

This is a conversation between Ernie Brayshaw and Graham Scully, 6.10.1989.

GS: So this is Robinson's hut site, is it? Is that pile of stones there where the chimney was?

EB: Yes. The door was alongside that willow tree there.

GS: Do you remember it standing?

EB: Oh yes.

built

a big ... slabs.

GS: Is this in national park?

EB: No, this is private. Actually Mum owns this.

GS: It was a slab hut.

EB: Yes, slabs

GS: Was it horizontal or vertical?

EB: Vertical. Neville Locker, ... I think the buildings are still ...

GS: Yes, they seem to be still in good condition.

EB: ... from inward. It's only a matter of time before ...

That's the old fibro hut that's down in your book. They called this one New Hut, didn't they?

GS: This is definitely how Leo Crowe described it. He did say it was made of fibro. He hasn't got a photo of this, so I'll get a photo of the remains and drop it in to him. And kangaroo bones are still there, a shovel too. Maybe I should take that back and give it to him.

EB: That's Leo from down Bega, is it?

GS: No, Leo Crowe.

EB: Just put a little notch around the end of the sapling and put a line onto that. She reckons if we had rods we wouldn't worry about putting up the bloody fence. We'd go fishing, and we'd just fill our saddlebags with fish. About late November we'd do a bit of fencing. You were only allowed so many stops. Yes, on top of the hill there, he'd meet us somewhere over there and count your sheep. Or at other times he'd meet you at the gate going into your lease.

(trouble with tape recorder)

GS: ..bearing of 50 degrees to Big Bog (?) downhill to Crowe's Hut.

This is Mackay's Hut? Is that in our huts list?

EB: Yes. You've got written New Hut as Crowe's and this one as Crowe's. It should be Mackay's.

GS: Who built this one?

EB: Well, I'd say it would have to be one of the old Mackays. The place was Mackay's paddock and then the big paddock over was Australian Estates, they used

to call it. Circuits is back down there. That's Little Gulf down there. Just around the turn down there is where the old Mungar camp used to be. We'll have to have a drive in there. Down round that bend used to be our snow lease. So this is the other trig side up here. That hill, they used to call it Trig Site (?).

(discussion as to whereabouts)

EB: Circuits Hut is down that direction, Schofields Hut is down across the plain there just on the edge of the timber. Gavel's Hut is just around the corner here. We'll go there. We've got to turn around and come back again, that's the only thing. Then we'll head across to Schofields and go down to Circuits. and do Brayshaws Hut last, on the way back down again. We're going to go up and have a look from the top of Big Bugtown. that will only take us half to three quarters of an hour. Jagungal was the name of the mountain I was trying to think of before. Big Bogong.

GS: So. Not much left. Stump foundations.

EB: All iron. Corrugated iron walls. That's where we got mixed up, because this was a new looking hut, all new iron. A real new looking building compared with all the other huts.

GS: It's a new looking building, that's why they called it New Hut. And the fireplace is interesting. They didn't often mix concrete for a hearth, did they, or have a brick chimney. That's unusual too.

EB: There was only brick up so high, and then there was corrugated iron.

GS: Did it have a wooden floor?

EB: Yes, wooden floor.

GS: So someone would have come and taken the iron away, I suppose.

EB: There was quite a bit of thieving went on up here when they closed all the leases. People came up and pinched the iron posts. One bloke got away with thousands of iron posts. They caught him in the end. There was nothing much they could do about it. Once you put an iron post in a fence it becomes part of the fence. You cease to own the iron post. Yes. If you put a ring or fence around a paddock up here and it's reclaimed, that still remains part of the block.

GS: So Mackay's Hut was called New Hut because it was made of new iron and it was new in comparison with everybody else's. And the bearing on Mt Nungar is 300 degrees. Did you know anyone who used the hut here?

EB: I've used the hut myself.

GS: How is it furnished?

EB: Nothing much at all, just an old table, a couple of stumps for chairs. We used to sleep on the floor.

EB: It was only used in the winter time for trapping rabbits.

GS: What were you doing when you camped in this?

EB: We were building some yards. We just came up here to set a few traps. There are a lot of rabbits round the side of the hill here. That was all cleared years ago.

GS: Did the regular burning stop the snowgums growing up?

EB: Well I don't think it was ever allowed to get into the timber. People only wanted to burn the open plain.

GS: I've heard it say that with the Greenhouse Effect everything is warming up so the tree line's creeping down.

EB: Well it's certainly not up here. Regrowth's just unreal up here.

GS: the treeline's creeping down the hill.

EB: that's good, isn't it, for the Greenhouse Effect? The more trees the better, isn't it? This whole plain was just a mass of flowers, paper daisies and all the old bluebells. It was a pretty sight.

GS: So, the graziers would burn the grass on the plain. Would most of the plain be burnt?

EB: Oh the whole lot of it. You could nearly pick who had just shifted their sheep out of the, in May. You'd look up and you'd see a big smoke cloud coming from over here, and you'd say, Gavel's just shifted his sheep, or Mackay's just shifted his. As they shifted their sheep out, each bloke would burn his paddock out. So when you came back at Christmas time the whole place was just a mass of green. But it doesn't look too bad up here. But you go down there on the plain and it's as sour as could be. I used to have to walk down there.

GS: Do you fish in the Mungar Creek just here? or further down?

EB: Well all the New Australians years ago blew it all. With lime and Gelly and bugged all the holes up. But they used to be terrific fishermen years ago.

GS: So you'd usually just catch the fish in the holes.

EB: Yes. It was full of rainbows years ago, but then they weren't satisfied with catching a feed, they used to put, they blew all the holes.

EB: This hut's been looked after by Nat Wanderers, ACT.

GS: One of them's a geographer in National Mapping. Yes, I don't know any of the others though. (reading log book) This is not a bad little hut, is it.

EB: Dick Schofield would have told you about this one.

GS: Did you ever use it though, Ernie?

EB: No. What year did mother's ... mother die? 82? there was a foot of

snow across the plain. I came through here on my motorbike with the cattle. I had some heifers out in the park, couldn't <sup>find them</sup> ~~find them~~ and rode and rode and in the morning, do you remember (to third person) and we found them, came back, and Peg's mother had died. That would be about seven years ago, July 1982.

GS: I meant to ask you about those yards at Gavel's, Ernie. Was that on your land?

EB: No. that was, Arthur Yen owned it.

GS: Oh, so you were working for Arthur Yen at the time.

EB: Actually it was my brother and Hugh Brayshaw.

My father and Uncle Ernie ~~Gottaus~~ were camped over at Gavel's. They ran out of tucker. They got snowed in. There were three foot of snow. So they walked over here and they knew Claude Sutton and I forget who was with Claude was camped here, and they thought he'd have plenty of tucker. They walked all the way over, when they got there they said to Claude Sutton, have you got anything to eat, you know, we've run out of stores. Yes, he said, I've got a good stew on. I'll warm it up. So he warmed it up on the fire in there, and they into this stew, spitting out hair. And they said to him, what sort of stew is it? And he said, kangaroo tail stew. But, they said, there's hair on it. He said, have you ever seen a kangaroo tail without any hair on it? He just chopped it up into pieces, hair and all. they reckon that's a true story.

GS: Claude Sutton sounded a pretty rough bushie.

EB: Oh he was. He was a terrific bloke.

A very old set of yards here when we bought the place.

GS: The old yards are the drop log yards.

EB: Yes. We put a race through the middle of it, put this wire-netting yard up here, on the outside, ...

GS: So, Russell had it first, then Robinson.

EB: Yes. Then Brayshaws.

GS: Was it Russell who built the old yards?

EB: I'd say so. They were sort of cattle yards.

Lady(reading from <sup>Brayshaws</sup> hut): 21st of the 7th, 82. You're still in snow.

EB: Yes, that's what I was telling you, the year, what was it? 21st 7th 82, still covered. Still something in snow. I was looking for the cattle.

GS: Oh look. Lurline and Phil Laporte have been here. Sad they split up. '83. Passed by training racehorses. They're fairly big yards, aren't they. They would have held a lot of sheep.

EB: David lost 200 sheep up here in '64, '65, the year of the big snow. They got caught up here. There were 40 foot drifts up here.

GS: 40 foot. As high as the tops of the trees.

EB: Yes, windblown. All the gullies here were completely blown over.

We drove the tractors as far as we could across the plain. Greg Russell came up with his Nuffield tractor. We had the little Fergy. We found sheep up through here standing on 6 or 8 foot of snow, and then at Christmas time, well snow lay in the drifts until Christmas time. There was 10 foot of snow across Kiandra Plain. 1964 I think it was. We found sheep up there at the top of the hill under Big Bugtown, where they got drifted over, and they'd ringbarked the trees, they were that hungry. They couldn't get out. They just starved to death. There were 10 or 15 dead alongside one big log, where they got drifted over. But Brian had the old fireball mare down in one of these gullies down there, and he went through, and he had to lead her way down the flat to get her out. It was drifted 10 to 15 foot high either side of the creek, and he just had to walk her down the creek to get her out.

GS: You said David lost 200 sheep. David who?

EB: Brayshaw. My eldest brother.

GS: Didn't you say to me earlier there were some sheep numbers written on the timbers inside? What's the earliest?

EB: 1962, I think.

GS: How many sheep?

EB: 471. Trimmed and treated. Yes, we bought some sheep that were load of footrot. There were 590 sheep that year, 326. You see

GS: 590 sheep 21st June, 67. What year's that? 69.

Oh look, you've got last year of lease there. 17.6.69.

EB: Oh yes. Seven short. 482.

GS: 211, what sheep to Bugtown. 260, what were they?

EB: Oh well, we relicked 211 back down to lighten ?

Funny. Dad was in hospital with gallstones at the time, and he tried to get a 12-month lease on the place. Anyway we didn't hear anything about it, and while he was in hospital, crook, we got all the forms and contract to sign. He said, well we've had it for 12 months, I don't want it any longer, so we just wrote away and told them that we weren't interested. but we'd already had it for the 12 months. We rang up in Cooma and he said, oh well, try it.

GS: Who did the writing? Is this your writing?

EB: Yes. Oh see, there's 510, That's '65. That's somebody else's up there. That's cattle. Cattle: 52. 27th of the first, 65. 18th of the first, '68, that's cattle. 400 in January '68, and 50 cattle in January '68. 60 cattle and 550 in 10th of the 7th '66.

GS: No, Tim Brayshaw, 6th of the 10th '89.

EB: You were pretty quick off the mark, weren't you! That's Brian's daughter, Nadia, '85, and 2nd of the 8th, 81, too, isn't it?

Lady: There's Michelle Brayshaw. 6th of the 10th, '84, and 11th of the 5th '85. Something of the 8th, '86.

GS: Here's a '69. 48 cattle, 8th January '69. 27th January '65, 52 cattle. This would be sheep - 510 sheep on the 15th January '65. 29th April '64, 630 ewes. 558 sheep. drenched the 6th of the first '66. 21st of the 5th, '66. That's Rellicky (?) put them in the paddock 6th of the first, '66 and come back and drenched them on the 25th of the first, '66.

EB: Garth Southern, eh? That's the bloke that they caught lighting all the bushfires up here. He was a park ranger, and he was on big money, so he made sure he made more. Yes, Reg Southern's son.

GS: Yes, I know Reg, down at Dalgety.

EB: Yes, Bob, or Reg. That's his boy, Garth.

GS: So he's not working for the national parks anymore.

EB: No, they sent him away. He was an alcho. They dried him out and he doesn't drink any more. He's got to look after his father's stud now.

GS: 600 sheep in January '67 and 70 cattle on the 10th of the 2nd '67. We've probably got most of those down. When I transcribe the tape I can get all the years done, and put them in order. Was there a little pot-belly stove there?

EB: Yes. Now it's out the back. All rusted away apparently. Yes, it was very old. Water coming down the chimney, I suppose.

GS: So it's got log foundations.

EB: It's sitting on bricks. There are bricks underneath there, yes. He only just knocked it together as a place to have a meal.

GS: Then the material would have been second hand.

EB: Well, it was a shed, a washroom in old Adaminaby. a laundry.

GS: From where he used to live?

EB: No, it originally belonged to Venables, I think. You know in those days the bath was away from the house. I don't know whether we brought the thing out holus bolus or knocked it into pieces. But the boards were perfect when we first brought it up here.

GS: Was it taken away from Old Adaminaby when the town was flooded? So I guess the thought was we might as well use it.

EB: It was given to Dad. Uncle Bob bought all the old buildings. He didn't want it so he said to Dad, it would do you for a hut in Mungar, so he took the truck in.

GS: Did you ever camp in it overnight?

EB: We came up and did some rabbitting.

GS: Do you remember what year it was built?

EB: Oh, it must have been in the late fifties. I'd just left school. It would be about '58. We didn't write the sheep numbers down every year.

We used a little notebook. Some years we used to write on the wall and some years we used to ... Dad bought the block of land I think in about 1952. Or '53. Up til then there was nothing here. He'd come up and get caught in a thunderstorm. He had a job to keep us here. We used to go fishing. The sheep were in the yard and away we'd go. And we'd leave him to do the drenching. It brings back a lot of good memories, you know. He was a great old bloke, Dad. He loved the land. This was the cattle yard here. There was just one big yard there, then. We built this race through the middle here as a drenching race, and halfway along here we had a combined drafting race, here.

GS: Did you ever have these yards choc-a-bloc full of sheep? Yes, I suppose with 5 or 6 hundred sheep ...

EB: Oh, we had a lot more than that a couple of years. They closed the snow leases, and I don't know whether we got permission or whether the bloke said, why don't you let the sheep go. Brian and I, I think we leased Rock Forest in 1967, and '69 was I think the drought year. We just didn't have any feed, so we brought about 720 wethers up here, and let them go over there in waves. It was hard work confining them. You'd ride for miles and miles. You'd come up and stick salt out, and a fortnight later there'd be 10 sheep dead around the salt drop, they'd smothered one another.

GS: Where did you get the water from?

EB: Just down in the gully there. There's a spring down there.

GS: Was a hole dug out?

EB: Yes. It's all grown over now.

GS: Just at the base of those big trees?

EB: Yes. Some of the biggest snakes in Australia down there. Big old smokey greys they call them up here. Gee they grow big. You see them up here you can't get their head off the ground. Over 6 foot.

GS: When you dug that out, would it have been the only water for a fair way?

EB: Oh no. Creeks all the way down.

GS: Yes, but in a dry year there wouldn't be any water up the hill.

EB: No. We had a 44-gallon drum up the back of the hut there, at the guttering. There was always water there to drink. And in later years Brian and Dad would ride up and I'd drive the truck up or vice versa, and we'd bring our own water and the drench and everything. Because as soon as we'd muster all the sheep, Brian would go home and leave one horse. And Dad would stay back with me and help to drench the sheep. Or sometimes Brian would go fishing.

GS: Is that guttering still on the back? No. So was the 44-gallon drum just here?

EB: Yes, just in the corner there. It was here last time I was up, I think.

GS: You wouldn't think anybody would bother taking it. It would be rusted out, wouldn't it?

EB: No, I don't think it was. It's a wonder you can't see where it was in the ground.

GS: It looks like people are using bits of the sheeppark for fires.

EB: Well, it's not doing any harm now, is it. That's the old Bloomfield drench, carbon tetrachloride. Green seal.

GS: Did you have a rubbish tip around here? NO? You just used to load the rubbish on the back of a truck and carry it out? Yes.

EB: Carbon tetrachloride. ? and stomach wounds.

GS: Do they use carbon tetrachloride any more for ... ?

EB: Tetrachloride's used for dry-cleaning, isn't it?

GS: Yes, I don't think it's used for sheep drenches any more.

EB: No. It ended up killing blokes. There's tetrachlorine in paraffin. They are the warmest gullies you've ever seen. They're that protected. And you can't even see the gully now.

GS: This creek's running now.

EB: There's an old wombat hole. This wombat attacked the spring, where it is running out. The rabbits are keeping it down short. But see, they don't venture down onto the plain.

GS: They don't have to, do they. I suppose it's the native animals keeping this down.

EB: It's the natural clovers there, trefoil. Dad supered this one year. But ? He'd never been up in a small plane before, and this old Joe Kovacs, he was a luftwaffe pilot, and he knew Dad was scared, anyway, he took the shortcut. He knew the country. Dad just showed him the map. And he got up here and Dad didn't have a bloody clue. He was completely lost. And Joe said, this is your paddock. No, Dad said, this is not it. He said, find the Bugtown Road. So he flew back and picked up the road we came up the hill. And he followed him up to Crowe's yards and then everything fell into place. Pam and Dad and I hired a plane one year, I suppose it would be in the mid 60s, just to come up here. It was after the snow had thawed. About 1964 or 5, just to see if we could see sheep. Anyway, we rounded up sheep on the plain, and counted them from the plane. They split up into mobs and we worked out how many we were short. Mind you, we weren't far off.

GS: Did the supering make much difference?

EB: Oh, too right. It was going to be a big thing. They were thinking about closing the snow leases. ? that will stop you closing the leases.

GS: You get thistles where there's been a bit of supering, don't you.

EB: Yes. Oh that's where we used to tie the horse up, in the shade too.

GS: Oh, so that would be due to horse manure and stuff.

EB: That was our favourite tree for tying the horses up.

GS: There are bits of wire hanging off the trees there. ~~EB~~: Before it was claimed off, this bloke was going backwards and forwards between yards, he had footrot. He didn't tell anyone. Our sheep picked it up because he was just going through our paddock. Anyway, we shored our sheep, didn't know anything about it, and mixed them all, different aged wethers, and brought them up here. We came up to drench them, I don't know, it's written down there what year we put them through the foot bath. And there were sheep lying around everywhere. It went all through our ewes. Dad ended up selling most of his sheep for 2 and 6 or 5 bob. And we found out afterwards that two stock and station agents, Harold Walker and Ken Martin-Smith, the bastards had sent them straight to the abattoirs. They got over a pound for them. And they told us that we couldn't send them straight to an abattoir. they just blowed them at home, and they went straight from home to the abattoir, and they were sold to the abattoir in Harold Walker and Ken Martin-Smiths' names. That was 1962.

GS: Oh. That's why you've got 'trimmed and treated - 471'. that's when you got the footrot. Did you get any footrot after that?

EB: No. We went right through all our sheep and picked out all the sheep for solid feed, no shelly feed or anything, and we classed them into one mob, and anything that was suspect we sold. At that gate over there, we made some baths about 6 foot by 2 foot six long, and about 4 inches deep, we set them up, and as soon as we drenched the sheep, to get out the gate they had to walk through the footpath.

(break in tape)

GS: We're at Robinson's Hut.

EB: Yes, Robinson, at Bugtown.

GS: So this Robinson of Bugtown owned freehold land here as well?

EB: Yes, he owned 1000 acres., plus at Bugtown, I don't know what .. is all about. Nobody seems to know.

GS: I wonder is it mentioned in our huts list.

EB: The old fellows can't remember about a hut here. He spoke about a hut being here, so it must have been a long, long time ago. They called this Roberson's lease.

GS: They're well-built yards. Look at all the fallen timber. Leaving Brayshaw's hut we headed approximately south-west, perhaps west, towards the

edge of the plain, and came across Crowe's yards, I think made by Leo Crowe and his father. These are very big yards. Ernie says they held up to 5,000 sheep, with a race down the middle. And from there about half a kilometre to Roberson's yards. Ernie did think there was a hut site here, but we couldn't find any sign of galvanised iron or any hearthstones.

END OF TAPE