

Interview with Vern and Fay Hallam

TAPE 5, SIDE A - The first crop

Vern Yes, well the first crop that came into bearing was my White Hermitage in 1950, yes 1950 and I remember it for one particular reason, Fay was home on her own as usual and I was down working on a farm down at Meribah where I used to do outside work and the poor girl was walking up and down, beating a tin to chase the starlings off the crop. Do you remember it?

Fay Yes, I do.

Vern And as fast as she got to one end they would be down at the other and she would go down and I am quite sure she was beating in tune with the birds and they thought it was a bit of an encouragement, they brought in their mates and by the time she got to one end as I say they were back in the other. I never picked any White Hermitage that year the birds took the lot. Fay was very fortunate really because I was down bag sewing at the time I think, no it would have been too late for bag sewing, anyhow I was down there and I saw these cartridges lying around the old Lands Bulldog tractor and they were twelve gauge and they were transparent case so I thought oh they are blanks obviously there is no shot in them, so I picked up quite a few and I was going to put give them to Fay and say put them in the shot gun and just fire a shot they are only blanks, scare the birds away. And luckily I saw the farmer and I said, "Oh by the way I picked up those shells lying around". "Yes" he said "I get a misfire now and again and that is to start the bulldog tractor you put it in and hit the button with a hammer and bang she goes". And these misfired and I said "Oh well, I will put them in the shotgun and see what happens". He said, "I will tell you what happens. It will blow your head off". So Fay was very lucky that I was short of (laughs), so were the birds. I think bits of Fay would have killed the birds. Anyhow that was my main impression of the first lot of grapes I had, I didn't pick them.