

ERNIE DALE

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Interview by Klaus Hueneker.

corrected by

KH.
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Read for People book

This is an interview with Ernie Dale on the 16 February 1982 at his house on the road to Ingebyra. Ernie has been a stockman and a dingo trapper in the mountains, was through the Tin Mines for a while, in that country, and also further north, up in Snowy Plains. I think he's got quite a ^{few} juicy stories up his sleeve.

KH: Can we start maybe at the beginning, if there is a beginning, with your first involvement with the mountains. Have you been a resident of this area all your life?

EB: Well I lived here practically all my life, my family shifted from here in 1925 and they went to Kiama down on the South Coast. My father was a First World War man and he'd been wounded ^{pretty badly} in the war and had to go to Sydney for medical treatment quite often, so they shifted to Sydney. I went to Sydney in the Depression time and 1930 I left school, I wasn't quite 14 when I left school. I was born ^{in 1916} here in Jindabyne. I left school about June 1930, I wasn't quite the 14. I came back here and worked with my grandfather, as a cowboy and sqforth, took the cows in of a night and milked them in the morning.

KH: That was with your grandfather?

EB: Yes, McGufficke I gradually got out into the bush, more with Norman McGufficke, Norman and Harry McGufficke was the two that I first got out into the bush with.

KH: Norman and your mother are brother and sister?

EB: Yes. I learnt a bit of stock work, cattle, sheep.

KH: Where did you go with Norm in those first days, where did he take you?

EB: Well in those days the McGufficks ^{e)} had leases right up to the head of the Moonbah river, head of the Thredbo river.

KH: Up in the Big Boggy?

EB: Yes in the Big Boggy. They used to take their cattle out and head them to Moonbah ^River which is Wombat Gully.

KH: Yes, there's a hut up there now or a ruin of a hut.

EB: We used to go out there, there was no huts in those days out there.

I can remember when Dead Horse hut was built, one of my cousins Norman was one, one of his oldest boys Herb, Laurie McGufficke, I think Harry McGufficke, they all had sheep out there. They were camped below Dead Horse ~~hut~~ where it was standing and that was in 1931, the year the Southern Cloud was lost. They were across the Bogong Creek and the Thredbo River and they had sheep in the - what they call Browns ^{Yard} up the Big Boggy about three miles, towards the Chimneys. They had them in breaks up there, they were three days there when the Southern Cloud was lost but they couldn't get over the river to get

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to them, to let them out even. The river was up. They couldn't get over the river and they couldn't get over the Bogong Creek which is just below Dead Horse hut. Dead Horse hut was built after that.

KH: Was Dead Horse hut on the Gap itself?

EB: It was right on the Gap, there in the saddle it was built. There's a bit of a ^{plaque} there now with ~~the~~ heights on it. The hut was built just on the right of where the road is now, practically alongside of the road.

KH: I think I've seen the flat area where it might have been.

EB: I should have photos of that about here of Dead Horse. I never camped in Dead Horse Hut actually until 1951/52 summer. I had camped there overnight with some of Nankervis' stockmen. But '51/'52 summer I was stockman there for Nankervis' at Dead Horse.

KH: That was a weatherboard hut wasn't it?

EB: No it was a tin hut.

KH: Tin walls too?

EB: It was galvanised iron hut with slab floor, all made out of mountain ash, just out of local snow gum, just out of the local area and the floor was put down - it was pretty rough - but it was pretty good.

KH: A few bunks in the hut?

EB: Yes. I tell you it was a lot better than the tent. Gradually we got out, the Cascade Hut was built in 1938, it's still standing.

KH: It had a bark roof on it then.

EB: Yes it had a bark roof on it for a start and then Brian Pendergast - one of the next door neighbours virtually - he put the iron on it.

KH: Would that have been in the 50s some time?

EB: I don't know exactly what year but it was in the 50s - it could have even have been in the 60s. I'm not really sure when they put the ^{graziers} right out of the mountains up there.

KH: What about Teddy's up in Wombat Gully, was the old brumby yard there then?

EB: I can remember quite a few brumby yards about there. The yard that is across from where ^{Teddy's} hut is, across the creek, there was one just a bit to the left of that - Kerry Pierce built it.

KH: It wasn't at the ^{same side the} old one! I knew there were two.

EB: Well Kerry Pierce and Leo ^{Byatt} - a whole mob of them, came up off the Murray and they run horses in the Cascades, down to that Woodhouses' Yards on the road to the Tin Mines from the Lookout. They had yards in different places over there, then they built that yard at the head of the Boggy - it was up for years - it either rotted down or got burnt down, I'm not sure which

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in the finish.

KH: That yard would go back to the 20s then?

EB: I'm not really sure when it was built. The first time I saw Leo ^{Byatt} ^{would} be in the early 30s - '31 or '32 - I can remember them leading pack horses and driving these brumbies that they caught.

KH: They caught them up there?

EB: They caught them in the Cascades. It's the first time I ever saw Leo ^{Byatt}, then I got to know him pretty well. Leo was a very good horseman and I suppose a stockman that most people would look up to. I always looked up to him anyway.

KH: Was he a bit of a 'Man from Snowy River'?

EB: Well there's a lot of controversy over that 'man from snowy river' but before his time I'd say.

KH: Do ^{you} reckon the 'man from snowy river' was one particular person or do you reckon ...

EB: No, no, I won't have that at all. I've heard lots of stories since. Jack Brodie, a World War veteran, he knew Banjo Patterson, Jack Adams was another one that knew him, and Norman McGufficke. They always said that Banjo Patterson told them that it was no particular man, just some man from Snowy River. Clancy of the Overflow was no particular man, he was mentioned in that somewhere.

KH: I tend to agree with that I think.

EB: I had a lot of good times in the mountains out there, graduated out to the Tin Mine when I was with Nankervis Brothers, looking for stragglers the first time. Charles Carter was there then.

KH: You remember Charlie do you?

EB: Oh I remember Charlie. He was an old gold digger, did a lot ^{of} gold digging - whether he got much I wouldn't know - he must have got a bit I think.

KH: Apparently he just liked digging holes.

EB: I don't think he did it for nothing. I think that he got gold, there's no doubt that he got gold. I've heard Pol Mc Gregor that had the store in Jindabyne say that she used to buy gold off him, so he must have got gold.

KH: Who was that, which Mc Gregor?

EB: Polly Mc Gregor, she'd be an old woman now, she's 90. She's in the new Sir William Hudson Home I think in Cooma, at the present time. She's blind I think, or very close to ^{being} blind.

KH: You would have camped with Charlie I suppose sometimes?

EB: Yes.

KH: He mainly stayed in the big mess hut didn't he?

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- EB: I believe it fell down, I haven't been there.
- KH: Yes, it fell down last winter I think.
- EB: That was always Charlie's domain, you were never allowed to camp with him in that hut.
- KH: No one was?
- EB: No, he'd never have anyone camp with him. It had a partition in it and I'm not really sure, it could have had two partitions in it - it was a very big hut. After Charlie died - he died out there - it was opened up and stockmen used to use it for salt and horse feed and what have you. I was never ever in that hut while Charlie was alive, he always kept it locked. There was different huts there - quite a few of them got burnt down. The first time I was at the Tin Mine I think there was about five huts, similar in design to the one that's there now that I put the chimney in. As time went on they either fell down - well some of them were burnt down in the '51 fire.
- KH: Were they! There's three of the cottages, ^(pointing to photo) do you remember those?
- EB: Yes I remember those.
- KH: They must have been for the workmen.
- EB: This is the one that's standing now isn't it?
- KH: No this is the one that's standing now.
- EB: Well that one was standing for quite a while after ...
- KH: Then it went down in the 60s or something like that.
- EB: Yes, that's right. There were three of them along where there was a yard.
- KH: Yes that's them. There's the yard, there's the manager's cottage, that little one that's still standing now, there's the big Mess that Charlie lived in and I think those three there are down along there.
- EB: Yes, they were in behind the big one, they were back a little bit, then there was a fence came along behind that one, then there was a shower room over here. Their water supply used to come out along the creek there right along side the chimney - the race line - for getting the water. I don't know who put that in, whether it was when they were working the Tin Mines or whether it was Charlie who put that bit in there. It was really good. Last time I was there it was pretty draughty in there - well I camped there quite a bit when I was dingo trapping.
- KH: Was the shower block very large? *Put cold water in a bucket and*
- EB: No only a small turnout - one room - bush showers. *top it up with hot.*
- KH: There's also talk that there's another hut way down over here that may have been Don Mowatt's hut, do you know anything about that?
- EB: No, Don Mowatt never ever built a hut there. He always used to

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- camp in the ^Manager's hut. That's the only hut he camped in there. There was a hut quite a way over - do you mean in the same paddock?
- KH: Yes, down here below the stock yards, a fair way down, there's just a pile of rubble there now and a bit of a fruit tree.
- EB: Snowy had a gauge turnout there - a sort of a wind gauge and what have you, but I don't remember a hut there, in my time. There was another hut way over at the junction of another - the Little Tin Mine Creek as they called it and then there was another creek junction just off it - went down into the Ingeegoodbee River. Little Tin Mine Creek runs into the big Tin Mine Creek and it goes on to the west, right on the divide, it goes into the western water shed where as the other goes on to the eastern water shed and goes virtually back into the Snowy. There was a hut over there - I think there was a bit of gold digging went on over there. It was still standing - the old framework - I could still show you where it was and there'd be still some of the relics of it over there. They had a race that used to come round out of the big Tin Mine Creek, right round the side of the hill. Whether that was for tin or gold I'm not sure. I did strike some prospectors who had been there years before, they came from Newcastle - Barretts I think ^{their} name was, or some name like that - out there one summer while I was dingo trapping. One of them told me that he'd been there working at one stage trying to get gold out. He says they never got much, but he camped in that hut. That was quite a few years back. I never ever saw anyone camping in it, it was beyond camping in when I saw it.
- KH: How far away is that from the Tin Mines?
- EB: It would be about a mile.
- KH: A mile to the north?
- EB: Yes straight in towards the Pilot.
- KH: Oh that's south. But the water came out of a race line from the Tin Mine Creek.
- EB: Yes, the water came right round.
- KH: You never found the main hole at the Tin Mine workings. You reckoned there was a big shaft somewhere.
- EB: ^{with iron nailed on them,} There's supposed to be a shaft down there. I found some pegs out there - would be a lease - one of the mining leases - other than that, I've heard them say, different ones, about them having a mine, ^I always thought that the tin must have come out of that Tin Mine creek - open cut. Whether it did or whether it didn't I'm not really sure.
- KH: There's a lot of stacked rock in there.
- EB: But I'm not up on metallurgy, I don't know much about what it contained.

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A hell of a lot of work was done there, as you can see by the shifting of all that rock.

KH: It looks like it from these - they had three cottages there for the workmen - it looks like they might have had a dozen or 15 men working there at a time.

EB: They must have had quite a few I think. One of them was a blacksmith's shop, so they told me. I think it might have been Carter that told me about that in his days.

KH: He wasn't there when it was actually working was he?

EB: No, he came back. He was here for years then he went away to Queensland.

KH: Didn't he have a feud with the Freebodys?

EB: Yes, he and the Freebodys had a feud out there.

KH: They didn't see eye to eye!

EB: I don't think they were very friendly right to the finish.

KH: Did the Freebodys like anybody in that country?

EB: I don't think so.

KH: It sounds like they didn't.

EB: Sort of the Martins and McCoys I think all the time.

KH: I've heard various stories of the Freebodys putting Carter up on a court charge and he actually went away and served sentence for a while.

EB: I've heard some of the story but I don't know the full rights of it.

KH: Did Charlie ever tell you about it?

EB: No Charlie never ever said anything about the court case any time I was talking to him. I was a lot younger and he might also have known that I knew the Freebodys, they used to live just up the back here - well Pat Freebody young Pat I know him, he lives near the airport at Cooma. He'd be the only one of that Freebody clan still living.

KH: I think he is.

EB: Old Pat, I used to know him, in fact I worked for him a little bit doing ploughing and things in the earlier days.

KH: It was Paddy and Jack wasn't it.

EB: Yes Paddy and Jack was the two that had Ingeegoodbee.

KH: Do you remember any stories about the Freebodys at all? They sound like quite legendary sort of figures.

EB: They were sort of ^{hermits} in the bush there for many years, used to come in with pack horses and take a lot of provisions and what have you out. They packed a chaff cutter for my uncle, Bill Bales, about 2 miles. I don't know whether they actually packed it on horses from there or they

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took it out to Ingebyra, as far as they could get a vehicle. But they packed it from Ingebyra anyway out to Ingeegoodbee and I think they might have even packed it on to Quombat, out on the border. I know they packed a plough in there.

KH: They were ploughing that field, that flat area were they?

EB: It was a hand chaff cutter. They used to grow oats out there.

KH: On Quombat Flat?

EB: Yes. I think they had a flat plough there - I wouldn't be sure on this - but I think they did have some ploughing done at Ingeegoodbee. You see Carter had selected Ingeegoodbee in the first place. They had their falling out and he was put away for so many years or whatever it was and they took over that country.

KH: So they were farming down in there?

EB: Just for their own use, for their own horses. They run a lot of good Hereford cattle in there for years. From when I first came back from Sydney I can remember them bringing cattle in. I used to take quite a few of them down Bairnsdale way for sale. Jack had a property at Buchan. He and Pat split up. Pat bought this place joining up here, 'Gowing Brae' - it's been split up again in recent years. Ray Weston bought portion of it, straight up the back here, and Bill McDonald, another cousin has bought where old Pat used to live, he's bought the house.

KH: Do you remember any stories of cattle rustling at all, without mentioning any names?

EB: There was always talk of it but I don't know anything about it. They reckon that cattle were duffed years ago. The McGufficks^e had all this end out here - Jack McGuffick^e My grandfather and his brother was the start of the McGufficks^e out there - Bill and then Jack McGuffick^e, he was Bill McGuffick's son, he had the Lookout - I think he had right down the Thredbo River in those days. That's back before my memory. Then the Pendergasts used to work for them out there. On the Big Boggy Plain, there a bottom end to it. There's a ridge there known as the Butcher's Ridge where they caught someone butchering the beast.

KH: Up in the Big Boggy?

EB: Yes. I can show you where that was done. It was done in Jack McGuffick's day, he owned the beast that was butchered. They were possum shooters I think, camped down somewhere near Leather Barrel Creek that got it. One of the old McGregors was looking after stock there and he followed them down and another one came in for the police. They caught up with them somewhere near Leather Barrel Creek. They slaughtered beast for meat, they couldn't pack

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him all away, they got quite a bit of him.

KH: It's not known as Butcher's Creek on the map I don't think.

EB: No it's never marked on the map Butchers Ridge. It's a little ridge that comes in off the Cascade side of the river and comes down into a bit of a saddle, real rocky point where it goes into the river. It was on ^{that} ridge that they killed this beast.

KH: Is that where the road goes up to the Cascades?

EB: Between Dead Horse and ^{Groggin} Crossing, they used to call that crossing in the river down there. It's not known as ^{Groggin} Crossing now, just above where the bridge is across Thredbo. It's about a mile say up the river from there, where they killed this beast.

KH: But you don't remember any stories of cattle duffing?

EB: There are lots of stories but it's only just hearsay.

KH: Were there any particularly dramatic things that happened when you were in that country - any search or rescues or bad fires where people got injured.

EB: There used to be different ones get lost but there was nothing serious I don't think.

KH: You didn't go looking for anybody?

EB: No I've never been in a search party out there for anyone.

KH: Did you ever get caught out there when it snowed?

EB: I got caught in fogs. I put in one night on Kosciusko. That was in January 1952.

KH: That was the last grazing wasn't it?

EB: Yes, I went on to Townsend to have a look, I'd never been on to Townsend much, I wanted to familiarise myself with that country for mustering time. I went out this morning, it was nice and clear, took my lunch with me, dressed in ^a pair ^{of} trousers, shirt and hat and a pair of boots. Anyway I got out on to Townsend and I decided I'd come back through Wilkinson's Valley. I got down into Wilkinson's Valley and a black fog rolled in and there I stayed. Everywhere I went I'd run into a clump of rocks.

KH: Did your horse stay with you?

EB: Yes he was with me. He'd want to go one way and I knew better and I'd pull him some other way which he'll always do. Had I let the horse go I might have got out of it, although he was more inclined to want to go stray. I used to put in about 20 minutes gathering that gauzy bush that grows in the rocks - there's no timber there - and it took me ten minutes to burn it then. I started to get cold and I'd gather a bit more. About 2 o'clock in the morning it come out a bit clearer and I set off and went round under Coota patamba, around the back of Kossie, under where Hayes body was found, come back with

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the overflow of Coota patamba across the creek and got on to the track then. I knew where I was and so did the horse. I was home early that morning I'll tell you. Not quite 24 hours I'd been away from Dead Horse and I wouldn't have been any more than 11 miles from it. We were camped in Dead Horse Hut then.

KH: This was '51, '52?

EB: Yes it was the summer of '51, '52. My name would still be on - I went up to the back of the hut, up on to the Rocky Bogong and I wrote my name with my pocket knife on the tin thing on top of Rams Head and the date. I think roughly, I remember it would be around the 15 or 16 January 1952, my name would be still there.

KH: That was the last summer for grazing up there?

EB: Yes, that was the last time they allowed grazing. They didn't have it right on to Kossie, they had their cattle up - we used to have a salt camp on the Bogong, which is up straight behind the old hut.

KH: I think that is now known as South Rams Head.

EB: Yes, it would be South Rams Head. I've never been up in that country on a horse - I was up to Kosciusko a few years ago, drove up to ^{Charlottes} Pass and then went in the bus, they had a shuttle bus service - I went up with some of the rangers to the top of Kossie. But I've never been in that country for years and years - I might have been up the next year I think - but I've never been there on a horse since. I could still find my way there if they'd let you.

KH: Did you ever go up Hannels Spur?

EB: Yes.

KH: On a horse?

EB: Yes. I don't know the first time I'd be on Hannels Spur - it would probably be that year 51/52 summer.

KH: Did you ever take stock down that way?

EB: No I never took stock there. Leo Byatt and a few of them - old John Pierce used to have that country before Nankervis' bought it. They had cattle up there. Whether Nankervis' ever took cattle up there I'm not sure. I know they took cattle down there, that used to run on Kossie, but I never ever did. 1951/52 summer they built the hut at Geehi, down at the bottom where the airstrip is now.

KH: The river stone one - it's as recent as that.

EB: I was working for the men - Nankervis' - I had a pair of reasonable binoculars. I used to get around on that point and you could look down on to Geehi. I used to have to report every fortnight at Tom Groggin. ^{Ken} Nankervis

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would come up to Tom Groggin and meet me every fortnight and I'd get the orders for the next fortnight - just to know I was still up there doing ^{me} job I suppose, more than anything.

KH: You were based at Dead Horse gap - Dead Horse Hut?

EB: Yes. I used to ride up on to the top of Kossie and have a look down to see that ^{they} was working. I used to be able to tell them what day ^{they} was there and they was doing.

KH: Did you send out smoke signals?

EB: No
KH: It was built in 51/52?

EB: Yes it was the year that hut was built.

KH: There's about five of them along there, those river stone huts?

Some were much earlier weren't they?

EB: I think five. There's one just above the junction of the Geehi Creek.

KH: Called Doctor Forbes now.

EB: There was a doctor from Albury put that up or had it put up. I wouldn't be really sure on this but I think Don Benson, he used to live at Khancoban, he was with them on the building of the hut for Nankervis. I think he was at the building of that hut at Geehi Creek and I think he was somewhere in the building of the hut for Nankervis' - Arthur Nankervis had a lodge down the bottom end of the bull paddock and then there's one opposite it, over the river, the Syndicate hut - I saw it but it's a pretty hard hut to get to.

KH: It's half collapsed now.

EB: Then there's one at Round Flat.

KH: The Youth Hostels had it.

EB: The Geehi Club used to camp in it when they had walks - I don't know if they still have them, I don't think so.

KH: Yes, the Geehi Club is still going.

EB: I was wondering if they still got down Hannells Spur because the last time I was on it, it was that rough with scrubby, with fallen timber.

KH: I think people still walk it sometimes.

EB: I'd tell you what, they'd stagger. By gee it's steep. There was some parts of that, the last time I was up it, you couldn't ride a horse, you had to get off and lead, the ground was grown over and it was too low with coverage of vines, the scrub was too low for you to push your way through.

You had to lead the horse. That ^{wasn't} very far, it might be about 150 yards. ^{then when you came out on the clear you were just below Byatts Camp.} I'd have a look through that country again, but I don't suppose I ever will - all my old mountain mates have either shifted away or died.

KH: All those riverstone huts were built about the same time?

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EB: The Nankervis Hut at the end of the airstrip was the last one that was built. The others were built before ^{ever} the road was in there.

KH: Back in the 30s?

EB: Could have even been built before that, but they were built, I know they were built before the road ever got in there. That road never came in there until the Snowy Scheme started. 1951 was the first year that the road came to Tom Groggin.

KH: So they would have brought their cement and stuff in with a bullock dray or a cart.

EB: No they'd have to pack it. The cement would have to be packed.

KH: Over via Geehi Walls.

EB: Yes.

KH: That would have been an old bridle track along there!

EB: There was a bridle track there, there was no way that they'd get a cart in, it was too steep down that Geehi Walls.

KH: Was Major Clews involved in the building of those huts at all?

EB: No, he wasn't involved in any of them. I don't think he came into there until ... he was a surveyor with the Snowy Scheme - Major Clews. He was involved out here - the first time I struck him was at the Tin Mines, when they were putting the road through from the Tin Mine to Grosses Plain and out past Bob Golbys to Ingebyra Gap. Actually I don't think they did much of that work. They might have put a few culverts or bridges over the creeks above Bob's but they could always take a dray - old uncle Bill McGuffick^e he used to take a double-shaft dray into as far as Thatchers Hole, years and years back, back before my time - he'd cart provisions. They had a hut there - at Thatchers Hole. That's the only hut I know that the McGuffick^e had other than No. 1 hut ^{out} on the Thredbo River and it's all fallen down now. They had the Lookout run and it was quite a way from there up to the Lookout. They used to pack from there, they'd cart horse feed and salt and food in that far. Major Clews put in a lot of time out, he did a lot of the surveying out Cabramurra way. He's always told me that they could have got a better grade to the road but he supposed that they wanted to use the wall of the dam for the road - Tumut Ponds Dam. He said they could have got a better grade from there, come through to Tooma dam other from going down into that and back out of it again. It would have to be up higher. I know they could have got a better grade round through - if they just wanted to go to Tooma dam - round through the old stock route, through Farm Ridge.

KH: Yes, but it would be snowed under in the winter time, well, so is the other road of course.

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EB: Well they could clear it in the winter time of course, but it would be pretty costly because there's so much of it, it's under snow on that one. Out through Dead Horse, I suppose the fact that they've got Thredbo there - one of the best skiing resorts in the southern hemisphere - you go right up on to the main tops with chairlifts. It's all opened up that country. They don't have to clear that much this side of Thredbo and it's only from Thredbo through there to about the *Wattles* that they have to do any clearing much. It's very seldom that they have to clear any further down to the ^{Leather} Barrel Creek, unless it's a very heavy fall.

KH: Do you know anything about Bullocks hut, did you meet Dr Bullock?

EB: Yes I met Dr Bullock quite a few times. Alec Barry and Charlie Conway, two builders from Jindabyne in those days built it, ^qreinforced concrete hut.

KH: It's built like a fortress, like a bunker.

EB: Yes well the story was - and they were building it - some of them asked Dr Bullock why he was building it so strong and he said he wanted to make it Pender-proof. Straighty Pender was over there in those days, old Straighty was a bit of a lad, anyway Straighty got the story. He said 'I'll show him how Pender-proof it is'. So he used to come there from Sydney, he was a Macquarie Street specialist, he used to come up there for the summer holidays and Straighty knew when he was coming. I think his wife used to get the message when he was coming and she used to do lots of jobs for him, a bit of cooking probably and cleaning up. Anyway Straighty went out and shot a kangaroo and dropped it down the chimney to show him that it wasn't Pender-proof. It would be quite a smell wouldn't it.

KH: He was up to all sorts of pranks that Straighty Pendergast by the sounds of it.

EB: Straighty probably got the blame for a lot of things he didn't do, he was a hard case.

KH: Why was that?

EB: He was a good mate, *he was witty.*

KH: He injured his knee apparently, is that why he was called Straighty?

EB: I don't know much about the story but he had a bullet in the knee. It was a real education to see him get on a horse.

KH: He could ride alright!

EB: It was the right knee that was hurt, he put the left foot into the stirrup and throw the old straight leg over and pick the stirrup iron up and throw it down over his boot. I've seen him do that hundreds of times. We lived in Jindabyne for a while, back in the early 20s, I used to see Straighty a lot then. They were always great church-goers, they'd come down to Mass every Sunday - the old McEvoy's, Peter McEvoy, Johnny McEvoy, Tom McEvoy, I

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can remember all them coming down, they were all old men.

KH: How old was Straighty then?

EB: Straighty was a nephew of the ^{old} McEvoy's, his mother was a McEvoy, he was a lot younger than them, but when he died I think he was around about 70.

KH: How long ago was that?

EB: That's going back a while - over 30 years when Straighty died.

KH: What else did he get up to?

EB: I was working for Jim McGuffick when he died.

KH: That would be the late 40s, early 50s.

EB: Yes '47 I started with Jim McGuffick so it would be in the early 50s.

KH: When you knew him, would he be in his 50s?

EB: He was younger when I first knew him naturally, you have to stop and think how old you are yourself and work things out. See I'm 65 now. I've been in the bush with him, he used to do a lot of brumby running, I've never worked with him.

KH: Do you remember any of his other pranks?

EB: I know quite a few of his old pranks, but it comes under the heading of libel ^(laughter) he's got sons and daughters and grandsons - you don't tell them stories. He wasn't such a bad bloke, I don't think he ever did anything real bad. They used to fight, him and his brother used to fight, not fist fights like you and I might have, it was whip fights. He could plait a whip with anyone who ever plaited whips in Australia - Straighty was as good as them. His brother wasn't bad either - Jim. He was a good old whip plaiter. Boxing Day down here used to be races. Races at Jindabyne on Boxing Day for years and years, now it's Rodeo. Jim would always have a horse ^{or Peter,} if their horse won Straighty reckoned they'd pulled someone else's. One of Straighty's sons used to ride and one of his brothers used to ride - Ted and Pat. Pat was Straighty's son, Ted was his brother - they was good jockeys - I think they used to do some shady things just the same...

KH: How did they fight with whips?

EB: The horse that Straighty backed mightn't win - ^{held} have - oh there wouldn't be many pounds on it, pounds were scarce in those days, the Depression time - there'd be a row or something, never be a fist fight, always a whip fight.

KH: What did they try and do, hit each other with the whip?

EB: My word, they didn't very often miss either.

KH: That's a bit deadly isn't it.

EB: They used to hit with the whip alright.

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KH: They could get hit in the face!

EB: I've seen Straighty use the whip on anyone.

The old bar at Jindabyne, I've seen him flick lolly papers off the floor, cigarette packets, even cigarettes. I've seen him knock a cigarette from a man's mouth.

KH: Who was the man who was prepared to stand there ...

EB: He'd get someone to do it, there was always someone who knew he was an expert with the whip. I've never ever seen him hit anyone with it.

END SIDE 1

KH: I was talking to Leo Russell last night, he was telling me about somebody who was able to cut through a bale of wool with a whip, would that be right?

EB: Yes.

KH: Two or three chops down the side and it would just open.

EB: That would be right.

KH: The power in those things must be incredible.

EB: I've seen different ones with a whip when they do their lolly with their beast. They'll open a beast up that long, 18 inches long, with a whip across the rump. I've seen that and have done it myself and I'm very sorry after.

KH: Would that kill the beast?

EB: Oh no, cut through the hide, it would bleed and then heal up, but there would always be the scar there, it's like a brand.

KH: You could do that with a whip?

EB: If you've got a decent form on your whip you can do it, my word.

KH: Then you were up Snowy Plain way for a while?

EB: The first time or two I was at Snowy Plain, I went there fencing in 1937. They'd let the fences down in some of those areas on account of the snow when they'd leave in the early winter. Then in the spring time they'd go back and strain them up again. George Collman and I did, we did a stint up there ^{around} ^{Coolringdon}. I think it took us about a fortnight or three weeks to do the job - I can't think of the name of the strainer, I didn't think I'd ever forget. We used to get it up nice and tight, then just about the time

we'd go to tie it, it would slip - I've still got some of the marks on my hands. ^{patent - old Reqd ought to patent it and chuck it in the sea.} We was there in early November, end of October we went up there to muster cattle or stragglers, then went back in November 1937, doing the fence and we got up ^{on to} the Bulls Peak River and this strainer slipped and George give it a wheel round and threw it into the river. We could see it, it was as clear

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as crystal, about 5 feet down. We fished and fished and fished with a bit of a wire hook on the end of it and didn't look like getting it. I might be white now, but I went in and got it and I was blue when I came out.

KH: You would have been up near Flanagans ^{Hut!}

EB: Yes, just below Flanagans country.

KH: Yes, I've crossed that. The river goes through a bit of a gorge there.

EB: Yes, that's right. Well we was down below that, going towards Alice Sturgeon's hut on the ⁺ Cafers Ridge - the [^] Yellow hut - it wasn't there then. We were up above that, we were up the Bulls Peak about a mile when we threw the strainer in. We got it out and ^{we} worked fairly well for about half an hour till ^{we} warmed up again!

KH: I'll say, that river can be cold.

EB: I stripped off and went in so I had the dry clothes to put on, that was something. That was the first time, then I went back through there droving. I was never back there until after the War, I went away in the War years, then after the War I was back through there, did a couple of droving trips across to ... I took cattle across ^{to} Welaregang on the Murray, then came back. Mick Pender and I took a mob of sheep through there the next year then I went to Nankervis', then back to Tom Groggin. I had a while down there and then ^{the} dingo trapping job came on, it was a bit more money, so I put an application in.

KH: You didn't ever feel lonely when you were dingo trapping? It was a ^{lot of} time by yourself wasn't it?

EB: Towards the latter part. Well first off - I used to camp a lot by myself out in the bush. First off I used to be up here at Norman McGuffick's hut, in an old house up above where Ted McGuffick lived and Ted was only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below me - I used to be down there quite a bit for meals. Then I shifted out in the summer time - I worked for the Pinch first, I lived in a tent down at the Pinch and trapped up around Ingeegoodbee and back on this side - that was in the winter time, in '61.

KH: I've got some photos here of the old Ingeegoodbee hut, do you remember ^{that} place?

EB: Yes I remember that well. You haven't any of the new one.

KH: No, that's the old one again.

EB: Well that wasn't the original hut, that one was built later - it never had a chimney in this one. The other one was built over somewhere near the yard. I never ever saw it, it got burnt down.

KH: That was the one that Carter and the Freebodys stayed in.

EB: Yes that's right. This one was built later.

KH: This one has gone too now.

EB: Yes it's all fell down. That was taken a while back too.

KH: Yes, '49 I think - yes 1949 they were taken.

EB: It sounds about the time that the McGufficks had cattle out there.

KH: Could be.

EB: 1947/48 they had cattle out there. I helped them take them out and then I helped them bring them back. Anyway the next time I was at Snowy Plain was when I went up there dog trapping.

KH: Did you go into the National Park then?

EB: Yes.

KH: So you went right through into Mawson's country?

EB: Well in those days up there - I was put on as a trapper in the southern end for a start and then they put Bruce Jamieson on - he was a married man so he went on the Ingebrya end and did all this country up round the Moonbah River and what have you. He knows all that rough country down to the Snowy and so forth - a very good trapper. Anyway I took the northern end then. We were supposed to trap in the Kosciusko ^{State} Park, it was then, the Kosciusko State Park it might have been then - anyway we were supposed to trap in the Park and areas adjacent. I got as far out as - I never had traps out quite to Mawsons, I had them out further, going out on the road to Cesjacks hut, I went up and camped there for a while and I had traps set out past the Post Office, down Strumbo...

KH: Where was the Post Office?

EB: Well the Post Office was out about half way possibly from Cesjack hut on one of the stock routes that went out through there, down towards Pretty Plain. Might be a little bit further than half way, from Cesjacks hut to Strumbo.

KH: Strumbo is Grey Mare.

EB: Yes, Strumbo is just before you get onto the Grey Mare track. Why it was called the Post Office - Mrs Bolton, she's dead now, some of her family lives about Jindabyne, Mrs Leo Williams, Mrs Ted McGuffick up here are two of her daughters, Mrs Arthur Harris another one. Well she used to run the mail when the Grey Mare mine was going, by horseback. She used to - there was a clump of rocks and they had sort of shelves in them and she used to leave the mail for Mawsons Hut - it was always known as the Post Office - she used to leave the mail and put a rock on top of it.

KH: On which side of Jargungal is this, on the north side ...

EB: On the Mawson side.

KH: There's Strawberry Hill through there somewhere.

EB: Yes, Strawberry Hill is between there and Strumbo, between the Post Office and Strumbo. She'd leave the Post Office then and she used to go down, apparently she went down the Rocky Plain river ...

KH: She was on horseback with the mail and she'd come from where Adaminaby?

EB: Yes I think it came from Adaminaby, I'm not really sure on that. I think it came from Adaminaby originally but where she picked it up I'm not really sure.

KH: And Mrs Bolton, not her son, not Jack Bolton?

EB: No, Jack Bolton's mother.

KH: How long did she do that for?

EB: I don't know how long but she used to run the mail. They've got the Mailman's Crossing, it's in Rocky Plain river and she used to cross there and go up to the Grey Mare. That mail ^{it} came from Adaminaby, but it would probably come out to Fletchers. I've never really asked where it came to, where she picked it up. There was a post office there for a while at the - where ... Laurie's brother lives there, old Fentonville, that was where the Post Office was then.

KH: Fred Fletcher!

EB: No, down below Freds. I think she might have picked the mail up there, I'm not really sure.

KH: She'd go up over Nimmo Hill.

EB: Yes probably, or she could go up to Black Gully and come up that way.

KH: Yes I've seen that track marked on a map.

EB: And then if they went up that way, they used to go up what they called Smiths Track, to go out on to the back of Flanagans hut. You wouldn't go to Cesjack, go up across the Doubtful, to the head of and straight on across - there's a fence line through there - the Post Office is nearly right on the top. If anything it's got to be on the western fall naturally.

KH: It's not on top of Jargungal?

EB: No, no.

KH: It's a group of rocks?

EB: Yes. Lindsay Willis told me about it being the post office.

KH: He told me this story too but I couldn't work out which side of Jargungal it was on - he thought it was Jack Bolton - I hadn't heard it was Mrs Bolton, it may have been that Jack did it later.

EB: Jack was a dingo trapper for a little while. Old Davey Williamson, he used to take sheep out there to Mawson's Hut many years ago and Davey often told me this story about Jack when he was a dingo trapper - a pretty good trapper.

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The dogs were killing the sheep, they used to come up out of the Geehi into there. To get the story straight, a few years previous Jimmy Woodhouse down here at Jindabyne was dingo trapping and they got him up there to catch a dog that was doing a lot of killing - he used to smoke a pipe. Amos ^{Bolton} was another one that used to smoke a pipe and Amos went with him this day. Just up at the back of Dicky Cooper hut, do you know where Dicky Cooper hut is?

KH: Yes I do.

EB: Well there's a little gap before you come to Dicky Cooper Creek, coming back towards Schlinks Pass, well they caught the dog there, they caught this dingo, so they killed him with a stick and they both get set to back her out. The two of them lit their pipe up and bent down to skin him and he took off. They'd only knocked him out, he got away from him. Davey used to tell me the yarn about 'that's the gap where Jimmy Woodhouse give the dog a hiding', then he'd tell you the story. He said Jack Bolton had to go to Jindabyne for more food and he showed me where these traps were set. One was set just below the Post Office, then another one down a bit further, another one near Strumbo. He wanted me to have a look at these traps while he was away. Davey says, over I went and there's a dog in the one ^{up} near the Post Office, so I killed him, never carried a rifle, killed him with a stick. He says, 'I wasn't like Jimmy Woodhouse, I got my pocket knife out and I ^{ham} strung him, both hind legs'. He says 'there was no need, because when I finished lighting my pipe, I skinned him, so I went down and set the trap up, went down to the next one, had to do a bit of alteration to it, the wombats had been about it'. He says, 'I went down and there's a dog in the next one, so I done the same with him, I killed him and ^{ham} strung him, I wasn't going to have him get away like Jimmy Woodhouse did'. It was an effective way of stopping them. I suppose it wouldn't be very humane.

KH: Did they mostly club them to death did they? What did you use, a rifle?

EB: I used to carry a rifle yes, odd times I wouldn't. I'll tell you a funny piece at Snowy Plain. I think it would be the last year I was trapping, the last year or the second last year anyway. I had a young horse up there, a bay mare, only sold her a couple of years ago. She wasn't vicious but she'd have a bit of a go at you. I got Noel Pendergast to come with me for a week, riding about, he hadn't been up there much. We landed up there on the Monday about 2 o'clock and I got the horses into the yard and I give him one. I said I'd ride this mare but I can't carry the rifle on her. I'd only been on her a couple of times before, Arthur had broke her in and brought her back to me. Anyway I got the rifle and hung it ⁱⁿ the tree. Noel said I'll carry the rifle,

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you can carry ^{the} second gear, so I just threw the second gear across the back of the saddle, had a bag made for it. She humped a bit at that, I knew there was no weight in it, she'd be right. We got down below Davey Williamsons hut, I straightened up and listened - I reckoned I could hear a dog - you imagine all these things you know when you're out in the bush, particularly when you've got a trap set, you listen all the time - looking and listening. So anyway I never seen anything there, I got down a bit further and went under the power line and I could hear this dog going to town. I said to Noel 'Do you hear that' and I said 'Where's the bloody rifle'. He says 'It's in the tree back at the hut'. I says 'We'll be right I'll kill him with a stick'. Anyway he was on Botheram Plain, a big yellow dog, he was a fair lump, he wasn't real sociable either. He got over into some sally trees - there used to be some sheep yards there years ago - he was dragging the trap. He's over there and he'd got into a fork of a tree and was sort of half hung up, he was a bit mobile but the trap was caught. I went and broke the stick and handed him the mare, I broke the stick and as soon as I got it up to have a hit, it broke, it was rotten. It took me about 10 minutes - the next stick I hit the log and it broke and I had one about this long. So I handed him one and he grabbed it. He's going to town and I give him one across the head with it, with a piece I had about 2 foot long and I reckoned I wasn't going to mess about, massacring him with a little bit of a stick. I knew I knocked him out but I give him one ^{fair} on the point of the nose just to make sure, because that's the surest place to knock them out. He sort of stiffened out and I got my pocket knife out and put the knife into his throat and cut his throat. I looked up and Noel was as white as that door, 'Don't you ever do that again' he said, ^{I thought he'd have your arm} 'he could have been shaming'. I suppose he could have been too, had I been on my own I wouldn't have done it. He said to me after we got back to the hut 'You'd better give me a whiskey, me nerves is not too good, I think you'd better have one yourself'.

KH: Did you catch many dingos in your time?

EB: Some years up there I do a lot of patrolling about, to make sure there was no dogs about, or try and catch them. There was only one year I didn't do much good at Snowy Plain while I was there, I always caught a few. The first year I was there I don't think I caught a dog but the second year two different mobs of dogs came in. I didn't know much about that area at that stage. With dingo trapping, knowing the area is half the battle, that's why I was lucky out here, see I started out here, the Moonbah River, I knew the area and I knew where the dogs used to travel. I know that area now, I know where to go and look for a dog, if I had to go back, not that I'd ever do it.

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KH: Was there anyone staying at Williamson's hut, the day you were there?

EB: No it's in the Park now. There was no one there, only rangers or a hiker or two, when I was about up there. There's a few huts still standing up there, be getting into disrepair I think. A chap from Canberra I think had the right to camp there, as long as he kept it in repair and looked after it, it wasn't his hut, but he could camp there.

KH: This was in the 60s was it?

EB: Yes that would be in the 60s and early 70s. I'm not really sure.

KH: When did you finish?

EB: I finished in '76. I finished up here though. I'd probably be up there early in '76. I finished up in August '76. I wasn't getting on real well with a few of them on the Dingo Destruction Board in Cooma.

KH: Does it still exist?

EB: Yes, it's still there, I was talking to the Chairman the other day, same old Chairman. He was inclined to get a bit sarcastic the other day, but I think he got just as much as he give. I had a bit of an argument with them over long service. I think I might have been the only one that was in a union. I was a member of the AWU, it didn't altogether cover dingo trappers but it covered pretty-well everything sort of thing. Bruce out here, he left before me, he's on casual now again, but he left before me and they gunned him. He didn't get near as much long service pay as he should have done. The secretary told me 'So much long service pay' and I said 'That's what you think', I says, 'You wasn't even secretary when I started, you don't even know the date I started'. He said 'When you started there was no long service leave'. Anyway a chap, I think he's still in Canberra, Bill Spellman, he might be out of the AWU now, but he was pretty-well up in it, Bill come from about here. So I wrote him a letter and I told him when I started, the date I started and the date I finished. He put it through the computer and sent it back up to me - how much they owed me. I went in and it was still about \$300 below what it was. I read him the end of the letter that I got from Bill. He said 'Don't be in too big a hurry, if they want to fight you, they pay you to the day that they decide what they've got to pay you'. I said, 'That's from a bloke well up in the AWU in Canberra, he an organiser'. He's up higher than that now I think. He says, 'Can I have the amount'. I told him what it was. I got the amount that was stated.

KH: What have you been doing today, you've been out mustering somewhere have you?

EB: I had some cross-bred lambs up here and there was a buyer coming to look at them. He wasn't very energetic on price, a bit tight. I don't do much now. I laid down there reading the paper for a while and went off to sleep, I was asleep when you come.

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KH: Do you remember Charlie Carter's cures and things - cures for cancer.

EB: I didn't know there was cures for cancer but he had two main cures for everything - piles in particular was one.

KH: What was his cure for piles?

EB: You put blue-stone on them tonight and then Spirits of Salt on them tomorrow night. There was this woman and husband came through and two of his brothers, hiked through there from ^{Benambra}, they came from Melbourne and they camped with us at Dead Horse hut one night. I just said to her 'Did you see Charlie Carter at the Tin Mine'. 'Oh yes' she said, 'he gave us a book, "Cancer, Communism and Finance"'. I had some of them for a while, they were things I should have hung on to too, I should have got a dozen of them when I got them. I know I lent one to Norman McGuffick & I never bothered asking him about it again - he put it away careful - he mightn't find it for six months. If he went looking for a pocket knife he might find what he was looking for six months before. Anyway this woman said to me 'Old Charlie told us this cure for different things, did he ever tell you the cure for piles'. I said 'Yes I know it, my mates mightn't know it'. I was egging her on. Anyway she said 'I'll tell them'. She said, 'Blue-stone on the piles tonight and Spirits of Salts tomorrow - that ought to frighten them back in'.

KH: What was the other cure? You said there were two.

EB: I don't know what his cancer cure was. He had his two cures - it was for toothache too. There was blue-stone out there for years and years, there's probably still blue stone in that old hut.

KH: It's fallen down now, the one that he stayed in.

EB: All that stuff was shifted over into the little one. What annoyed me, the last time I was at the Tin Mine I was with the Sergeant of Police down here, Mike Shannehan. The first time he was at the Tin Mine ^{he} was with me, when I was dog trapping, he was a Constable in those days, now he's back here as a Sergeant. A pretty efficient copper. Anyway I went out with him and they've got this big *screed* over the fire place about Carter and so forth, making out that that was the hut Carter died in. But Carter didn't die there, he never ever slept in that hut in his life I don't think. He always lived in the big hut and he had all his gear in it. When he died, Hubert Golby up here was executor of his will, he and someone else went out and packed all the stuff in that he had, it wasn't very much, kangaroo skin rugs and things like ^{that} would be worth a bit of money, camp ovens, I suppose a few dog traps - he was a pretty efficient old dog trapper - caught a lot of dogs. He built a trap or had it built - Leo Barry brought it in - for catching brumbies - built on the same principle as a dog trap, only a lot bigger. I don't think he ever caught

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a brumby in it, I wouldn't like to get hold of him anyway if he did because it was a steel trap with a round hole like that. When it sprung it'd fill out this hole, held them with the foot, it would make a hell of a mess of his leg I'd imagine.

KH: How did he catch his horses?

EB: Snares mainly set between two trees. Sometimes he'd run to a yard. But Charlie in his latter days - I got to know him pretty well - I used to see him bringing in pack horses and going to Jindabyne for supplies and what have you, used to camp up here with old Charlie Finn at Grosses. I got to know him pretty well but never camped with him or anything other than a couple of nights at Charlie Finns when I was only a boy fellow until I went out there to the Tin Mine. He'd always have a yarn with you, ^{interesting old bloke.} wherever he went in the bush, whether he was digging, or whatever he was doing in the bush, he always carried a rifle and that rifle was always loaded. I've been told - he never ever told me - but I've been told that he reckoned he'd always carried a rifle in case he ^{run} into the Freebodies, so they'd be frightened of him with a rifle. I remember Laurie McGuffick and George Day when George was manager of the Chalet up here, we went out there running horses, we caught some horses at the Cascades, it was early in the day and a pretty good track across the Lookout then, the McGufficks didn't have any stock there, only a few horses. We went over there to try and put a horse in the yard, a brumby that was running with these horses, a grey stallion. We missed him on the road over and we went down to the yard and we set everything up, put the wings up and everything. Laurie left George Day and I, I was on one wing and George was on the other. Charlie Carter came out of the scrub right behind George - I could see him coming but I couldn't warn George. George was looking across at me and there was no way - Charlie's looking at me - he's got this massive big beard on him and carrying a rifle - 'Hello, what are you fellows doing here' he says and George's hat went up about 2 inches and he looked around and seen the rifle. He said to ^{me} after 'I didn't know what that old so and so might do'.

KH: Charlie had a beard did he?

EB: He did then, he never used to, when he come in here he'd be clean shaven. He'd grow a beard while he was out there in the bush. Well Laurie come just after this, he never mentioned - he was away looking for this horse. Charlie said 'Well I come over here and I didn't expect to find you fellows, but now that you're here I'll make some use of you'. He says 'There's a horse running up here with McGuffick's horses, I thought we might get him, would you be in that'. Laurie says 'Yes we'll be in it'. He didn't know we were there after him too. Anyway the old yard was fairly rotten, he told me

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You don't rush them,
if the horses come, just get in behind them and make sure [^] that old yard mightn't stand much. He said to Charlie, 'Right-o you're boss, do you know where the horse is'. He said 'Well yes Laurie, they're out here on a little flat round from Black Bullock Flat, they're feeding there, I sneaked down off the side of the hill and had a look at them. If you go up the track and go on round from Black Bullock Flat and round them in the scrub there'. He said, 'Give them a bit of a coo-ee and they'll come'. He had George Day stationed up where the road goes through now, to the Tin Mine. Anyway this yard was down towards the diggings. I was stationed on one wing, the longest wing and Charlie was down on the bottom wing and he said to me 'well if they come' .. he said to George 'well you put a bit of pace of them' and he said to me 'They'll be hooting when they come to you, you bore it into them'. Because Laurie told me when I was going up the station, he says 'You bore it into them if they come to you, I'll try and put them down'. He says, 'We don't want him to get that horse'. They come to me and I bored it into them alright and Charlie did too, he was hooting. We got down and they hit the yard, flattened it and Charlie wheeled round and said 'Well the old yard didn't stand them, we've lost him, he's gone on through'. Well he went on down and they had a better yard at Long Plain which was about 5 miles below, roughly. He went back to the Tin Mine and we had a bit of a yarn, we were going back to Dead Horse, Charlie was going back to the Tin Mine ... the Goldsworthy fellows had that country out there then, had cattle out there. He got a couple of them to come with him the next day and they went down there and hanged if they didn't get the horse in the other yard. He was a fearsome looking man I'll tell you, coming up through that scrub. I was ^h game to say anything to George.

KH: You wouldn't expect anyone out there.

EB: We never expected to see him. He never even heard his horse. I think he thought he was going to be shot. He's a man I haven't seen for a good while.

KH: Yes, George Day, I want to go and talk to him.

EB: He's an interesting man, George.

KH: I might get over there next week or the week after. I've got some people to see over at Khancoban and Corryong. I want to see Errol Scammel.

EB: Yes, Errol's been away in hospital but he's back home again now. I was over there a fortnight ago. I didn't see him, I saw his two sons.

KH: I only spoke to him before Xmas, rang him up.

EB: Errol is the fellow who could tell you who built those huts. He'd be mixed up in it because he was in that Syndicate hut at Geehi. He knew all that country, he worked for the Nankervis'. I thought he was an older man than what he is. I was talking to one of his sons, and I always imagined

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that Errol would be well up in his 70s. He's only about 4 years older than me - 68 or 69. The first time I seen him, I didn't know him really well, he was working for Nankervis brothers, that was the elderly Nankervis brothers, I worked for the young ones. All the old fellows are dead now. He worked for Harry, George and Arthur - they're all dead. Jim and Ken are still over there, they've split up now - Tom Groggin's been sold *to a chap from England.*

KH: Yes I want to see Jimmy Nankervis. I've had a chat to Charlie Bell over there.

EB: Old Charlie would bull-shit to you. I always used to call Charlie, Charlie Bell B.A.

KH: I think he knows a lot.

EB: My word he does, particularly that end of the mountains. He ^{was} about [^] Kiandra a lot.

KH: Yes, that's right.

EB: Mrs Don Mowatt, she lives there, she's a sister of Charlie Bell's. She lives in Khancoban. Her two sons live out at Snowvale where Don had the property. They've got the property now, Peter and Roger. Charlie lived out there, but he lives in Corryong now. He had one of those Snowy pre-fab houses built on Don Mowatt's property, he shifted it into Corryong. I know Charlie fairly well, *got to take him with a grain of salt.*

KH: I suppose a lot of people do. He wants to write his life story now.

EB: Ken Colson, he's another dog trapper, he worked for Nankervis brothers down here, he took on dog trapping after him. Of all the dog trappers I've struck I'd say he's the most energetic and has caught the most dogs. I went over to his 50th birthday the other day. His wife wrote me a letter and asked me if I could spare the time to go over. There was four dog trappers turned up at it, they tried to get us to pose for a photo but it never come off.

KH: Have you got any old photos around here?

EB: I had some old photos, but I don't know where they are. I'd probably have some up in the - usually a bit scattered. I had a lot of slides that I took when we went for a fishing trip - Don Mowatt, Norm McGuffick, Jack Carson, Richard McGuffick and I.

KH: Jack Carson! He was from Sydney.

EB: Yes.

KH: He took a lot of photos apparently, is that right?

EB: Yes, he had photos of the hut out there.

KH: Black and whites!

EB: Yes, all black and whites, he died only just last month.

KH: He'd have a wife wouldn't he, who would still have his things?

Ernie Bale

EB: She'd still have his photos I'd imagine.

KH: I think Neen Pendergast gave me ^{their} address in Sydney.

EB: Yes, 69 Beechan Street, Enfield. I used to be able to rattle his phone number off.

KH: When did Jack Carson start coming up to the mountains?

EB: 1931 he was here.

KH: Did he take photographs then?

EB: I'm not really sure, I suppose he would. He and a chap from Nimmitabel, Wade Poulton, come up here together. They went out there on a gold fossicking turnout, but they never did much good I don't think. He got in pretty good with Norman McGuffick. He and Norman were friends right up to the day old Norman died and they found out after a few years that their birthday was on the one day. Norman's birthday was on St Patricks Day, 17 March and Jack's birthday was on ... he was 14 years younger the Norman. That would be in '76, Norman died when he was 90 and Jack would be 76.

KH: Jack would just come up for the holiday?

EB: Yes he used to come up here, he'd been pretty sick and I think the doctors wanted him away from Sydney for a while. He put in 3 or 4 months up here, bought a horse and a couple of pack horses. Dave asked me if I had any photos of Teddy's hut. I should have had some, but where they are - I've got some of Dead Horse, Cascade.

KH: It would be good to get some photographs of Teddy's hut because we are trying to get it restored.

EB: I had some slides I took out - it's rather funny - I don't know what year it was - I had a fall over here, I had a bay horse I used to ride round the traps, a ^{quiet} horse - ^{quiet} - until he got away from you, you couldn't catch him - he as a bit of a rogue that way. But I led him over here to the gate, and he was real figgety when I went to get on him. I shut the gate and put my foot in the stirrup and just as I went to put my foot in the stirrup he flew away and I could hear this car coming. That's a pretty bad bend there, it's blind. It was coming at a hell of a bat and I flew off him and I trod on a little round rock and broke my ankle. Anyway I thought I had only sprained it, I went down into the gutter and I'm hanging on to him because I knew that if he got away I'd never catch him. This fellow pulled up down the road and came back and said 'Are you hurt' and I said 'I sprained my ankle I think'.

END OF TAPE.