My baby, delivered by nurses in the Gold Coast Hospital when it was a single storied ‘Queenslander’. Me, drying dishes in the hospital kitchen when I was in early labour. Volunteering to take over the baby bath demonstration because Sister was called to a labour ward emergency.

Enjoying a movie at the Pier Theatre, lounging in a twin deck chair, with my 2 week old son on my lap. Pushing a pram from Echlin St. along Nerang St., passing huge Moreton Bay fig trees to meet girlfriends at the little C.W.A. room in the Broadwater Park. Biscuits and tea for sixpence along with a clean changing table, a cot and those lovely, motherly C.W.A. ladies.
Back in 1934 my father helped build the Main Beach Surf Pavilion. We camped nearby. Although under age, I insisted on attending Southport State School. Older boys led me there via the old wooden Jubilee Bridge. In early 1940s we staged our night films at the house of my mother’s bridesmaid and husband. Their boys escorted me to see old Southport Pier picture theatre.

At Main Beach Fred Lang took many photos of us in our bathing costumes and Johnny Patterson used to spray us with his “Vita Tan” coconut oil. Many a time he drove us around on joy rides in his large silver vintage car from France. I had a camel ride on the beach and we used to buy mullet from Fishermans’ nets. My father and I fished at The Spit where we caught flathead and bream with bait we dug up with our heels in the sand. I remember a small light plane landed on Main Beach.

We were accompanied by sand crabs crawling over our rugs at the radio concerts held at night. In the late 1940s we came from Brisbane alternate weekends to stay in a shack my parents bought and made jam from pie melons growing in the front of the property. One night my parents had to take me to the lifesaving pavilion where my sand fly bites were treated and I was told to dab a mixture of baking soda and water on them to get some sleep. Mangroves attracted the blighters at the swamp at the rear.

For financial reasons, my parents were forced to sell this property. My father had in mind to build there eventually. In 1978 when my husband and I were...
looking for flats as an investment, with one for us to live in on the premises, the first place we were shown was the aforementioned property my parents once owned, which then had a not too promising block of flats on the land, right up there to the street, which we did not bother to inspect. The asking price was $85,000! We ended up buying a home unit and a home at Southport and a home unit at Surfers Paradise and another home unit at Main Beach when house sold at Southport, and then bought a house at Burleigh Waters – sold that and then bought my present residence (Elanora).
During the War, the lookout on the top floor of the Southport Surf Club at Main Beach was manned 24 hours a day by the V.D.C. (Voluntary Defence Corp). The lookout was an ideal place to see and report any unwelcome activity, i.e. Japanese warships. Fortunately this didn’t happen – the defeat of the Japanese ships in the Coral Sea battle turned the tide very decidedly.
My parents Don “Sandy” and Dot MILNE moved to Southport after my sister Betty was born in September, 1931. They both worked hard as Dad worked at Sinker’s Garage as a mechanic and also had the motor car distribution agency for the Hudson Terraplanes. Our family car was a Durant which Mum drove as the local taxi, in between rearing 3 children. Apart from that I recall helping Dad build his glider on the verandah. Each of us had our jobs to do, Dad was the designer and builder, Mum sewed the canvas around the wings and tail and I had to make the wooden struts for them. Another of the gliders we built was a ‘Twin Tail’ and we took it down onto the beach near the Life Saving Club as that is where Dad used to take off from. A bad storm came with very high seas and it washed the glider out to sea. I can’t recall if it was ever retrieved but it was obviously interesting enough for the newspaper to mention it.

Dad was quite well known in the mid 1930s, apart from his being an avid glider he held the 1933 World Primary Glider record, he also took the first air mail letters from Southport to Brisbane on the glider with him. He was the MC for the dances at the Savoy Hall and he even beat Gordon KNIGHT in the roller skating competition held in the Pier Pavilion. Apart from the pictures being shown there it very popular place of other amusements.

Southport even had its own Gliding Club and amongst the members were Gordon KNIGHT, Eileen Margaret SPILLER (better known as “Billy”) and Doug HENDERSON.

I can’t recall the name of the street we lived in but, to get to the house one had to go over the railway crossing to the top of the hill. The house was rented from Jackie SKELTON, the local butcher and our neighbour was Mrs. O’Shea.
I started school in Southport around 1932 and my first teacher was Mrs. Chalmers – next year it was Miss MADAM (I recall Betty Catling sat beside me that year – wonder if she is still alive too?). By 3rd class I had the never-to-be-forgotten Miss BURNS. The boy behind me was playing up and she was sure it was me (*Author’s aside – must have been the *only* time he wasn’t in trouble*), so she gave me 2 cuts on the hand. I kept telling her that it wasn’t me but she refused to believe me. It just so happens that she drove a little old Baby Austin to school, so I went down when nobody was around and let down her front tyres. That fixed her little red wagon!!  Back to the teachers – I recall the Headmaster was Mr Hibbard and his offsider that we called ‘Mr Three Es’. I have since been told that it was probably Mr E. Ebbeaston. He married another teacher and all of us kids got out and banged drums and yahooed and made quite a lot of noise, which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

I recall Mr Melrose who owned a bullock wagon, he used to load it with logs and drive them down through the streets to the saw mill which was almost opposite the old power station. He had a son Hugh Melrose who was a really good Rugby League player and ended up playing in Brisbane for the North’s Devils.

Our parents were into surfing and they made friends with many of the local Lifesavers, the ones that come to mind were Garry GERRUDE (soundexed), Cliff ‘Juddy’ NAPPER and Charlie BUCKLEY. They had a Lifesaving Club House over towards The Spit; unfortunately it was knocked down during a cyclone in May 1936. The lifesavers really impressed me and, because of this, years later I joined a SLS Club down in NSW.

We didn’t stay long in Southport as in November 1936 Dad left for Hong Kong to work as Director of the Technical College at Kai-Tak Aerodrome, training Aeronautical Engineers and in March 1937 we all joined him. To this day I recall how our time in Southport was very special to me….it must have had an impact for me to remember it so long.
Bert Morris settled in Southport April 1946. Bert Remembers the first Motel, first high-rise, construction of canal estates, theatres, peer, Regent, Savoy, the clock in Nerang Street, The Jubilee Bridge, the flying boat landing on the Broadwater, the steam train unloading the circus, and the many cyclones.

Bert’s occupations were varied including:-

- Assistant to piano tuner
- Paper boy, shop assistant
- Van salesman, bread carter
- Penciler to bookmaker
- Well digger
- Market gardener
- Bee keeper
- Candle maker
- Land developer
- Naming Nevenia Street at Labrador
- Church warden and auditor
- School bursar – 25 years at St Hilda’s
- Author of the book An Octogenarian
- Looking Back
- Long distance runner
- Community worker
- Friend to the needy
- Chess club president
- Care taker tennis court
- Master mason
- Justice of the Peace

Southport clock, circa 1950s
Image courtesy of Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library

Southport Pier and Picture Theatre, circa 1940s
Image courtesy of Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library

Jubilee Bridge, circa 1926
Image courtesy of Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library

Jubilee Bridge, circa 1926
Image courtesy of Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library
I remember when the Pier Theatre was used for the Southport State School fancy dress ball in 1956. My husband and I played music there. Local fisherman and miners from Ipswich used to fish behind the Pier Theatre and catch bags of fish. I also remember the Spring Festivals held every year. Schools and businesses entered colourful floats and paraded through town for judging. Also brass band contests held behind the RSL. I still have videos of these events.
Queen Street, Southport (established 1935). For many years, Croquet was a social activity with games being played on the lawns of many houses around Southport. Southport Croquet Club was inaugurated in 1934 and formally established at a General Meeting held on Tuesday 11th June, 1935.

The principal officials of the Club were – President – Mrs. T.R. Hall, Vice President, Captain and Secretary – the Mayoress, Mrs. N.S. Woodroffe; Treasurer – Mrs. C.L. Kennedy; and Committee – Mesdames A.I. Munro, M.E. Dunn and A.C. Bastick. The total membership of the Club was 20.

The General Meeting decided to arrange for a lease for the use of the Croquet lawns at Wychcourt for four afternoons each week (we believe this location was in Young Street on a site now occupied by Australia Fair West).

On Wednesday 28th June, 1939, the Town Council authorised a loan of 1,000 Pounds for Southport Croquet Club to construct a Croquet lawn and clubhouse in Queen’s Park. However, in September, 1939 it was agreed the construction ‘be deferred until international affairs are more settled’.

Although there had been a meeting in 1945 at the conclusion of World War 2, Southport Croquet Club was not formally reformed until Monday 25 July, 1949. Land provided by the Council in Queen’s Park for the construction of a Croquet lawn and clubhouse in its present location at the junction of Queen Street and Ada Bell Way, Southport.

In 1990, with the support of the Gold Coast City Council, the clubhouse was extended and the number of Croquet lawns increased to three. In more recent times, with the patronage and support of Councillor Dawn Crichlow OAM, the Club has been able to add a car park and build new shelter sheds (August 2005) and install night light illumination (April 2008).
With 55 playing members, Southport Croquet Club now enjoys a World class facility that attracts competitors from around Australia and overseas to its various Mallet Sports tournaments. Further, it is a favoured venue for Interstate and overseas Mallet Sport enthusiasts holidaying on the Gold Coast.

From 1934/5 to today, Southport Croquet Club has been an integral part of the community life of Southport. We look forward to a continuation of its traditions and role within the community.

Southport is where the Aboriginal elders of the Yugambeh people grew up including my mother, Patricia O’Connor and her many cousins. Her generation have told me many stories of Southport, including traditional foods, early coastal life and Aboriginal language terms of the local community.
My husband Daniel was a paper boy when he was eight years old. He used to deliver papers to “Kinkabool”, one of the oldest buildings in Surfers. He used to sell papers in the Surfers Hotel, go in one side with a pile of papers and come out the other with nothing.

The pier picture theatre was fantastic – while you were watching a movie you could see the ocean and fish swimming around.

Charlie Ladds owned the land on the Skyline Terrace, it was a banana plantation – 1954. Aunty Dulcie Dunlop Ladd wrote danced and acted in the Gold Coast Theatre Group – she wrote “We Have Our Dreams” about the banana plantation.