no male this side of the river could be in the AWU and no male that side of the river could be in the Misso's – they were in AWU. The Unions divided up who could join where.

SP: They were in a fair amount of conflict?

JC: There were problems from time to time with our Union if it came with a strike and there were strikes from time to time and I got into a bit of strife a couple of times because I didn't go on strike, a few of us banded together and we stayed on while everyone else went out and we tried to make the place work with the meals. As far as patients in bed were concerned, you would be penalizing someone who would be a captive audience up there in bed with nowhere to go and if you went on strike we'd get all volunteers to come in and feed the patients somehow. I just didn't believe in strikes, so I was at odds with the Union.

SP: How many of those strikes would there have been?

JC: There were three occasions before frozen food came in and there were a lot of toing and froing with frozen food and putting people out of jobs and there was a lot of arguing between the Unions then with bargaining etc. for the jobs and eventually it got settled and someone made a decision somewhere over in town on our behalf but Unions always made decisions on your behalf.

SP: When you were employed as an Apprentice did they give you a Uniform and shoes?

JC: Yes – we had to wear white trousers and a white shirt and I wore a white beret type cap. The shoes later on were given to us, and that was through a Union organised practice to supply safety shoes for members so we did gain something with the Union and the uniforms were laundered on site. Later on I think from late 1969 to the early 1970's we started to get check houndstooth pants and white shirts and we changed over from white to check pants.

SP: And what were your entitlements? Did you have holidays, sick leave, and superannuation?

JC: No – at the time no superannuating. A Board governed us so we weren't Government employees we worked for a Board and were semi-Government so we weren't allowed to join the Superannuation Scheme for Crown employees. It wasn't until the late 1970's early 1980's before we could join superannuation.

SP: Was that Kitchen all men?

JC: When I started here it was all males. We went through some changes when the first Female Cook – there was one Female Cook then we had another Female Cook and when I was Chief Cook they put on a female Kitchen Hands which was a bit of a rarity – Female Kitchen Hand and then from there we went to joining together male and females and now females far outweigh the males.

SP: Did it make much difference?

JC: It did with the Union – they were fighting tooth and nail that I shouldn't employ females – there was a bit of pressure brought to bear that I should not employ females because as soon as I employed a females they went into the AWU so every female I employed it cut another Misso out so there was a fair bit of animosity there.

SP: So why did you employ women?

JC: Found that the women worked better than the males, I saw some scope, why should they be all males, so I introduced females in 1979.

SP: And when did you finish your Apprenticeship?

JC: In 1964.

SP: What happened then?

JC: Usually when you finish your Apprenticeship you go and you find another job and when I finished I was lucky that there was a vacancy for a Cook so I went for that and I learned cooking and they had a Diet Cook, a Sweets Cook, a Meat Cook, so I went through all of those aspects and again I showed some flair and I was made a Second Cook and used to do the functions – special functions and from Second Cook I was relieving Chief Cook and Chief Cook and after that I went to Production Manager and then to Relieving Catering Officer and from Catering Officer I went back to Chief Cook and now I am a Co-ordinator and I do training and look after rostering and am not in the Kitchen anymore – it is a complete diversity away from the Kitchen.

SP: Those moves – were they accompanied by extra studying or was it extra hands-on work and extra cooking experience?

JC: Well some of it was extra studying. When I was an apprentice I was doing a college course and if you did well at college you got an extra 5% on top of your wages each year if you attained certain levels. In theory and practical I got Credits and Honours, and attaining credits and honors I was rewarded with the extra 5% in my wages. So by the end of the third year, I was ahead of Apprentice Chef because he was not going to college and he wasn't getting extra and I was ahead in monetary value. At the end of my Apprenticeship I went out and did some moonlighting and worked and followed a couple of the Chefs around and did Cold Larder Chef in a couple of the restaurants in town. They taught me along the way so that gave me a bit of backing when I used to do the functions. I also joined the CMF, which is the Citizens Military Forces, which they now call the Army Reserve. I joined the Catering Corps and because of my trade as a "Pastry Cook/ Cook" they gave me the rank of Lance Corporal. I had the skill needed to progress through the ranks passing the exams as a Corporal Cook then Sergeant Cook.

SP: That was something you did on the weekend?

JC: We trained once a week at night then on some weekends. Two weeks per year I had to go into camp and they work released me to go to camp for those two weeks. I was in the CMF for seven years while I was still cooking here and I

went back and did night studies and did my Junior and I did my eighth, ninth and tenth in the one year.

SP: What subjects did you choose?

JC: English and Math – they were the two I needed in those days.

SP: Was it difficult?

JC: Yes. Adult learning was difficult but I struggled through.

SP: You seem to be career oriented. Did you have any spare time?

JC: Not a lot. I've been here about 40 years. Once I went to Greenslopes Hospital for two months and I thought I'd try a different hospital as it was a Commonwealth Hospital and I transferred over there in the early 1970's and I didn't like it – it was too boring – it was very structured there, worse than our place and you'd have only so much work to do and there were too many people, very padded and it got very boring. I came back and that's when I started through my career upwards and I did courses when I was at work here through TAFE College.

SP: Did you have any spare time?

JC: Not a lot. I didn't play any sport. Hobbies – I used to collect and build little soldiers and toy aeroplanes and models mainly but that's about all I used to do. I think my life evolved around work to a certain degree. Work was my life and to a certain degree it still is – it's like an extended family. When you've been here – what you get for life if you've murdered somebody – the first ten years is the worst. Once you've gone through ten years it becomes 20 and then 30 and it's been a big part of my life.

SP: And have you married and had a family?

JC: Yes – I've been married twice. It's my second marriage now and my family are all grown up now and I've got grandchildren now and at the moment I'm living at home with my daughter – I've built a house up at Burrum Heads on two and a half acres and that's going to be our retirement but to get to there, you have to make some sacrifices along the way and we're with our daughter while we're waiting for our house to go up – we only get up there once a month or on long weekends.

SP: In the early days, when you were in the kitchen, was that shift work?

JC: No, it was pretty good. When I was an Apprentice I was Monday to Friday but at the end of my apprenticeship I went into the CMF so that took up the weekends and some nights during the week but then when I went into the cooking side of it, it wasn't real late shifts – I did 5 am shift from 5 am until 1.30 pm or 9.30 am until 6 pm, so that wasn't very late at all but then going through years later it changed and we had a 12 noon until 8.30 pm shift and I've done all the shifts in between.

SP: Is there a skeleton staff all through the night?

JC: No. The last person is the one who is the cleaner and they finish at midnight. The late shift is 9 pm and the last of the people go home and then this person is cleaning up until midnight and it starts again at 5 am. We have someone in the stores at 4.45 am and they unlock.

SP: It's not very conducive to a social life is it?

JC: No and when I was younger you could do that and go out and go to a party or something and go to work and have a couple of hours sleep but as you get older there's no way in the world you can do that.

SP: No – you don't even really want to do you?

JC: And now sometimes I'm in bed as early as 8.30 pm! Or I am in bed before then, either watching the TV. My wife worked here at Princess Alexandra Hospital for 27 years as a Supervisor so we both had long association with this Hospital.

SP: What was she supervising?

JC: What they called "Domestics:" in those days and then four years ago she took a Voluntary Early Retirement package and she's happy but there's been a bit of stress along the way. I've had a triple bypass.

SP: Oh my goodness. Is that working well?

JC: Oh, not to my liking – when talking to other people who've had the same operation. I'm not as good as they are and my left lung never came back fully inflated and I got Pneumonia two weeks after it so that knocked me back a bit but you know I'm alive and I can function and I was in good hands and I've seen a

few hospitals. I've been at Logan Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital and Chermside for my heart – so I've seen the inside of a few.

SP: Is this the best one for food?

JC: Oh, I'm prejudiced!

SP: Let's go back to the Functions. What sort of functions were you catering for?

JC: There were huge functions, sometimes up to 200 guests. We had end of year parties that the Board would put on for all the Specialists and their wives would come along and we'd have hot and cold buffets or special themes and we'd have whole roast pig, fish and hams and all the meats and salads and we'd do huge buffet table and I'd do margarine carvings and someone else would do ice carvings and we'd have different swans and we'd make them out of margarine and in the back you'd put a glass bowl and fill it with strawberries. Those things were extra on top of your normal duties.

SP: Were you paid overtime?

JC: Yes, a lot of it was overtime in those days – you worked for the dollar very little overtime now.

SP: When did that change occur?

JC: About seven years ago – on a downward scale with less and less overtime to a point now where the only overtime we would get would be if there was someone doing a function and we'd charge to the function and they'd recoup the overtime but very rarely.

SP: Let's look at the chain of command above you. Who do you answer to?

JC: I answer to the Director of Nutrition and Food Services in the Department – there's the Director, a Deputy Director and they're both dieticians and it's like in the Army I suppose – it's flattened down – there use to be a hierarchy and now it's flattened down so there's not as many top brass and then there's someone in charge of stores and they have storemen working for them. Someone in charge of Dining Room and people in the Dining Room working for them and someone in charge of the kitchen who is the Leading Chef and we have Chefs and Chef's

Assistants and then you have Nutrition Assistants which are in the old terminology menu monitors – there are 003's – Operational Officers;

SP: So this is a salary heirachy?

JC: 002 are the base level staff, and then Supervisors 003's, 004's and 005's and 006's. I'm a 005. I am Staffing Services so I have one person working with me so it's all built in and we look after a casual pool and we have about 53 casuals on the books. Nowadays if someone is ill, Workcover or people like that step in on a sliding scale and the casuals back fill the part timers, the part timers fill the full time staff. When we hire them, they are hired on the basis that they can get here within an hour of us calling so that they work on the basis of on call.

SP: Regarding when you were "hands on" Chef, did you have any hand in the making of menus or were the menus all made?

JC: The menus were structured but you had some input into it as you got higher up into the Second Cook and Acting Chief Cook, you had a hand in it then and each month they'd have a Board Meeting so you'd have to cook the Board Dinner so you had to make up the menu and cook the Board dinner and serve it and it was taken up to the Board Room.

SP: In the Board Room were how many people?

JC: About 14. I remember Mrs. Broad and some other people and if I saw photographs I could pick them out – people I've seen at Board Meetings – there've been quite a few went through.

SP: Indeed. What was the most special occasion you catered for?

JC: Oh sometimes a big function at Christmas when we put big Smorgasbords on – prawns, crabs, bugs and oysters. I have some shells, which are my own – big clamshells, and then big displays with the prawns cascading out of them – people could show their flair in decorating them. I've got some photographs of those.

SP: Good. We may want to copy them. What about very special important guests?

JC: I suppose the Pope visit here. I've got a little thing that the Pope gave out in appreciation of the kitchen staff. He came as a visitor not as a patient.

Princess Alexandra – the Hospital was named after her and we had changed names and it happened before I came here in about 1960. Before that we were only a holding thing for an overflow from The Royal, we became the South Brisbane Hospital and South Coast Regional Hospital Board and we changed names on a regular basis. When I do orientation from New staff I go through 1883 – that it was Diamantina Orphanage and I go through the different dates when things changed – I have some photographs out of the Jubilee Book that was put out and some of the photographs so just to give a little bit of history of how long we've been on this site and have probably been a party to seeing new things built.

SP: Have you had a hand in the design of the kitchens for the new Hospital?

JC: Well, very small, as I'm in Administration so I'd only have a bit of say in the Administration Office – in the Kitchen now out of my domain I'm not allowed to poke my nose in there and give advice!

SP: Are you happy with that change?

JC: Oh to a certain degree. I suppose because I like cooking I would have liked to end up in cooking rather than in Administration but as it turned out it was a little stressful and probably a lot safer where I am for my health.

SP: And in your home, who does the cooking?

JC: Well I used to do most of it but because my wife works night shift, it's a shared basis. My wife does some and the daughter does some and I do it when they want it on special occasions – cakes or something special but before that, that's only recently when my wife stopped working here, I shared it with my daughter or I did it on my own.

SP: Have you ever seen bad accidents in the Kitchen?

JC: Yes there was one, probably the only really bad accident was when somebody put their fingers in the mincer and we had fairly large mincer and in the front on the mincer was the blade and the whole thing comes out and there were holes around it for coarse meat and he was doing something and instead of switching the mincer off, he put his fingers on the front of it and two of his fingers went through and chopped off two ends of his fingers. I came along and found

him – he was taking something up to the Pig Room – I don't know whether he was in shock but he didn't realise it had happened. I sat him down and we had clean cloths and I wrapped it around and took him to Casualty. The only other ones were burns and people always slicing their fingers with knives.

SP: What about really funny things?

JC: Oh, Christmas got really funny – we always had to work on Christmas Day, the big day of the year and we always used to bring our own supply in and have a little party afterwards and things got a bit funny on those occasions. On one occasion I came in dressed up as Santa Claus and somebody wheeled me around up around the Wards in Acute and I gave out lollies to patients and asked them if they'd been good but everyone was good.

SP: Did they have known you up in the Wards; did they know who you were?

JC: Some of the people knew me, through my association, but not a lot of them because we were basement staff and they were up in the Wards and there were a lot of hierarchy there too – I can remember there was a pecking order in the Dining Room there was Senior Sisters and sisters then the first, third and fourth year Nurses and then the Doctors and Matron. One time Matron had her own table partitioned off with a screen she had a bell and she'd ring for service it was very hierarchy. That was Matron Broomfield. Before that the nurses couldn't sit with the Sisters and Doctors. The Senior Sisters had their table so you couldn't mix and our staff weren't allowed in there at all so it was a closed Dining Room but after years and years it opened up to where everybody could go into the Dining Room and Nursing Staff – no more live-in Nurses and Doctors and it changed.

SP: When the Nurses lived in and ate in the Dining Room here, they had breakfast and lunch and dinner here?

JC: Yes and supper.

SP: Did you ever make special birthday cakes and things for the girls who lived in over there?

JC: Not particularly. There were only special occasions for patients but not many for staff – you'd end up making birthday cakes all the time and it was never a practise to start.

SP: You've had a satisfying career haven't you?

JC: Yes.

SP: And are you staying on until they open the new Hospital?

JC: Oh yes, yes. I'll be here – we're due to move in late 2000 – we'll be one of the first departments in – we have to feed people from there, get orientated and feed people from the new Hospital while they're closing down the old one so that will be a challenge. We've got trolleys now and we tow the trolleys up to the Rehab now – an electric vehicle so what we do now, we tow the Rehab trolleys up where we are now and it will be in reverse. What will happen is we'll be cooking up there and Rehab will be closer and we'll have to run Acute down on trolleys so it will be in reverse so there'll be more trolleys coming this way than going up that way.

SP: Will the new Kitchen be much different?

JC: Yes, I think it's smaller, more compact and they've looked at the cross flow of work so there's not such a huge walking distance like now and the kitchen leads onto the plating area so there'll be roll in and rolled out refrigerators so the food will be put in this side and taken out that side to put on to the plating so in that suspect it will save a lot of walking and create a flow through. Until a few years ago we had to bring stores onto the dock, they'd get unloaded off pallets onto big trolleys and then carted right through the kitchen and put into the storage area right across the other side of the kitchen and then brought back again into the kitchen because we took on different areas it wasn't built specifically for that, so there was a lot of walking and a lot of unnecessary shifting of large quantities of stuff but now they've built a new loading dock and stores which come into the kitchen so we're flowing through now a lot better than it was than when we first started.

SP: Can you just give me some quick consumption figures like how many eggs do you use a day here?

JC: Oh, I'm out of touch with those numbers. I've now been about ten years in Supervision and you lose touch of the enormous quantities over there.

SP: When you moved into Supervision was that a job you applied for or was it suggested to you that you do it?

JC: Well someone suggested I do it because I'd had some ability and there are some people that have some ability and some people just want to be a worker and I think I had some aspirations that I didn't want to stay just a worker – my brain ticked over all the time when I just didn't want to do routine cooking but eventually you're thinking too much for everyone else and you get to a position where everyone else is picking your brains once you've been in supervision for a fair length of time, you get a bit of burn out.

SP: So what sort of, can you describe an ordinary day for you now?

JC: A day for me now is a real cross section of, I look after just getting new, when people are sick, calling people in to replace, making sure that people have got their annual leave forms filled out, there long service leave forms filled out, their increment levels. They have to go through a bit of PP&R to get their increments and HRM.

SP: What's PP&R?

JC: Performance, planning and review, where you have to sit down with their supervisor and go through what they have done and what they should improve on and before they get their next increment level.

SP: Yes

JC: I look after work cover, all work cover payments come through me, so I look after that. Then there is all of the leave. Then I have to and if people are changing from a casual to a part time, part time to a full time, I have to prepare the letters. Letter of appointment to go to the next appointment so that they must have a start date and a finish date to make sure their all flowing on. So it's a fairly comprehensive work in that. I coordinate the training. There is never enough time in the day. Up to about a year and a bit ago, I was nearly computer illiterate and

then all of a sudden there was a computer sitting on my desk. So now you will use a computer.

SP: You will use it.

JC: So I mean that I'm getting the hang of it, a bit of self taught learning as I go along. I've picked up a bit.

SP: You enjoy using the computer?

JC: Sometimes. I'm a bit slow; I get mad with myself when I'm not fast enough at the typing. So it takes me longer to do things than I should. Because it's a computer, there are huge things that it can do. Like for the annual leave I mean everyone has to bid now for his or her annual leave. We have to make up a form and print it out and give them when they can have their leave all in two-week blocks and they all have to apply for it. Get every form back and then plot it out.

SP: Work out who's got priority on this particular two weeks

JC: Then it goes up on the board and then everyone comes in and says I don't like what I've got so start swapping people around. All that information you put it into the computer and keep it ticking over. Computers help with numbers and number crunching and when you have volumes of work to do. If you've got a macro down it's good.

SP: Yes indeed. Now you've got four or five years before you retire. What are your hopes for those years?

JC: Well my wife hopes that we get up to Burrum a lot sooner. She works on me all the time but when we retire that's the last pay packet we'll have. It's got to last us. Because we joined super late we haven't got that. If I joined when I first joined as an apprentice I could retire comfortably now. No way if you've joined in the 80's you haven't got that push along. Now I've just got to tick along and have my goal. I've got the house built up at Burrum. I've got the shed, fruit trees, the dam, the pumps in so it's all comfortable and just keep looking for the goals, I've achieved that and achieved that and just bit by bit.

SP: Is there any further up in the hierarchy in the hospital that you want to move.

JC: No I can't move up any higher. I'm an 005 and I could go to an 006 but there but I would have to back into the kitchen for 006 and I don't want to go back in there. I left there because of stress and I don't want to go back that way.

SP: No and its physically very demanding, more demanding than your present job.

JC: Yes I don't think my health.

SP: You would have to be on your feet nearly all the time wouldn't you.

JC: If I wasn't in my desk job that I'm doing now, I don't think I'd still be working unfortunately because I've got a back problem as well. So I've got spondolosis so I just couldn't last on my feet. I'm very lucky when I got up through the ranks I got into administration. If I wasn't in administration I would be on an invalid pension. So I suppose I'm lucky I've gone this far.

SP: You didn't move into administration because of your health.

JP: No it was only because I wanted to. I could see, just looking at the part of the normal day to day humdrum routine. I have to keep moving and keep things going and new projects moving on. Training is always a big thing, I mean there is always training and that keeps me busy.

SP: Who are you training and what are you teaching them.

JP: All the new staff that comes through, they have an orientation program. It's documented as they go through some of its theory, some of its hands on. So they come in and they have three half-day training sessions and could be some theory and some hands on. Then they do four hours half a day buddy system and then right you're on. We go through the training; we did client focus I work with CTD on that.

SP: CTD?

JC: Central Training Development, they have trainers on site here at the PA and that's their training people. They develop the course and between the trainer and myself, we put everyone through the training session. That meant we had to put five sessions on a day, five one hour, no two hour training sessions. I've done so much training over the last few months. We did client focus, and then we've

done food safe which is a food safety course. The environmental health officers in Western Australia developed it so everyone has to go through personal hygiene, food hygiene, food handling and all of the aspects of that. That means putting everyone in the department through it, which is nearly 200 people have to go through session 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. So we're up to session 5 at the moment. So it's taken us months and months to get through that. The next training session after that is fire training awareness. Then after that the dieticians have some training lined up for understanding diets and then we might go back to square one and do food safety next year. So it's just repetition and then we've got a committee and education and training committee. So we map out the training in that committee and what we are going to do and we have it in advance we're already on to two training sessions in advance to the one we're doing now so that we have months of planning before we implement it. So its busy, I'm training but I enjoy it. I get out in front with the white board. My English is not real good but I get over that by writing on the white board. I'm trying to better it but I'm afraid its I'm a phonetic speller and a lot of people pick me up on my spelling on the white board and I say look you're not in here for English classes we're in here to learn the subject we're on now. If you want English classes you'll have to go to TAFE College or something. I get around it that way. Some take delight to pick up spelling mistakes.

SP: I hope the move to the new hospital go smoothly for you.

JC: I hope so too.

SP: I think this is not a bad place to stop. Thank you.

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