

MRS BOARDMAN

This is an interview with Mrs Boardman on the 29 November 1981 in <sup>her</sup> ~~our~~ house near Khancoban. Interview by Klaus Hueneke. in the company of Ted Winter and Pieter Arriens

MRS B: Do you want to know about the Kiandra township?

KH: Was the earliest phase of your life?

MRS B: Yes I was about 12 when I went from Tumut up there.

KH: So you were born at Tumut?

MRS B: No, I was born in Lobbs Hole.

KH: In the mining days, when the mining was still going on?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: Your father was a miner there was he?

MRS B: Yes in the copper mines. When Julius Fostram<sup>and Blackman... I think they were there in those days.</sup>... anyhow I left there pretty early and went to Tumut and then I went back to Kiandra again when I was about 10 or 12 - 12 - I was still going to school, I went to school in Kiandra.

KH: Who was the teacher?

MRS B: I got the highest education in Australia. 'Banjo' Pattinson, <sup>[Paterson]</sup> we used to call him 'Banjo', Mr Pattinson was his name.

KH: There was a Pattinson, he was a relative of Jim's wasn't he.

MRS B: No, I don't think he was any relation.

KH: It was later on one of his sisters became a teacher.

MRS B: He was a very cranky curly headed man. Anyhow I went up there and who was there then! You know where the building is on top of the hill, it's still there, what is it? a hotel.

KH: There is a hotel - it's a Dept. of Main Roads Depot - it was a hotel and part of the old gaol.

MRS B: Yes well that's right out of the town. You come right down to where the Pattinsons lived, where the old home is - no, not up the creek, in the township.

KH: It's up Pollocks Gully a little way. That's the place they have now, where they still go sometimes. They may have had a place closer into town.

MRS B: Well it's there somewhere, we'll say it's Pollocks Gully, I don't know. It's a long time ago since I was 9. On the right hand side there was Fred Russell's house and then there was George Irwin's butcher shop ...

KH: This is on the right hand side coming from Cooma?

MRS B: Going to Cooma. Then there was Wilson's shop, then he had the hotel too on the right hand side.

KH: He had a big beard didn't he, Jacob Wilson?

... butcher's, - no, George Irwin had the butcher's shop, -

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MRS B: No, no, no, - George Irwin didn't either. Then the next building down was the hall where we used to have our dances and then you went up past the hall to the top of the hill, not to the top, but up the side of the hill to the school.

KH: It was back behind wasn't it?

MRS B: Yes, behind, behind the hotel, between the hotel and the hall, but up there. And then after the hall there was no bridges or roads built up then, there was a little creek that used to come from way up there and after you crossed the creek there was Charlie Wortz's home on that side, on the right hand side and another house of the left hand side. That's where my uncle Jack Fraser lived, when I was with him. Then that's the end of the town. So now we go back to the gaol, on the left hand side going to Cooma and we come down the road to old Mrs Patrick's house, the church first then Mrs Patrick's house, then George Irwin's hotel and then a place they called the School of Arts where Sanko Smith lived.

KH: It was a bit of a library too for a while wasn't it?

MRS B: Yes, part of it was a library, one big room in the front part of it was the library. Next door we come to Peter Quinn's home and then down to this big long building where Jimmy Andoo lived.

MRS B: No, he burnt himself to death.

KH: He fell into his fire or something?

MRS B: No, he used to do a lot of betting and gambling and drinking and he came home and they think that he must have gone to bed and set fire to his bed and he was burnt to death and all this building, old building with him. Tommy Yan's baker's shop was next door to Jimmys - Tommy got out but his baker shop was burnt and his great big stack of wood right down the back of his shop, that was all burnt.

KH: Was he full Chinese?

MRS B: Oh my word. He was the real thing.

KH: Where's this in relation to Yan's store?

MRS B: I never heard of a Yan's store.

KH: Harris' store - newsagent, general groceries and there may have been a butcher shop, part of it.

MRS B: On which side of the road?

KH: The left hand side going into Cooma.

MRS B: Well that must have been built up after all this was burnt down. This was early in my .... 70 years ago that was.

KH: Harris' was there because Charles Kerry took photographs of it in about 1903 and it had Harris across the top of it in big letters. It was then later known as Yan's store.

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MRS B: That would be old Tommy Yan's son. He had Frank Yan, George Yan - some of those would have had that store.

KH: Yes, George Yan was he the brother of Tom Yan who died a few years ago?

MRS B: Tom went to school with me, he was very clever. Anything we wanted to know we used to ask Tom.

KH: A little fellow, wiry short fellow!

MRS B: Yes. No he'd be old George or Franks' son.

KH: That store must have been there. It may also have been known as Cowpers.

MRS B: No I never heard of a Cowper.

KH: It's been there a long time that store. This AhDoo fellow he lived at the School of Arts.

MRS B: No, no, he lived in another old building after you went past Peter Quinn's house. Peter Quinn was next to the School of Arts.

KH: Where was the Grand Slam, the big ski run in relation to these buildings?

MRS B: That must have been the one that came down past the - Jacob Wilson's hotel, the butcher shop, George Irwin - and then it came from there, straight down past the two hotels. They were straight directly opposite each other, Irwin and Wilson.

KH: The Tumut side of the big hotels?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: The other side of the school?

MRS B: No, the Tumut side of the school. See the two hotels were opposite each other and that came down, between what they called the 'dings', way down on a big flat, with a lot of holes dug all over it, where they used to go prospecting.

KH: Where was your house in relation to these?

MRS B: I was at Charlie Wortz, going towards Adaminaby, Charlie Wortz on the right hand side after you went across the little creek.

KH: What's your maiden name?

MRS B: Fraser.

KH: Because there was a Fraser's too wasn't there?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: Bill Hughes told me about a house called Fraser's, so that was yours.

MRS B: Bill Hughes lived up the creek, on the flat up there. There was Jack Wortz, Rees's and Quinn's. Bob was Bill's brother wasn't he - yes well they lived up there, when they were going to school. Bill was

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younger than Bob.

KH: Bill is still alive, he's in Sydney.

MRS B: My God, he's old then, how old is he?

KH: About 76 I think.

MRS B: Oh he's only a baby.

KH: How old are you?

MRS B: 80.

KH: So you were born around the turn of the century.

MRS B: Yeah, two years after she turned. I'll be 80 next month, no the month after, January.

KH: So how long were you in Kiandra for?

MRS B: Oh I don't know. When we come back down to Tumut ... oh I don't know ... after I left school, about 10, *when I went there, to Uncle Jack Fraser*

KH: So Kiandra was still a sizeable township then, 200-300 people.

MRS B: Yes. There were a lot of people living up on that flat up there.

KH: Up Pollocks Gully, where Pattinson's house is, is that the flat you mean?

MRS B: They can't be living in their own house if ... they could be in some of the other places.

KH: In fact I think Jim built that in more recent times.

MRS B: Yes, because he was just there, nearly opposite old Mrs Patrick's house when I was young. Then there was Fred Russell's house and then there was the pub, Wilson's pub.

KH: What do you call the flat then?

MRS B: Well you know when you come down through Kiandra and there's a little creek that comes from way up here and goes down just the other side of the creek where Jimmy AhDoo was burnt, that's the end of the township, the old Kiandra that I knew. You went through the creek and up the flat.

KH: Yes, I call that creek Pollock's Gully.

MRS B: No, I don't think that's Pollock's Gully.

KH: The road takes off across the other side to the Four Mile, it's called the Commissioners Gully track, you go out to Nine Mile that way, just the other side of the bridge.

*MRS B: Where we stopped today, we were the other side of a little creek between the cemetery and Pollock's Creek. - Permanent Creek.*

KH: That flat on our left there, where Peter took those photographs must be the flat.

Ted W: That's not Pollocks - Pollocks is the one the Pattinsons are living in.

KH: Yes.

Ted W: But there are two creeks.

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KH: There's Cemetery Creek, another creek and Pollocks!

Ted W: It's only a small creek.

KH: I'll have to look at that again.

Did you ever ski when you were in Kiandra?

MRS B: Only when I had to.

KH: Were you there during the winter?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: So you had to learn how to get about in the winter time!

MRS B: But I didn't like it. I was on my seat more than I was on my feet.

KH: Have you got any photographs of that time, on toboggans or anything?

MRS B: God, no, All my photographs were lost when I came from Tumut up here, I lost a whole case of stuff. The man that brought some of our stuff up, we brought a lot of stuff up. Ernie was working for the Forestry and he used to bring different things up from Tumut when we lived with a relative down there. One lot, he brought the case and a table and some chairs and he left them in Batlow - he lived in Batlow - that's as far as they ever got. *That's where all my photos were - I was sorry to lose them.*

KH: So you left Kiandra after you left school?

MRS B: Yes, went back to Tumut.

KH: Then you came this way 46 years ago?

MRS B: I came up here when Joan was 14 months old. It took us all day to get here. My goodness the roads were different then to what they are now, you can climb from here to Tumut and back in no time.

KH: What was your form of transport then?

MRS B: We had a Chev utility.

KH: You had a car?

MRS B: Oh yeah, we had a car before we came here. We had a Chev 'Four' for a start, we lived out on Red Hill station, out there for eight years and then Ernie was on the Forestry. During the depression in '36, '36-'37, when the boys were sent up here from Sydney to do so many days work, so many hours a week or something. They made the road from over there, there used to be just a track once you got there, it was only just a track up here as far as the flat. These boys and Ernie built the road from there right up to the foot of Bradneys Gap, and then they made a 6 foot track from there to the top. He had another gang of men over at Yellowbog, there was about 30 men over there. They used to give them a couple of blankets, a tin plate and a mug, a knife and fork and send them to the bush. They got so much a week.

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KH: This track was cut to take the stock up?

MRS B: No, no, no, the stock used to go - there was track enough for the stock - this was for vehicles to travel on. A motor vehicle couldn't get any further than Mr Scammels when we came here. That's the house up the road next to Joan, there used to be a house there, there's only a cow yard there now, just above Joan's place. That's how far you could only get when we came here. There was just wheel tracks up as far as the flat, but no road. They used to go when they came to the deep gullies, the first one just over here, they used to leave the track and go right down and around it where they could get through and back up onto the road again. Well, he got bullocks from Khancoban station and put in wooden culverts <sup>in that place, there,</sup> and another one up where you turn to go down to Joans, that big deep gully there. They used to go down around that too.

KH: So there was no roads up into the hills?

MRS B: No Sir, you had to either ride or walk when you got to the flat.

KH: Ernie then, when he came here, he also got a job taking stock up there.

MRS B: Yes, he worked for Colonel Chisolm.

KH: The man who had Pretty Plain built?

MRS B: Yes, well I think the Colonel did. John Harrison and Jack Armstrong ... who else built Pretty Plain ... Clem Hill, he had a bullock team out there drawing the logs.

KH: Do you know where he got the logs from?

MRS B: Somewhere around the Plain there I suppose.

KH: Close to the hut?

MRS B: I suppose so, I don't know, it was built there when I come here.

KH: That was Clem Hill!

MRS B: Yes, he worked for Colonel Chisolm, Colonel Chisolm's bullocks. He had the place leased at the time, the Colonel.

KH: You were trying to think of someone else that built Pretty Plain, there were more than three?

MRS B: Yes, there were more than three, I'm not sure who the others were though. I know Jack Armstrong, that lived over here in this hut, I know Mr Harrison, Jim Harrison's father, they both worked for Colonel Chisolm, and Clem Hill - I think Arthur Shooks, I think Shooks was there with them. I can't think of anyone else. I remember a lot of the men who were down at the station after that. I wasn't here when the hut

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was built.

Ted W: It would have been built around 1936.

KH: 1935 I think, that's the date I've got, so you would have come here just after it was built. So it was a very new hut when you would have seen it first, if you rode up there then.

MRS B: I didn't ride straight up there then, I rode up there after, years after. There was holes into where the horse would bite you through the ....

KH: It actually happened to you did it?

MRS B: No, it didn't.

KH: Just a figment of the imagination is it?

MRS B: That's what they used to say, a horse would bite you through the holes, through the cracks.

KH: You mean other people said it apart from Ted Winter?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: Oh it was Ernie's phrase, 'a horse would bite you through the cracks if one should stray'. *MRS B: He didn't have the "one should stray" bit, that came in to make it rhyme.*

Ted W: Ernie would say there were cracks in the hut that a horse would bite you through.

MRS B: He had some funny sayings Ted didn't he!

KH: Do you remember any others?

MRS B: Oh dear. That's him there, that's what he used to look like when he'd been out and been a naughty boy and come home - don't you reckon it is Ted? When you said to him, 'what have you been up to', that's the look he had on him.

KH: What would be his reply?

MRS B: God only knows, he had a lot of different ones.

Ted W: He was a real personality.

KH: How did they get the iron up there?

MRS B: I don't know, I suppose Ted took it up with a bullock dray - he wouldn't take a waggon - only two wheels.

KH: There's a lot of iron in that roof, and there's a lot of logs in the walls.

MRS B: My word.

KH: It must have taken them a while. Did you hear anything about the building of it?

MRS B: No I'm sorry I didn't. I was more interested in everything else that was going around when I came here first.

Mrs Boardman

KH: What about Wheeler's hut! When you first went there was it a slab hut then?

MRS B: Yes, only slab. What is it now?

KH: Well it's slab now but I heard that there might have been another earlier hut there which was much simpler. The one that you know ...

MRS B: I can't remember.

KH: Did it have two rooms?

MRS B: I can only remember the one where we stayed, with the cracks in the wall and the snow flying in.

KH: You visited Wheelers, or you stayed there sometimes?

MRS B: We didn't stay there, we only went down the river riding from Pretty Plain and back.

KH: Did you ever meet Wingy Wheeler?

MRS B: No. I heard of him. He died I think just after I came up here. I think he did. He only had one arm. <sup>That's why they called him 'Wingy'.</sup> I can sort of remember a bit about him, but he couldn't have struck me.

KH: What about his son Charlie?

MRS B: Oh yes, I knew little Charlie.

KH: He was pretty good at swearing I believe?

MRS B: Yes, Charlie could hold his own.

KH: So you didn't hear anything about the building of Wheelers, you don't remember anything that stands out?

MRS B: No. Now who would know, I don't think there's anybody about here now that would know.

Bruce Chislm, he's only new, he come up from near Alice Springs somewhere, so he wouldn't know much about it would he.

KH: Joan mentioned Goldie Whitehead.

MRS B: Yes Goldie might remember.

KH: And a fellow called Findlay, just along here too.

MRS B: That's the fellow that doesn't talk, he's very quiet.

KH: That's all right, people are allowed to be quiet.

MRS B: One time Ronny and Jack Caldwell were out there mustering with this Findlay and all the time they were there he hardly spoke, he'd just grunt. The next time they went out they found a bullock's skull and they put it up on a stump and wrote a notice - 'Talked to death by Harry Findlay'.

KH: It sounds like we'll have to take a bottle of whiskey or something when we go to visit him.

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MRS B: I don't know whether he'd drink, I think he's a goody, goody. If you whipped rum into him he might go to sleep. If you wanted to talk to Ernie and bring a bottle of rum, he'd talk.

KH: So you would have come here at the tail end of the epression?

MRS B: Yes we were here the last couple of years of it when we had the boys up there ... oh two Christmas' I had them all. We lived on the flat for a start when we first came here. Ernie had a big shed built, a big room like this and we used to live in that and cook in it and so on. Ernie and I had a tent with a cot in it for Joan and then the two boys had a tent and the other two girls had another tent. We had three tents and all the other boys they were further down near the creek.

Ernie bought 50 acres there for 10 pounds and I sold it and the Park argued the point and reckoned it belonged to the Park. I sent him to Ray Graham and he straightened them out and I got my thousand dollars.

KH: There's no huts left there now?

MRS B: No, there was only this bit of a place. Then we built another place after that and we used it as a store. A Corryong storekeeper - Cagin - they used to bring stuff out there and sell it.

KH: Did you ever ride further than Pretty Plain, did you ever go up to the Grey Mare or anywhere else?

MRS B: No. It was a good day's ride to Pretty Plain.

KH: You'd stay a night or maybe two?

MRS B: We used to stay sometimes for a week. We'd ride round about there - I don't know where we went. I'm not like Ted, I don't know every nook and cranny.

KH: What about the old hut up on Pretty Plain, that would have still been there?

MRS B: Yes, they used to call it Pender's hut.

KH: One of the Pendergasts had it?

MRS B: Old Bill Pender had it. He used to take cattle out there ... it was up - Pretty Plain hut's here and Pender's hut was up there.

KH: Up the creek, on the other side.

MRS B: Yes.

KH: He lived there did he?

MRS B: He used to stay there when he went out, he lived up Khancoban here.

KH: That was a different lease was it?

MRS B: Must have been. It wouldn't be anything to do with Khancoban I wouldn't think.

Mrs Boardman

KH: He must have had the lease up the top of the creek!

MRS B: What a pity somebody didn't think of this earlier when ... now Mrs Pender, she'd know all those sort of things and different ones. There's now left now - old Percy Whitehead, he's dead, he'd know all about out there. I'll tell you someone else who'd know, Errol Scammel.

KH: Yes I've got his name down, he's in ~~Corryong~~.

MRS B: He'd know quite a bit about it.

KH: Would he? Would he know about the Pretty Plain area?

MRS B: Oh yes, he used to go out there a lot.

KH: Would he have known ~~Wingy~~ Wheeler?

MRS B: Yes, I think so. You see he was up in the mountains among these musterers, they used to all go up there in the autumn to muster and they used to all meet, round about in different parts of the mountains.

KH: Did they just have one muster?

MRS B: Oh God no, they'd bring two or three different lots of cattle and cut them out when they got down here.

KH: Whereabouts did they cut them out, do you know? *Up here?*

MRS B: No, they'd take them to a yard somewhere, either to the station or up to Khancoban, somewhere they cut them out.

KH: Somebody told me they had two musters sometimes, one a big one ....

MRS B: Oh yes, they'd go back - they'd have one big one and then they'd go back for the stragglers, the ones they'd missed.

KH: They'd miss a few sometimes I suppose!

MRS B: Oh yes.

KH: Did you ever hear of any stories on this side of the mountains of cattle or sheep being snowed in, leaving them up there too long or snows coming in early?

MRS B: There was a terrible lot of cattle snowed in there one year, up round Kiandra there. They had to cut gutters for them to get out and the cattle were level with the snow - it was as high as the cattle. They just cut a track for them to get out and the snow was still way up above them, up Bullock Head creek.

KH: That was back in the '50s or something wasn't it - that was an article in the newspaper I think. I think Molly Taylor showed me some photographs about it or maybe Mrs Harris.

Do you know Tom and Molly Taylor?

MRS B: Yes. I don't know from where I knew them.

Mrs Boardman

KH: From Yarrangobilly maybe!

MRS B: They live at Currango don't they?

KH: Yes.

MRS B: I was <sup>in</sup> out there very much. We used to go to hot water springs and back to Kiandra, *a lot of us, on our horses.*

KH: The Yarrangobilly one?

MRS B: No, from Kiandra out to the caves, the hot water springs there, we used to swim.

KH: You mean at Yarrangobilly?

MRS B: Yes, the Yarrangobilly caves.

KH: Did you ever go to the Rules Point Hotel?

MRS B: Yes. Bung rode his horse up the passage one day - Bung Harris - in one door and out the other, straight through the hotel.

KH: Apparently it was a fairly freely run sort of place!

MRS B: Yes. There was Ernie and Bill Wertz and Dave Sheddon, Bronco Wertz ... who else was there ... they put a rodeo on there once ... oh, and the two Russell boys, Les and Joe.

KH: Bill Hughes was in on that wasn't he?

MRS B: No, Bill wouldn't ride anything, he might have been there.

KH: He told me about the rodeo.

MRS B: Did he. They wanted some money to have a bit of a spree and they were betting on who was going to ride the buck jumpers. I don't think Bill ever got on a buck jumper.

KH: No, he just told me stories about all the people who did. He did say that everybody won a prize apparently, it was engineered in such a way that everybody got a prize.

*Ted W:* I was talking to Klaus about the time when Ernie broke his collar bone, the horse rolled on him.

MRS B: Oh yes, Ernie broke his collar bone! No, no, he got fair dinkum bucked off. He got bucked off 'Slippery Kate'. That was about one of the first times that he'd ever had his photograph taken and put in the paper and I don't <sup>know</sup> how many times he'd ridden buck jumpers and didn't get bucked off, but just the day he got bucked off they come along and took his photograph. He was that disgusted about it.

KH: Was that the horse he could keep if he could ride it?

MRS B: No, that was one that - he was down in Tumut and he was supposed to be - he rang up 'I can't come home mum because there's a hold-up over the cattle and I'll be a day late'. So the next thing, over the wireless, we hear 'Ernie Boardman is in there helping his friend saddle up'. This

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was where Ernie Boardman was - why he was a day late. There was a fellow called Edgar Vagar. Edgar had this horse that had thrown two or three, it was sort of a clumpy sort of a thing - two or three fellows - and he wanted Ernie to give an exhibition ride on this horse <sup>- we called him Prompt -</sup> and he said 'No I'm sick of riding him, I'm not riding him'. 'Prompt' said, 'Well, if you can ride him you can have him'. So that changed the story. So he rode 'Prompt' and brought him home. We had quite a bit of fun with him. Ronny loaded him up one day to go to the mountains, put the pack saddle on him and loaded everything on to him. I said 'Why don't you take him down to the yard'. 'Oh' he said, 'he's right'. So he was there near the shed and he just finished loading Prompt and Prompt decided that he'd have a bit of a go so he bucked all around the paddock. There was potatoes flying and tins and meat and God knows what. They had to catch Prompt and take him to the yard and load him up.

KH: Was there any whiskey in the pack saddles?

MRS B: No, they didn't take whiskey as a rule. They used to ... Ron said that he flattened nearly every tin of anything that was in the load - he used to flatten up against the trees going out to Pretty Plain.

Ted W: The time Ernie got hurt at the Chalet, he had to ride all the way home to Khancoban with a broken collar bone, down Hannell's Spur.

KH: How did he get hurt at the Chalet?

MRS B: He got bucked off. They used to have rodeos all over the place.

Ted W: They wanted to send him to Cooma hospital and he said no, he was coming home to mum. He went riding across to Wilkinson Valley down Hannells Spur, across the flat, up the <sup>Gechi</sup>wall to here. They left at the end of the day to do this in the night time and he's got a broken collar bone.

KH: He got here all right?

Ted W: He got to <sup>Pierces at</sup> the bottom of Khancoban flats, up where the dam is now and reckoned he gone far enough so <sup>he</sup> stayed there for the night.

KH: It's quite painful is it, having a broken collar bone?

MRS B: You could imagine it, having a horse bobbing you along.

KH: So Ernie was pretty tough, he must have been to be a buck jumper.

MRS B: As soon as he started to get a bit - reckoned he had enough - he was getting sleepy and wanted to come home to mum.

KH: Did Ernie ever ski?

MRS B: No. He used to .... Ted and all his mates out at the tucker tree, is it gone, burned ... what a shame, we should have made a monument of that.

Mrs Boardman

Ted W: Have you got any of those old photographs handy.

MRS B: That you took?

Ted W: Yes, would you have any here.

MRS B: I've got heaps somewhere.

Ted W: Well if you can find them, Peter and I will look through them and pick out some interesting ones. I want to particularly see ones with trees in them, and huts where there were no trees. The main reason I was interested in them, we saw one down at Joan's that was taken at the Grey Mare in about 1949-50, say 31 years ago, and there's hardly a tree in it and these fellows know the Grey Mare as it is today, when you can't see the hill for trees and the argument is that huts are no good because where there are huts all the wood gets cut down and the trees are destroyed and it reverses the case.

MRS B: What about that 'Yowi' thing, did you hear about that in Canberra?

KH: I've heard of Yowi's but not around Canberra.

MRS B: He was supposed to be over around Kosciusko and up in that area. I was expecting to see him walk out of the bush any time. There's no such thing now is there? Yeah after they'd had a few rums they'd see them.

KH: Was he going to come out wearing snowshoes was he?

MRS B: There's no such thing as a damn 'Yowi' or 'Yogi' or whatever they call him.

KH: I suppose in *Nepal* they call them Yeti's. In other places they call them Black Panthers.

MRS B: That's more like it, a black panther might live there but a man wouldn't, anything human.

KH: Might be some prehistoric man!

MRS B: How could he live up there, in the snow, with nothing to eat.

KH: It's pretty unlikely.

MRS B: Unlikely! I'll say.

Ted W: Wombats on the odd ski tour!

KH: When you were at Lobbs Hole, do you remember much about it?

MRS B: No.

KH: Were there many people down there then?

MRS B: Oh yes, there was a lot of people there.

KH: Several hundred?

MRS B: Yes. It's a pity you didn't catch on to Ted Quinn and Ivy before they went to their good hunting ground, they were the ones that would know about Kiandra and Lobbs Hole.

Mrs Boardman

KH: I talked to Ted before he died, but I didn't take my tape recorder. He's pretty quiet.

MRS B: You give him a whiskey or two and he would have been right.

KH: Or if I'd taken Jim Pattinson or someone like that over it might have helped.

MRS B: He was a shy type of a man unless he knew you. Did you ever see the bullock team, that picture he had - 32 bullocks. They used to go ....

KH: Yes, dragging a boiler through Adaminaby.

MRS B: No. all chaff. A great big load of chaff. They worked down round Main and in the winter time they used to leave up there - a lot of the bullockies - and come down either to Tumut or some of the Yans used to go to Lobbs Hole out of the snow. Charlie Wertz and Jack Wertz - that's another family that was up at the flat - Bob Broadhead, he was another bullocky, and old Sanco ... not Sanco ...

KH: There was a Sanco Smith.

MRS B: Sanco wasn't the bullocky he was the .... he lived in the School of Arts.

KH: Sanco certainly got around by the sounds of it.

MRS B: He was a very 'lah-dah' joker.

KH: Was he, he also took mail to the Grey Mare mine in earlier times ....

END SIDE 1.

COMMENCE SIDE 2.

MRS B: We went to the top of the hill on snow skis (which I hated) and then we walked from there down to Lobbs Hole and that night I was so tired that I didn't know what to do with myself. I've never been so tired *before or since*. Skiing out to the top and then walking from there and we used to come to these creeks and we had to clamber over logs, crawl on hands and knees over most of them, I did - I wasn't a very atheletic person.

KH: There was another mine down on the way to Lobbs Hole?

MRS B: They christened it 'Ravine'. Now how old was I when they turned it from Lobbs Hole to Ravine - I suppose I'd be about 12.

KH: I thought there was another one up the hill called Blue Creek Copper mine or something like that?

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MRS B: Blue Creek, yes.

KH: Was that going then?

MRS B: The Harris', they were at Blue Creek, Bill Harris - have you ever talked to Mrs Harris in Tumut?

KH: Yes briefly. She was involved with that was she?

MRS B: I think they were up there. No, it was at Glory Hole, it wasn't Blue Creek at all.

KH: Were the winters very heavy when you were in Kiandra? Were they worse than they are now do you think?

MRS B: Oh yes, it's nothing now. You know the men used to ski from Kiandra out to Rules Point for the mail *after* the end of May. If you didn't have all your goods in by the end of May, well June, July, - *It was* the end of August, before traffic started to move again.

KH: So there would be three months and Kiandra would just be snowed in.

MRS B: For years and years. One time there, there was snow come right off the top of that hill - you were talking about where they used to ski - right down over Wilson's pub and across the road to Irwins and they had a tunnel from Wilson's hotel across to Irwins.

KH: Did they have it lined with candles or something so you could find your way?

MRS B: It wasn't that far I suppose, I don't know. I know the whole street was full of snow that winter.

KH: Do you remember when that was?

MRS B: About 70 years ago I suppose.

KH: Before the First World War?

MRS B: Oh yes, just as it started, 1914.

KH: What about the other run. There's another ski run at Mt Selwyn, up Crackhardy Spur, up above Kiandra, there's a long ridge, further over you've got Mt Selwyn and Pig Gully, there's another ski run over there. Was that ever going when you were there?

MRS B: No.

KH: You never skied out there?

MRS B: Only from that top one, way up there down on to the *diggings* down past Wilson's pub.

KH: Was the dredging still going on when you were there, on the river, on the flats, no dredges that you can remember, no big machinery?

MRS B: No.

KH: Can you remember the tunnels into New Chum hill and the big



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wooden sluicing boxes?

MRS B: Oh yes, but they were there years before.

KH: They weren't being used any more.

MRS B: No, they were still there.

KH: Ernie, did he ever go up to the mountains for a long period of time or was it just for a few weeks at a time or a few days?

MRS B: No, Ernie never went up there, only for mustering, for a few weeks, he never stayed up there in the mountains at all, he come home to mum.

KH: When was it that they took them up usually?

MRS B: They'd take them up about, around about Christmas time or just before, when the grass was starting to dry off down here, they'd take them up there and then start to muster in May.

KH: Did they have any stock snowed in?

MRS B: Not since I've been up here.

KH: No<sup>t</sup> up here, that's right you mentioned an area near Kiandra.

MRS B: Oh dear, there used to be a lot more snow in those days compared to what there is now, it's nothing now is it, you can go right from here to Cooma in the winter practically.

KH: It was pretty good last year.

MRS B: Yes, there was a lot of snow last year. A lot more than usual.

KH: Do you ever get snow down here?

MRS B: Yes, we've had snow down here. One year, now what year was that, we went into Corryong on the Friday morning, about lunch time and it was snowing like at home up there when we left. When we went to come home, because there was no sealed road once you left the turnoff, the main road to come up here and when we turned off we couldn't travel, we had to go back to Corryong and stay the night. Of course we had young calves shut up that we were feeding and we had to get home the next day.

We came home in a blitz waggon, you know one of those military things.

*Tom K...? drove us home.*  
When we got to the top of the gap, this one here coming out of Corryong and look down over here, there wasn't a sign of anything only snow. Nobody had been along the road, there wasn't a track or anything.

Ted W: I think it was '54 because I think it was the year before Neil got caught in the flood.

MRS B: Oh yeah and Joan and I rescued him in the landrover.

Ted W: Yes, then he got lost up on the mountain.

MRS B: Poor old Neil took the wrong turn.

Ted W: Neil was to come up the spur on his own, he'd never been up there before and we - two boys were coming out and they were to meet

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him and give him directions and he could follow their tracks. The two fellows got down, right at the bottom here and hadn't seen any sight of Neil at all.

MRS B: And we knew that Neil had gone, so then it was on then. We had to go looking for Neil.

KH: This is Neil Roberts.

MRS B: Yes.

Ted W: He'd camped at Everards Flat and left the tent there and he set off up and the cattle drank .... after he got to Khancoban Creek, it had a branch off going to the Ink Bottle at the Wheelers, in that direction and Neil had apparently got onto that and the other fellows hadn't seen his tracks and they came down and got all the way here. So Neil's gone up and the boys had come down and hadn't met one another. We were waiting at the top, no sign of Neil, so we thought he might have got injured in the last game of football, no use waiting at the top of the spur for Neil ....

MRS B: Yeah he didn't come with you fellows, you came in school clothes, didn't you? He always used to come when the football finished, he was Captain of St Kilda, got <sup>The Brownlow</sup> medal one year.

TW: Any way the panic was on. Neil realised he was on the wrong track and he came back to the tents and when they went up searching he was asleep in the tent.

MRS B: I'll never forget him one morning, he bogged his car ...

TW: That was my car, he walked.

MRS B: No, this was one time after you, it was his car I think. He bogged it coming down through that swamp, instead of keeping on the road, he got too far over and got bogged. He got out and he <sup>walked</sup> home.

Ted W: I was with you, it was my Kombi. There was all those springs along there, very swampy ... *We were there at Scott's Gate.*

MRS B: This was another time, Ted, he came on his own, when you fellows had gone to the <sup>mountains</sup> and he bogged the car in the paddock straight opposite the house, up home, and he came over and the next morning Joan had just ... we'd been down and milked the cows and she just came up ... she rode up on Jule, you know the grey mare, and she was a funny little horse. Some people she didn't like at all, anyhow Joan said 'Where are you going' and he said, 'I'm going over to get a jumper out of the car'. She said, 'Here ride the pony over'. Neil gets on the pony and way went the pony as hard as she could pelt, back down into the cow yard and she wheeled into the cow yard and head over heels went Neil into the mud hole.

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I said to him 'Why didn't you hold her, why didn't you pull her up'.  
'Oh' he said, 'I never got my foot into the foot rest'.

KH: Were you involved in the story - when Jean Finlay-Gower's father died and that incredible mix up?

MRS B: Yeah, they came over in a plane and all sorts of a mix up.

KH: Sending messages from the air. What was the story of that?

MRS B: Joe went up to meet somebody to tell them - they were at Pretty Plain I think weren't they - Jean and someone else. He went up there to meet them to tell them, I don't know much about that story, I was away for a while.

Ted W: It was about the time you went to Africa I think.

KH: What sort of tucker did Ernie take up into the hills with him when he went?

MRS B: Bread and meat - corned meat.

KH: Did he take any vegetables?

MRS B: No, I couldn't see Ernie cooking vegetables. He used to have powdered milk and Weetbix.

KH: Did they do any slaughtering up there?

MRS B: No. I think they used to kill a sheep there when they had sheep out there but they were Scott's sheep, they'd get a sheep off old Andy Scott. There was another old fellow who came from Wagga with a big mob of sheep went up there one time - Tommy Lawson. I had a black mare, didn't have a vehicle then, I had a cart and I used to bring the cream down to the cream stand over here at the gate and this thing bolted with me a couple of times. She jumped up off the road and in through the trees. I got her back onto the road and in down here. Another time, Joan got out and opened the gate and when she went to get back in, as soon as sat down - we had a board across for a seat - and when she sat down, she bucked in there and away she went again. We didn't have any culvert there then, it was the creek and she dashed into the creek. Anyway this old fellow came along with a mob of sheep - no he didn't have the sheep, he was going out to muster them - and he had a van with two horses in it and a riding horse. This poor old mare, I'll never forget it, she was as poor as a crow. I said to him 'Is that a quiet horse' and he said 'Yes she's very quiet'. I swapped him, anyhow this black mare for this poor old mare. Well when Ernie come home he nearly had a fit when he seen her - the horse that I'd swapped Blondie for, she was a black horse but we called her Blondie - anyway poor old Bess she died with founder, that's how well she done after we got her. I could get her

I suled her up the road until she got sick of it and she came back.

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down to the road alright because it was downhill. I could get downhill with the cream but it would take me half a day to get home again. When Bess decided she'd gone far enough she'd stop. She bolted with Ernie one day and he decided I was telling the truth about her bolting and she went for her life up that road. He said that there used to be horses in some of those paddocks over there, that when she heard those horses galloping, that's what used to set her off. I didn't know, I thought a bee had bit her or something.

KH: The pack saddles that Ernie used, did he make them himself?

MRS B: No.

KH: Could you buy them - leather ones?

MRS B: Yes. A man name who got them ... Jock McCall got Ernie's pack saddles. He had great big leather pack bags that they used to hook on both sides of the pack saddle. In that picture there you can see his leather bag there and on the other side he had a leather thing with a quart pot in it.

KH: Have you still got his quart pot?

MRS B: Joan's got it up there.

Ted W: And he also had the smallest camp oven I've ever seen.

MRS B: Yes, still got that too.

MR B: You've got it have you.

MRS B: Yes, it's down in that - you know what used to be my old wash-house, they've made it into a sort of ... they've put an old stove in there and they have it for a b.b.q. area and she's got a whole lot of old, the little tiny oven, quart pots and stirrups and bits of sulky and all different things down there.

KH: Hanging there are they?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: What did he use the little camp oven for?

MRS B: Well if you want to make a damper or a Johnny cake or something.

Ted W: It was the smallest camp oven I've ever seen, it was a beauty.

MRS B: They're made out of iron and you hang them on the fire and get them hot and then mix up your dough. Ernie said he had it all up his arms - put it in the oven and put the lid on and then put some red hot charcoals on top of it.

KH: This was a one man camp oven.

MRS B: Or you could fry pancakes in it or cook steak, make a stew, do anything in them.

Ted W: It would always be worth the while of a bushwalker having one

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although it's three or four times the weight of a billycan but it would pay for itself in the variety of food you could make. They could be made out of cast aluminium.

MRS B: When I first went out to Red Hill I cooked in a camp oven for quite a while.

KH: All the time?

MRS B: No, when we got back into Tumut we got a stove. Gee we had some funny times out there with horses.

KH: Would you take other special foods up when you went up to the mountains with Ernie?

MRS B: Yeah I'd take a brownie or a bit of something.

KH: What's a brownie?

MRS B: Cake. A damper with currants, sugar and eggs in it. Same as a damper.

KH: Did you have a sleeping bag or did you have a swag of blankets?

MRS B: I never ever had a sleeping bag, rolled myself up in a blanket with a bag mattress.

KH: Were the hessian stretchers there then?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: You slept in those?

MRS B: Yes.

KH: There would still be a bit of a stable there too I guess, with a hay shed or whatever it was!

MRS B: Yes the stable was there for quite a while.

KH: Do you know when that was built at all? Was that built before Pretty Plain hut?

MRS B: I think it was there before the hut wasn't it, Ted? I think there had been an old hut and a stable that was there. They used to put the chaff in the stable when they took it out on the pack horses for the mustering.

KH: There was another old hut where Pretty Plain hut is?

MRS B: Yes.

Ted W: Yes, the whole foundations are there, you can see quite plainly.

KH: As well as the stables?

MRS B: Yes. You had to have somewhere to put your horse if it was a really bad night.

Ted W: If you look out the side window of Pretty Plain ..

KH: On the western side, up the hill?

Ted W: Yes, you can see the remains of the old fire place. As a matter of fact, Mike Hinchey, the other day, rebuilt the right hand

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side of the fireplace because the rocks had fallen down, and a big fire, if anyone had set it carelessly, could have got through to the timber. *So Mike got some mud and rebuilt that side.* He was as busy as a fly in a bottle, Mike. In no time he had it done.

MRS B: Ernie used to pack the horse feed out on about three or four pack horses and then he used to let them go and put a bell around their neck, or a bell on the leader, which ever one was the best one to come home, and they used to come home on their own then, he didn't have to keep them there, they'd come straight back the next day.

Ted W: I rode there on a pack horse one day, the day I came down to get a new ski - I broke my ski - the time my father died. I only just gone on my way back when a telegram came to tell me my father died.

MRS B: Up there at Edwards boundary, you know where you come through the first gate or whatever, and when we heard the bells we went up and let the horses through.

KH: That would save feed up there wouldn't it?

MRS B: Oh yes, you couldn't cart the feed, you had to feed them because there wouldn't be enough for horses, extra horses.

KH: There was a big home paddock up there wasn't there, at Pretty Plain?

MRS B: Well that's what they used to muster the cattle into. As they found them they'd muster them in there and then let them out this end when they were ready to come home. You couldn't keep them there very long because there wasn't enough feed towards the end of May.

KH: Do you remember any other stockmen who might have come over towards Pretty Plain from elsewhere?

MRS B: There was a lot of those fellows from Jindabyne used to come over.

KH: Did you ever meet Straighty Pendergast?

MRS B: Straighty, yeah, and the Mackays, Bob Mackay used to bring cattle through there and Bill Mackay - they're both gone to God, I hope.

Tea Break

KH: Who makes it that strong, did Ernie make it that strong?

Ted W: No, but he'd get off his horse to have a cup. Do you know he had old jam tins or anything he could boil up, all the way up the mountain hidden in hollow logs and so on, so that if he ever dropped his quart pot he wouldn't have to go without tea.

KH: Is that where you got your habits from?

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Ted W: No, I could drink tea before I met him.

KH: I mean your little jam tin idea with a bit of wire!

Ted W: He always carried a quart pot with him.

MRS B: Have a piece of toasted brownie.

Once I was up in Queensland one winter and I wrote to Neil and I said I was dying to get back to the hills and good water. He wrote back and said you be satisfied where you are, there's nothing down here, only rain ...

Ted W: You know that letter you got from Neil, have you got it handy?

MRS B: Yes.

Ted W: Well please read it to Peter.

MRS B: Well look ... he's a funny man, there's no doubt about him. He said, we had a choice we could either hit the *Manse*, the Presbyterian church or the school or the school toilet. He said that would have been a push-over.

MR B: They hit a big elm tree.

Peter A: *It was Barassi driving like a maniac, was it?*

Mrs B: *Barassi. That was about the third car he'd smashed.*

MRS B: A boy came here one day, for water or something. Anyhow I said come and have a cup of tea. He came in and we talked and talked and he finished up taking a photograph of me sitting at the table and the cup where he had his and the stove and this Swaziland thing was up there and he sent me back a photo about a month later.

KH: That was nice of you to invite him in.

MRS B: Well I always do.

Ted W: How would she have got to know us if she didn't.

MRS B: How many of you were there Ted the first night?

Ted W: Joe [Scarlett?] took a photograph of the whole four of us, taken that very same trip before we left Betts camp and I don't think we've ever seen the photo before. I don't know who took it. It might have been one of the Jeffs or Joes or it might have even been Ben Crocker's.

MRS B: You and <sup>Joel</sup> ~~Jonah~~ came back year after year didn't you and you nearly always brought a different crew with you. Peter Tiers the doctor and John Hawkins ...

Ted W: He died just recently.

MRS B: Yeah poor old John.

Ted W: Jeff is coming to a wedding in Armidale on the 12 December and he's going to come and stay with us.

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MRS B: Is that from Tasmania?

Ted W: Yes.

MRS B: Was he one of the first?

Ted W: He was one of the first yes.

MRS B: Which one had all the skin rubbed off his feet?

Ted W: I think that might have been Bert Crocker I'm not too sure.

MRS B: One of them would walk down the hill in his snow boots, and when old Mrs Edwards, the old woman across the road, she said ....

Ted W: You know Joan's every bit reserved today. I don't know whether she ...

MRS B: Was Joe there?

Ted W: Yeah he was around.

MRS B: Well! If you'd have got her on her own.

KH: Joe went to town and she did warm up then and I felt like bringing the machine in.

MRS B: She's not so go-ahead when he's around, she's got to be careful.

There's one snapshot - we didn't know what to do about it one night - someone took Joan and auntie, she was out here from Africa that time for a visit - and they went right up in Khancoban creek and Joe said, 'Who's that'. I said that's the one of you and Coral and Auntie. He's terribly terribly jealous.

KH: Oh is he.

MRS B: And he <sup>has</sup> no need to be, has he.

Ted W: I laugh at that story ... you were so young and Neil came up to the Perisher to see me and I hadn't seen him for years and he had this strange young lady with him. I didn't ask any questions and I wasn't told any lies. Joan says, 'he was here a couple of years ago and he had a strange lass with him. She said, Mum someone's coming up to see me.

*Juan's story goes: The car pulled up outside, she had an old English sheepdog - great big thing, it came bounding out the back of the place. Les jumped out of the car, and this little lass jumped out and minced over towards her, and this dog came bounding in between the lot of them, and Neil's first words were "Where the Hell did you get that?"*

Ted W: This first night we came here we came down off the spur and none of us had ever been down, hadn't been past Grey Mare before. We finally got to Pretty Plain at the end of three weeks on the snow - the first two weeks we were in Betts camp so they were fairly comfortable. We didn't even know how to get from Pretty Plain ... George Day had given me some instructions on how you'd find places on trees and get to the top of the spur and down you'd come. But once you got down through the mountain ash it was unmistakable, you're on the spur and you can get here. Going down these spurs, they're so long - a thousand feet followed

MRS B: And she said: "Where the Hell did you get that!?"

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by another thousand feet and we thought we must have been lower than the Murray River when we hit Khancoban Creek ... we eventually got down, we heard the dogs barking - it was just on dark, and misty rain - we didn't want to butt in and say too much, we thought that they might suggest ... I think we said was there any place to camp, can we get into your shed or something like this ...

MRS B: This poor man, all the skin rubbed off his feet and another three miles to go.

Ted W: We wandered down .... these Boardmans are more outgoing sort of people than we are ... we got the message anyhow.

MRS B: I have never turned any one away, once I look them over and I know - I know whether they're men or mongrels and these jokers seemed to be alright. They had a hot bath, a good bed and a good feed.

Ted W: Mrs Boardman packed up brownies and breads *and fruit...*

MRS B: I cooked a great big box of date scones, he's very fond of date scones and a brownie and a big hunk of meat and some bread and we went down to Marligang reserve, that's where the cattle were supposed to be coming to. When we got there, he wasn't there, there was a message to say that he'd gone, taken a different route through Rosewood, through Tumbi rumba somewhere, so we came home and had all this food. Along come four hungry men and they cleared it.

Ted W: We sat down and ate and talked until midnight.

MRS B: The kids said 'Mum there's a man out here at the door' and another kid said 'Mum there's a man out here at this door'.

Ted W: About 4-5 years ago Bronwyn and Joel and Joel's mate and myself set out to do the same trip again, to get to Pretty Plain and we came out at almost the top of the spur and Bronwyn complained - she'd discarded her own ski boots <sup>in Perisher</sup> and of course Joel had grown out of a pair of 'Yetti' boots that he'd brought from Norway - very good boots but he'd grown out of them and Bronwyn is one of these scroungers like me. The fact that you could only wear them with one pair of socks and not two, it wasn't a very good boot to go touring on, so consequently when we got to Pretty Plain her heels were raw and by the time we got to the top of the spur she complained. I took her boots and socks off and she had blisters this big. I thought the idea of her walking straight down the spur in these boots - she could ski better than she could walk. I thought we'd better follow the fire trail until we get to the Dargals and hit the road, possibly get down the road or Joe might come up <sup>and we might get a lift down</sup>. We didn't know at that time just how continuous the fire trails were and the one

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that we did get on came down this side of the 'Ink Bottle' and then just disappeared in snow suckers and so we'd committed ourselves to come down this face and you couldn't proceed. It was dark, we camped out at night under a tree and eventually later next day got on to Everards Flat track and got down here after dark. We went down across the road and they were playing pool in the front room. I knocked at the door and you could hear voices inside, there were 3-4 people playing pool, a bit of conversation going on and the knocks couldn't be heard. I knocked again and Joan said to Ron 'I'm sure there's someone at the door' - anyway they opened it and Joan looks over his shoulder - 'Christ it's you again' - it happened 30 years before.

MRS B: She's a person who will say what she thinks wherever she is or whoever they are. She never thinks, well you're Mr so-and-so and I musn't say this. Whatever's there, it just comes out.

I called in there one day with three friends, they were going on a sportsman's night to Jindabyne and he was very anxious for them to meet me - I don't know why - anyhow they all had lunch here - I did have something to eat that day, not like this. Some of them said, do you see a lot of snakes here and I said 'Oh no, not a lot, we see some sometimes, I had one out there the other day, I keep a long-handled shovel for the snakes'. They say they make good pets, well they don't, because if you pat them with the back of a shovel, they will not be friendly. You've got to pat them, haven't you. Anyway I said 'I chopped his biting end off and it got away'. Well these fellows nearly had a fit because I chopped the snake's biting end off - well I did - I chopped him in two and his biting end went and it took me some time to find it.

KH: That could be dangerous.

MRS B: Oh he would have died.

END OF TAPE.