JACK BRIDLE

Interview with Klaus Hueneke, 29th June, 1982

KH: Where were your parents born, Jack?

JB: Maybe I could tell the story in my own words and you could ... as we go along, eh? As you already know by the introduction, I'm Jack Bridle and I live at Talbingo. I'm seventy years of age and I'm a fifth generation Australian. But to go back to the beginning of my background, the first of my ancestors to come to this country was Edward Miles and he came on the *Scarborough* in the First Fleet. Now he didn't come voluntary either, we might add. A year later, another convict ship, a young lady came on that, Susanna Smith, and they were married in Sydney. Edward Miles was great-great-grandfather to Miles Franklin and that's where she got the name Miles. He was also my great-great-grandfather. Edward Miles and his wife had four daughters. One of them married William Bridle who came to Australia on the *Larkin* in 1818 and he didn't come voluntary either.

William and Martha - well, William took part in a exploration trip over the Blue Mountains and he got a grant of land about Campbelltown and he and Martha, he and Martha Miles were married in 1823 and they lived at Campbelltown, or Macquarie Fields for a good many years. There were about five children born there. Then he overlanded to Monaro and took up land on this side, on the Talbingo side of Cooma, the creek still bears his name. And there another four or five children were born. Now then, in 1848 he came down to Talbingo, and settled on the Tumut River at Talbingo. The family - my grandfather - took up land at Bowler's Flat which is six mile downstream from Talbingo. There my father was born in 1875. And he married Clara Green who was born in Lob's Hole. They were married at Adaminaby in 1902. They had a property about ten mile out of Adaminaby and there I was born in 1912, being the fifth of the family, fifth member of the family. None of the family were born in hospital, as was usual in those days, they were born at the home and the next-door neighbour's wife, or whoever was available came and acted as midwife. I can well remember my dad running up and down from the kitchen to the bedroom on one occasion. The kitchen was always built separate to the rest of the house, mainly for reasons that if a fire broke out in the kitchen the whole house didn't get burnt down. Well, I can remember dad running up and down there one night and I didn't know what in the hell was going on, when my younger brother was born.

The school that we went to - you started school when you were four or five years of age or whenever there was a school or a teacher available in the bush. There were about ten schools that I can remember within a ten-mile radius of Adaminaby. And there were, I would say, ten times as many people living in the bush a hundred years ago than there are today. The little school that I started at was called Holymount and it was a four-mile walk to school and a four-mile back, over a hill and across two creeks. It was a subsidised school. The school was probably built by the parents at some central location or it was an old building on one of the farms that had been made into a school and the teacher could be anybody, he could be a broken-down old remittance man who could read and write, would get a job as a school teacher. Or it was mostly some young lass who had just left school, had gained her QC, which was Qualifying Certificate - I don't know what it qualified for apart from school teaching - and they would have to board with the parents. And they would have to walk the same distance to school as the kids. They would go around from one parent to the other, probably sometimes they might find a homestead that was close to the school and if everyone was agreeable they would stay at that one homestead. Possibly the other families would have to pay something for her keep. And probably they found it pretty hard to find that few shillings at times, too.

The school was just a one-room school as they all were in the bush. There would be twenty or thirty kids going to the school, and one teacher to teach the lot from first class up to sixth class. They must've been pretty good school teachers because most of the kids finished up with

some sort of an education, despite the fact that they may have only got half the time at school that they should have done because of lack of teachers. Naturally, these young lasses would get sick of this sort of life and they would leave and then it might be some time before they got another teacher. I remember my lady teachers. One thing that I remember quite clearly, always have done: as they leant over me, to show me how to do some work on my slate - we used slates not books, with a stone pencil which was a pretty scratchy, screechy sort of a performance - as they leant over me I could always remember the smell of their scent or powder, whatever it was they used. On one occasion my teacher wrote down a little addition sum on my slate and handed it to me over my desk, the way she had written it, but to me it was upside down. But I never had enough sense to turn it around so I done it the way she gave it to me and got it right. She thought that was pretty clever but I thought it was pretty bloody silly afterward. Well then after -

KH: You mean it made sense upside down, did it?

JB: 'Cause I got it right. She gave it - she handed it over the desk like that. I never had enough sense to turn the slate around so it'd be the right way up, so I done it the way she gave it to me, upside down. She told everybody about it. Well, after a few years there we couldn't get schoolteachers to stay so we had to move into Adaminaby to go to school. And that was the only time I ever went to school in a township. There was a three, threeish-roomed school which is still standing by the way in old Adaminaby. They've made it into a camping area now. There were three teachers there and I went to school there for a few years. And then for some reason or other Dad decided to come back to where he was born, to Blowering.

And we moved over on to West Blowering and I went to school there for a few years. Much the same then although they weren't subsidised schools then but the teachers were much the same. They had to board with the parents and if it was a girl teacher she mostly finished up marrying one of the cocky's sons and started the whole cycle over again. ...

KH: ... Maybe if I could just ask you a few things to sort of fill in some details. How much education would your parents have had?

JB: Well, Dad had very little education. He would've only went to school for maybe two or three years. He could read and write and he loved to read, he'd read anything he got hold of. I remember well we only had the kerosene lamps and Dad used to love to get a newspaper and he'd put it around the lamp because he had no glasses and couldn't see very well and nobody else got any light because his newspaper was surrounded the lamp. But he was wonderful on mental arithmetic as most people who didn't have much education and they had to work things out, he was wonderfully good on mental arithmetic.

KH: What was his occupation later on, like when you were a boy, what did he do? What was he doing at that time?

JB: Well, when I was a boy, my dad run, he had a little farm eight, ten mile out from Adaminaby and he ran the mail from Adaminaby to Yaouk on horseback, a distance of forty miles, that's there and back. And he done that for twenty years. And in between times, of course, he had a little property and a few head of stock and he looked after the farm.

KH: That was enough to bring up nine kids?

JB: Well, it's an amazing thing, they didn't seem to need much money in those days. Even in the Depression days, if you were unemployed for six months it didn't seem to make much difference, because you didn't sort of need much money, you never had all the things that you must have, you didn't have things to pay off like you have today.

KH: Did your mother work as well, apart from running a household? She wouldn't have much time I suppose.

JB: No, no, she never done any work apart from household. Maybe help with a bit of farm work.

KH: But she never did any ironing for anyone else, or anything like that, mending?

JB: No not to my knowledge, I don't think she ever did.

KH: Do you remember approximately the sort of time span over which your brothers and sisters were born? Like the years?

JB: Well, they were all less than two years apart.

KH: So they were born over a period of fifteen, sixteen years or something?

JB: That'd be right. Yes.

KH: So your mother was pregnant for a long time?

JB: Well, that's true. Yes. They were marvellous women in those days, how they kept up and done all the work, gardening and milking cows, and making cheese and butter and gardening, and they cured all their bacon and beef, and all the fruit and vegetables would be bottled or pickled or put away somehow or other, there was nothing went to waste. How they got time to have done all this and do all the washing and household chores as well, I don't - I often wonder.

KH: But your brothers and sisters were not all born near Adaminaby, some would have been born in the Blowering Valley, would they?

JB: No. One! One, the last of my brothers was born when we moved to Blowering. The rest of them were born out of Adaminaby, in the bush. Ten mile out in the bush.

KH: Did any of them die at a very young age or anything like that?

JB: No, not of my, none of my brothers and sisters. I remember them being very ill with various things, scarlet fever and things which used to take a lot of kids off in those days. Diptheria. They didn't have the antibiotics and all the good medicines and things they have now. But they all survived. They all survived till adulthood anyhow.

KH: Did they all have about the same sort of education, about as much as you had?

JB: Oh, much about the same, yes.

KH: What, from the age of six to the age of fourteen?

JB: That'd be right.

KH: About eight years?

JB: They would never, there would not have been any of them would've been to school after fourteen years of age, and maybe left, some of them, before they were fourteen years of age if a job was available or if they could find something to do. But, there was not much prospects apart from working for the local cockys around the place, bush work of some sort or other, farm work.

KH: Did any of them go into a more professional sort of occupation?

JB: No.

KH: Any of them get a further education?

JB: No, no.

KH: Did any of them go for their QC?

JB: No. I sat for a bursary, whatever the hell that was and I don't think I passed. I had to ride a horse into Tumut one day to sit for a bursary and I wasn't very interested in it.

KH: So they all kind of went to jobs around the place, on various farms and so on?

JB: That's right, and you remember of course, you realise that when we left school, when I left school, say 1928, was the beginning of the Depression. I was eighteen years of age, no, I wasn't -

KH: Sixteen.

JB: Sixteen years of age. And I had an elder brother, my eldest brother, he's about seven or eight years older than me, he and a couple of other chaps from Adaminaby set off north in a horse and sulky looking for work. And they got out to a little place called Nymagee, this side of Cobar. And strangely, enough, even in the Depression days, football was booming. Probably they didn't have much else to do. But a couple of these chaps were good footballers and there was a game on and they stripped and played, and they were good footballers. So they gave them some sort of a job to keep them there, to play football. And would you believe, that the three of them are still there? Well, they're not still there. My brother left there a few years ago and bought a farm out near Forbes, and he's retired now, living near Parkes. But the other two blokes are still there. And they all got on very well. One bloke, he owns a station, now. I think he married the squatter's daughter. And he's a big noise around the district now, he's in everything. They were shearers, my brother was a shearer. And they took contract work, tanks (?). And then my brother opened a shop in Nymagee, the only shop in Nymagee. And as the years went by it developed into a big concern. What you couldn't buy there you couldn't buy at bloody Anthony Hordern's. And he run the mail from there to Hermidale which was the nearest rail town.

KH: Where is this?

JB: Nymagee? It's an old copper-mining town between Condobolin and Cobar. Out Mt Hope way, an old copper-mining town. And it's just amazing how the three of them just went out there and stayed there.

KH: Three of your brothers.

JB: No, no, one my brother and two of his mates.

KH: Oh, right. I think one of the other people I'm going to interview is from that town, near Cobar. Nymagee. I must remember that.

JB: What's his name?

KH: Ted Winter.

JB: I don't know Ted Winter, but I know of him. He writes a lot of good poetry. I've got a lot of it, in fact. Yeah well, he could do, too, I don't know.

KH: But, the others, like the girls, would they generally live at home until the time they were married?

JB: They went into domestic work. A couple of them took on nursing aide at some place or other, and they nursed aide at the Kenmore Mental Hospital, I remember. Two of my sisters. And one of them contacted TB and died down at Waterfall when she was reasonably young. The rest of my brothers, they more or less only done farm work round the district, too. Until war broke out and three of them went to the war. In the Middle East, and Singapore, and New Guinea. My youngest brother was killed in New Guinea on the Shaggy Ridge. They were the ranges.

KH: Did your father or any of your relatives fight in the first World War?

JB: My father didn't. First World War, he went into Adaminaby to enlist - they were very patriotic in those days - and they come down and bang a drum and everyone in town wanted to enlist. But Dad went in to enlist and the old Post Master was the recruiting officer and he said, "How many kids have you got out there in the bush?". And he said "Oh, eight I think, something like that." He said "I think you better stop at home and look after 'em." He was gonna go away and leave us all out there in the bloody bush.

KH: Really?

JB: Yes.

KH: Would your mother have got a pension or anything?

JB: I don't think so.

KH: An allowance?

JB: No. A shilling a day if he was home wouldn't be very much in those days.

KH: Well, you would've been three or four, if he'd gone.

JB: That's right. There were others younger.

KH: So most of the family was very young.

JB: Probably a couple of others younger and he was going to go away and leave us. Marvellous, isn't it?

KH: But did any other relatives go, that you remember? Like any of your dad's brothers or your mother's brothers?

JB: No, I can't think of any, any of my uncles, that went to the war, strangely enough.

KH: Did you talk about it very much? Do you remember people talking about it?

JB: No, I don't. See, I can remember Peace Day in Adaminaby. The great celebrations and everyone was dressed up and I can remember it as clear as .. And I would only have been six years of age and I remember all these fancy dresses and things. I suppose it was a bit of a Red Letter Day in our life in those dull times.

KH: Did they discuss Gallipoli or any of those sort of major events of the war?

JB: I can't remember, in my young days, anyone ever discussing the events of the war, when I was a kid.

KH: Was your father a member of the RSL?

JB: No, no.

KH: Was he a member before '38?

JB: He was never a member of the RSL and neither have I ever been. Although I had three brothers over there and one of them didn't come back I've never joined an RSL, I've never been to an RSL march. Even if I was living in the town, I think I would leave the town and go fishing or something else. I'd prefer to do, to grieve in private.

KH: Did your father continue to work, did he always have work? I suppose running his farm he always had work during the Depression, did he? There was something to do?

JB: Well, yes, there was a dole system during the Depression and we only had a little farm down at Blowering, at Brandy Mary's Flat as we called it. And the dole in those days, for a single man it was worth 5/6. A married man it'd be worth 12/6. If you lived in a district you could go and get your dole. If you weren't living there you had to keep moving on, the police would see, they'd give you, you couldn't get it two weeks running in one town, if you were a traveller. That was so they wouldn't all congregate in one place. They kept 'em walking so they couldn't sort of start a rebellion or something, I don't know.

But I remember Dad telling the story. You didn't get your dole posted to you as you do today. You had to get into town the best way you could and queue up at the Police Station. And the Sergeant of Police had the sole say whether you got it or you didn't get it. If he thought you didn't warrant it, you didn't get it. And Dad tells the story that the Sergeant said to him: "You've got a little farm out there. Can't you make a living off it?". And Dad said "Well, I might make a living off it, I can't make a bloody living on it." But, although I went right through the Depression, I never ever had to get the dole. I worked at some sort of work all the time, enough to keep meself going. And in the bush it wasn't as bad, it must've been murder in the city. But in the bush you could always get something to do, you could go and trap some rabbits or you could go, you'd grow, you could get some spuds or pumpkin from a neighbour if you didn't have any yourself, or you could, you could exist.

KH: Did any of your brothers go on the dole?

JB: No.

KH: They all found something?

JB: Yes, as far as I know, none of them none of them ever had to go on the dole.

KH: Yes, because the one who was off and went to - and played football, he was allright I suppose.

JB: Yeah, yeah, well, in those days we didn't know much about the Depression. It was not much difference to us as it had ever been, really.

KH: No. I mean, that amazes me. Like, people say now, you know, that we are heading for another big Depression. But I would suspect that when it's actually happening to you like it did

in the 1920's, you really sort of don't notice like on a day-to-day - It's not as though: Today is now a Depression.

JB: That's quite true.

KH: It would be a very gradual process, I imagine.

JB: We didn't know much difference apart from when I decided to leave the district and I was about twenty-one, twenty-two years of age. And a mate and I left Tumut in a horse and spring-cart to go to Queensland. And we got, we left Tumut in January in a hot time of the year. We got a few mile out of Tumut. We pulled up on the side of the road, in the shade, and we got our old gramaphone out and sat it up and played records, Tex Morton and things, that'd tell you how light-hearted and carefree we were in those days.

Well, we set off, we got as far as Condobolin with the horse and sulky and we had to get the horse shod, or the tyres on the cart cut, and went into the blacksmith's shop and the old blacksmith said: "I've got a T-model Ford out the back, I might make a deal with you blokes." So we had a look at it. He said, "She goes." We started it up and he said, "Not a bad sort of a cob you got." He said, "You give me the horse and cart and five pound and," he said, " you can take the T-model." So we were young and silly, we took it.

Well, we drove that thing to -, we had no licence, it wasn't registered, but very few people did register them at, in the back country in those days. Or bothered about a licence. In all those western towns up in Queensland, so long as you didn't go and park it in front of the Police Station, they took no notice of you. There was an "unregistered" road around the back street. Provided you kept to the unregistered road, there were no questions asked. Well, we drove that old T-model up to Cunnamulla, and that was my home town for the next couple of years, Cunnamulla in south-west Queensland. And as soon as we arrived there - and, I might add that under all the bridges, under the Darling River bridges, North Bourke and up to Warriego, there'd be fifty bagmen camped under the bridges, up to fifty, maybe sometimes only half a dozen. There was a distinction between bagmen and swagmen.

KH: Oh, was there?

JB: Oh, yes. A swagman, he'd always been a swagman - that was his mode of transport from one job to another around the shearing-sheds or whatever. But a bagman - were blokes, who would, in the Depression, who came up from the cities mostly and they didn't carry a swag in the orthodox manner. They probably carried a suitcase and a bit of a roll of blankets somehow or other. And they were known as bagmen. And they - they would jump the rattler wherever there was a train going, they'd get on it somehow or another.

And I remember well in Cunnamulla, the train used to pull up - that was a terminus, actually, Cunnamulla - came down from Charleville - and the train used to pull up about half a mile before it got to the railway station and let all the train-jumpers off. And on one occasion I was camped under a bridge there, between jobs - I'd been away on a droving trip and I'd just arrived back, and I camped the night under the bridge with all the other blokes that'd got off the train - and in the morning this well-dressed bloke came down the bank and started giving them a bit of cheek.

He said, "G'day, ya maggots." And one bloke looked at him and said "What d'ya mean?". He said, "Well, you blokes are - ," he said, "jumpers, you know, maggots, you know, the jumpers in the trees, in the cheese." He said, "You blokes are jumpers aren't ya, train jumpers?" And he said, "What's it bloody got to do with you, anyway?"

He said, "Did you get all that silver I threw out to youse last night?" It turns out that when the train pulled up and let 'em off, this bloke must've had a lot of loose change and he threw all this silver out and there was a great scramble for it. Well, he was a hero after that.

KH: All the bagmen got a bit, did they?

JB: Yeah, he threw it out, he threw it out when they all got off the train. Threw all his money out to them.

KH: Just to go back to your schooling. The children that went to the school would've been just local children, I suppose?

JB: They were all farmer's sons, that I went to school with. But some of them would probably have to come four or five mile to school, and some even more. But, the ones that lived a distance away, they came on horseback. Or they came in horse and sulky, maybe three or four kids to a sulky.

KH: Was there any sort of distinction between children that you could play with and ones that you couldn't play with? Was there any sort of class thing?

JB: No, not really. You know what kids are like. They formed bits of gangs in those days but there was no class distinction. Maybe one of the blokes would get a bit above himself and he'd form a bit of a gang, and he'd sort of gang up on the rest of them but there were no class distinctions. Next day they'd all be mates again, sort of thing.

KH: There was no distinction as far as your parents was concerned?

JB: No, no.

KH: There was only as far as you and your relationship with the other children?

JB: That's all. Yes. The kid - there was no class distinction in the type of people that I was with as a child, like the farmers that lived around. If there was, I didn't come in contact with - maybe some of the bigger property owners thought they were better than the others, but I never come in contact with anything like that. When I grew up and went to work on big stations up in Queensland, there was class distinction there with the bosses, the managers, and the men.

KH: But mostly I imagine you walked to school, did you?

JB: I only walked to school, yes. To start off with I had four mile to go and when I was in Adaminaby I only had about a mile. When I went to West Blowering I had two mile but I walked to school, I 'd hitch a ride with other kids who were riding a horse to school. You'd double-bank on the way home perhaps. On one occasion we were going home from school and my brother and I - the elder brother - got on behind another bloke. And they all decided to have a race. We jumped over a bit of a gutter and my brother and I both came off. He broke his nose and I broke me arm.

KH: Oh, yes. Is that the only time you broke a bone?

JB: Yeah, the only time. ...

KH: Do you remember any particular things that you did on the way, on the way to school? Did you loiter or were there particular places where you might stay for an hour or so?

JB: Oh, heavens, half the time when I started school the teachers'd very often be late for school, they wouldn't arrive there till ten o'clock and we'd hear 'em coming through the bush and we'd go home and tell Mum that the teacher never turned up for work. And sometimes he didn't, either. Yeah, we loitered home from school. I remember on one occasion, my brother and I were staying with our grandmother - that was because it was closer to school - and we were always in dark coming home, so one of my uncles went up half-way to school and he got behind a big black

thistle. And he dressed up in one of Granny's straw hats or something. We didn't know what a policeman looked like and as we come past he stepped out from behind this briar bush with a gun or something. Well, we run - there was a six foot fence and I don't remember getting over it, I think I must've jumped it. When we got home, my uncle wanted us to go out and yard some sheep to get a killer. I wouldn't go. I was terrified. My brother went with him.

We used to loiter all right and play the wag, too. I was going to school in West Blowering - the only sports that we had, we had no organised sports like they do now, they have all sorts of sports - but on Friday afternoon the teacher used to take us for a walk in the bush, nature study, and he had a whistle to keep us in order. Well, he'd lose half of us and he couldn't keep us under control. And in the dinner hour we'd go away. Our playground was a million acres, and we'd go away playing Bobbies and Bushies - that's bushrangers and policemen, whatever - And we'd arrive back at school just as the rest of the kids were coming out at half past three quite often. But we'd pay dearly for that next morning. They were pretty strict as a whole, the teachers in those days. Some of them were tyrants actually. But, there were no talking in school like they do now - it amazes me today, I go into school sometimes and they're all nattering away at once. There were no-one was allowed to speak. You put your hand up and clicked your fingers for half an hour - and he might look and he might not - if you wanted to leave the room or say something.

KH: And what was the form of punishment if you stepped out of line?

JB: Well, the cane was used pretty freely.

KH: What, across the hands or across the bum?

JB: Oh, across the hands, yeah, across the hands.

KH: Not across the bum?

JB: No, never, and no doubt it was warranted on occasions, too. I remember one kid in Adaminaby there, he got the cane every day. He was a stubborn bloke but he grew up into a real good bloke. A lot of the blokes that were villains at school, they grew into well-adjusted ... And a lot of the girls, too, that were larrikins when they were going to school, I wouldn't like to tell you some of the stories, but they -

KH: You might, you might, here's your chance.

JB: But they grew up into, had a well-adjusted family, you know, today.

KH: Were you ever punished at school? Did you get the cane?

JB: I got the cane, but no more than I deserved. We had one school teacher on West Blowering, he give a couple of boys a hiding with a sulky whip. He had a sulky that he used to drive to school. That'd be frowned on today, I guess.

KH: That'd be like a cat o' nine, wouldn't it?

JB: And all they done, they were sitting behind his daughter and they were dipping their pen in the inkwell and splashing the back of her dress. And her sister was watching 'em and she caught 'em in the act and told her father and he went down the shed and got the sulky whip. And gave them a whaler. And he had to because his old woman would've give him a bloody hiding with the sulky whip when he got home if he hadn't've.

KH: She was the kingpin, eh, or the queenpin?

JB: She was that, she was that. She was a little old lady with a pointy chin and Dad used to say "Beware of the woman with the V-shaped chin."

KH: She was the power behind the throne.

JB: She was.

KH: And it went right down the line.

JB: Yeah, yeah. Poor old fellow, I saw him at a tennis match one day at the school. And she flogged him up past the school with an umbrella and he walked along with his back humped up, taking it all.

KH: It would have been unusual though, wouldn't it, for a woman to be so dominant?

JB: It was, that was quite true. It was. But I do believe that today with school, the teacher and the children have a much better relationship what I can see - and I go to the school quite occasionally. They want me to do somethin' like I'm doin' now for the kids and there seem to be a very good relationship between the teachers and the children today.

KH: When you were punished, did you go home and tell your parents or did you keep it to yourself?

JB: Oh, no. We never told them anything. We never told them what the - all the larrikinism we got up to at school either.

KH: Even if you came home with bruised fingers and so on?

JB: Oh, yes, they might know - but they didn't, like today of course, they'd take up arms against the teacher, but they would say, "Well you must've deserved it" in my day.

KH: Which subjects - Do you remember the main subjects that you did at school? ...You would have done the same sort of subjects right through, wouldn't you?

JB: Yes, yes.

KH: Like geography?

JB: History and geography.

KH: English? Or some form of English, composition ...?

JB: English. A little bit of grammar which I didn't absorb very much as you might imagine. But it was history and geography, and reading and writing, and arithmetic. That was, that was just about summed it all up - write composition, stories. One thing I could do at school was learn poetry. And today I can recite Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson from now till this day next week. I can even recite poetry that related to history and geography. If they had learnt me my history and geography in poetry form I'd have learnt it ten times as well.

KH: That's interesting, isn't it? Yes, because when I talked to you before, I remember you remembering some snippets of poetry. I don't know whether it was written by Bunty Morris. It was about Kiandra, I think, or something up there.

JB: That was written by Christie Hetherington, at Kiandra.

KH: That's right. But, it was never written down, I don't think. You just remembered bits and pieces of it.

JB: Oh, yes. Old Bunty Morris, I remember quite a lot of Bunty's poems, too. He had a suitcase full of poetry.'Cos they were brought up those fellows, old Bunty Morris and my father and his brothers and my uncles, they were brought up in the days when Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson were writing their poetry and their stories and sending them in, and the *Bulletin* was - they'd call the Bushman's Bible. They'd be waiting for the *Bulletin* every week to see what was coming out. And of course they were writing poetry. They'd be camped out in the bush with nothing much else to do. And every second bloke was a poet.

KH: But did you - You learnt it. But did you also write it? Your generation?

JB: I didn't write anything when I was young. I've only written a bit in these last few years.

KH: Because that surprises me. I mean, there was all this interest in poetry, and interest in Australia and the land, and so on, but your generation - like Cecil, too, he didn't hardly ever write any of his own.

JB: There have been a few of my age that did but very few.

KH: See, Ted Winter is quite unusual. He didn't write his until he was in his fifties, in the late sixties he started writing his.

JB: Yes, that's right. I think perhaps as you get older, you're reminiscent more about things. You've got time to sit down and tell stories and think about writing poetry whereas in your young days you were more interested in other things.

KH: Were there any other subjects that you were interested, that also took your fancy, apart from poetry? Any aspect of history or ...?

JB: Well, I was interested in history but we mostly only learnt British history, English history. But one school teacher we had come from New Zealand and I could draw maps of New Zealand from memory. Every day was New Zealand or Canada or somewhere else that he'd been. But we didn't get a lot of Australian history and I think a lot of it was a bit distorted, too, to what we're hearing about things today.

KH: Do you remember any of the textbooks that you used?

JB: We had no textbooks.

KH: No textbooks?

JB: No. We had a school magazine which came once a month.

KH: They were sent by the Education Department?

JB: Yes, yes. And that was just more or less for reading lessons. And then, of course, we started off with slates but after a few years they got exercise books. At the beginning of the year, in January, there'd be a load of books, a couple of boxes of books and pencils and pens and things. They didn't - when I started carrying in Tumut in '39, I was carrying from the railway and every week there was almost a truckload of books going to the school, there was a truckload of something. But we got a supply of books once a year. That was just exercise books mainly.

KH: Were there particular teachers that stand out in your memory that you got on very well with or that had some sort of impact on your life? You must've had one or two that were your favourites.

JB: Well, one I think was a little bit ahead of the general run of them. Was sort of keener to teach you and make you understand things. But I don't know if he had any impact on my life at all.

KH: Like, you know, you had the situation where you certainly remember the scent especially of some of the female teachers. Was there more to it than that?

JB: No, see I was only five or six years of age. I suppose it was new to me - I'd never smelt these sorts of things before. My mother and sister would never be, er, and of course the young girl that came around, they'd wash regularly every day and they'd put a bit of powder and scent on to go to school. It just sort of stood out in my memory, that's one thing that I can always remember, how sweet these girls smelt.

KH: What about Anzac Day? Did you have any celebrations of that? 'Course you would have been still at school after the first World War. Was Anzac Day beginning to be celebrated then?

JB: Not as far as I can remember. They may have been a little, they might have flew the flag at the school or something. We used to march into school and sing songs, they might have sang some patriotic song as they marched into school. But there were no celebrations for Anzac Day.

KH: What about Empire Day? Did you have a cracker night? Bonfire night?

JB: Oh, always, always. We probably didn't know what it was for but it was always Empire Night the 24th of May whether it was rain, hail or shine.

KH: Were there any other celebrations or ceremonies that you can remember apart from those? Anything special done for Easter or ... ?

JB: No, no. People in the bush sort of made up their own, their own fun all the time. Every Saturday night there would be a dance in somebody's home. There was no hall - er, some of the younger blokes or girls would get together and they'd say "We'll take a surprise party out to so-and-so" and they'd all arrive there with their tucker and music, someone to play a fiddle or concertina or something and they'd clear the room and dance all night. And this was nearly every weekend. And they really did dance, too, the old square dances. My father was a good dancer, a good waltzer and that. And he used to call for the square dance, the first set of quadrilles, the lancers and the Alberts, and they were always done, they all were done, these old-fashioned square dances.

KH: What about at school, in playtime, like at lunchtime, do you remember any of the games that you played?

JB: Well, we had a tennis court at the -

KH: You had tennis?

JB: We had a tennis court at the last two schools I went to -

KH: That would've been pretty unusual, wouldn't it?

JB: Yes, er, but we didn't have any racquets I might add. Only the schoolteacher made us wooden bats. He used to make them out of a butter box. You got boxes in those days with good thick wide boards and you could cut a tennis racquet out of a, out of one board. And then he'd nail half, he'd split a broom handle and tack that onto both sides of the handle of it for the handle. And they were quite good but that was the sort of tennis we used to play.

KH: What about any games? Like British Bulldog or any sort of games like that or, I don't know, a version of touch football?

JB: Well, we used to play football in a rough sort of way. Sometimes there wouldn't be enough kids to make up a team. We sorta done everything at the wrong time of the year, we'd be playing football in the summer time, we'd be playing marbles in the winter time. We should've been doing it the other way round. But more or less made your own games. As I say there was no organised sport.

KH: With your interest in poetry and anything that sort of rhymed, that was more entertaining in that form, do you remember any rhymes that you might have had at school, like any childhood sort of things? I mean sometimes rhymes are used to nark other children.

JB: Oh, we did, of course, of course all kids did, I suppose, and probably still do. Oh, we used to just - I remember a couple of kids when I was going to school in Adaminaby. One little girl was called Cassie Shooks and there was another big lump of a lout there was called Lewis Brooks and we used to sing: "Cassie Shooks and Lewis Brooks were walking out one Sunday.
Said Cassie Shooks to Lewis Brooks ,"Tomorrow will be Monday" . "
a silly bloody thing like this just to annoy 'em, of course.

KH: Yes, that's right, that's the sort of thing, that's right. Oh, it still goes on. In a slightly different form.

JB: Yeah, no doubt.

KH: Did you have anything like sports teams or anything like that, like the schools that you went to, did they actually form teams and things and go and compete with other schools or anything like that?

JB: No, no. Not until after we left school. Teenagers, you know, in the Depression days, I suppose more or less, too. Then we did. We'd form football teams then. It'd be Up- the- river plays Down-the-river or East Blowering plays West Blowering, or these sort of games.

KH: That was once that you'd actually left school?

JB: That was after we left school. And I played cricket with the Blowering Cricket Club and we travelled around the Tumut district playing cricket. There was no, there was no inter-sports competitions, inter-school competitions while I was at school, at any time.

KH: Do you remember what you took for lunch? You would've taken your lunch to school, remember what sort of tucker you had?

JB: Oh, yes, it'd be a sandwich, whatever was available.

KH: What, your mother baked her own bread most of the time?

JB: Oh, yes, she baked her own bread right up until after I left school anyhow. No, it'd be just sandwiches. We used to take, sometimes I remember we used to take a bottle of tea with us, it

was a beer bottle with tea, cold tea. But the funny thing in those days, you probably heard about how the kids used to swap dinners. We'd all sit around in a ring and we'd swap dinners. If you thought somebody had something different to you and they were agreeable to a swap, we'd swap dinners.

KH: Oh, my daughters still do that.
JB: Oh, no doubt.

KH: Yes, especially with something enticing.

JB: Yeah, yeah, you always thought theirs was better than yours. And some of the poor buggers, of course, didn't have any dinner, or very little dinner, and they'd sort of get away on their own.

KH: Oh, I see. Gee. ...The children who didn't have lunch, would they have felt sort of awkward in themselves and have separated themselves?

JB: Oh, they were, but that would be very rare. Rarely, you know, all the young they would be pretty backwards.

KH: And the teachers, I think as you said earlier, mostly boarded on properties nearby, didn't they?

JB: They did when I started. Well, they did, right, pretty well right through. Well no, the last school I went to there was a school residence. And that was two mile from the school. But the other schools I went to they, each one of the teachers boarded with the parents.

KH: Did the teachers cycle to school at all? Was there much use of bicycles?

JB: Oh, there were , there were odd one's who had a bike. The last, the last school teacher I went to used to ride a bike to school. But, they'd walk, briskly along, their two mile to school and back.

KH: And ... you mentioned a couple of things that, with regard to other things that you did apart from school, like trying to wag school, as well as other things after school. Most of those things, I suppose, would've been without parent or teacher permission, would they?

JB: Oh, of course, yes.

KH: And you'd largely get away with that sort of thing, would you?

JB: Well, not very often.

KH: Like if you came home at night, late at night, every night, like in the dark, would you be in strife with your father?

JB: Oh, my word. And well I remember on one occasion. Mum'd be halfway down the track to meet us, we'd be coming home in the dark. And I remember Dad giving my brother and I a whalin' one night with a leg-rope. If you know what a leg-rope is, they used to milk cows and they had a green-hide leg-rope that they tied the cow's leg back with. And he gave us a whalin' with this leg-rope. And I don't know whether it done us any good, whether we come home any earlier, I suppose we probably did.

KH: After that. Do you remember having any other ways of earning money, especially while you were at school?

JB: Trapping rabbits was the, er, was - if it hadn't been for the rabbits, when I was a young fellow, not only when I was going to school but after I left school. That was the only pocket money we ever got, actually, was trapping rabbits for their skins. And of course they'd use the carcasses for, Dad used to do a lot of trapping when we were on the farm. He always had pigs and he'd trap rabbits and boil them up for the pig feed. And for kids, too.

KH: For your own pigs?

JB: Yeah, yeah.

KH: Your parents would've known the teachers fairly well, especially if they boarded with them at times? So there was quite a lot of contact there. More contact than there is now.

JB: Oh, yeah. Oh, no doubt, and of course, the teachers, too, they would be expected to help round the house too. If it was a lady teacher, there'd probably be that many kids howling round that she'd have to sort of get in and do something. And maybe it was a bloke, he'd probably have to help milk a couple of cows before he went to school.

KH: Do you remember any particular teachers staying with your family?

JB: I do, I mean I was very young but I remember them. There was a Miss Gosper and a Mr Gottis, Billy Gottis. Billy Gottis had one short arm and the other hand he only had two, two fingers on it, I think. He must've been born like that, I think. But he was a good teacher and he could use that cane with his little short arm, too. But the teachers, the lady teachers, there was a Miss Gosper and a Miss Godfrey, I think. And as I say we had to walk over a big hill to school and they each sort of pioneered their own track over this hill. And we used to call it the Gosper track and the Godfrey track.

KH: Oh, did you? Did you ever talk about, the teachers with what you might do after you left school, or was there much discussion of whether or not you might have a vocation? Or did you just sort of,... you wouldn't have had much choice in those days?

JB: No, I don't think so, I don't think so. They just thought, I think they just sort of reckoned that you got your education and you took it from there. But there were, I don't think they ever tried, ever bothered to worry what you were going to do afterwards.

KH: Did you have any sort of special things that you wanted to do, that you remember? Like, did you want to be an engine driver or any childhood dream thing like that?

JB: I don't think so. I don't think so. I just sort of lived from day to day. And the only thing you could look forward to when I was, was bush work or farm work. I don't remember having any ambition to work on the railway, I never saw a flaming train till I was about fifteen. ... No, I don't remember having any ambition. I probably liked that type of life that we were doing; I was droving and things like that. When I was a teenager I did go on a few droving trips up the mountains. Blokes taking stock up on the Monaro.

KH: Were they your first full-time jobs?

JB: The first full-time job I was working for dairy farmers. I left school when I was about fourteen. And I went out to Adelong way and worked on a dairy farm. For ten bob a week. And I might add I was damned homesick there for a week or two.

KH: This is when you were what, fifteen?

JB: Fourteen. And then I went to work for a cow cocky down on Tumut Plains for ten bob a week. And it was a seven day, seven day a week job. I got off between milkings on Sunday. I got on the horse and cantered home to Mum with me washing to do or something else. That was about all the time I got off. You were up before daylight and you'd work, work all day. And if you wanted, if you wanted any money, you had to go and ask him for it, and sometimes you'd think he didn't even owe it to you, he'd be that bloody cranky about giving it to you.

KH: And these jobs, these first jobs, did you get those through friends or the grapevine?

JB: Yes, well, that's quite true. The job I got on Tumut Plain, the mailman, the mailman knew I, he was older than me. But he went to the same school as me before I started and he was running the mail down Tumut Plain and he come up and he said so-and-so looking for a bloke down there to work on the farm. That was how you got the job but of course there were a lot of farmers fairly close about you too and they'd call on you if they had a bit of corn-pulling or millet-cutting to do or something. Even when you were going to school, you'd go and work for them after school, planting tobacco.

KH: Oh, yes? Was there much of that?

JB: Oh, there was quite a bit of tobacco-growing around Blowering and Tumut Plains. And they had a tobacco planter. Two blokes sat on the back of it with your lap full of plants, and the bloke sitting on the tank of the planter, would've had a water tank on it with two horses, and there was a roller went over a ratchet and each time it went up on the ratchet it'd let a stream of water out into this little thing that was making a furrow behind the planter. These two blokes took it in turn to sow the plants as they went along. We used to get 2/6 an evening after school planting tobacco. And there were a lot of Chinamen around growing tobacco. Dad used to cut wood for the Chinamen. They had to have wood to fire their furnaces for the kilns for curing the tobacco. And they used to get eight shillings a cord for wood. A cord is, probably some people doesn't know, was a stack of wood eight foot long by four foot wide and four foot high. And he used to get eight shillings a cord cutting it for the Chinamen And deliver it. And I done a lot of work for Chinamen when I was around Tumut Plains millet cutting and tobacco cutting and so on.

KH: Was that mainly - the tobacco - was that mainly for local consumption?

JB: Oh, no, no. It was all sold to the British-Australian Tobacco Company. They'd come around and - trouble was there were no competition among the buyers. They had a monopoly of it. And I was growing tobacco as a share-farmer and the buyer would come around and he'd pick a few bales of your good tobacco, bright lemon colour, and the rest of it you 'd be left with it. And the sheds were all full of tobacco that'd been rejected. They just come and picked the best of it. Then during the War, a lot of local blokes and some of the Chinamen, they started manufacturing tobacco. Illegally, of course. And they manufactured some real good tobacco. I remember very well quite a few of the blokes that manufactured tobacco, they'd go into town on Saturday morning and the old blokes would be sitting on the Post Office steps and they'd all walk across the street and they'd hand them out ten shillings a pound. The blokes would have their pockets full of ten bob notes. But one bloke, old Charlie Doohan in Tumut - the Doohan boys are big carriers and well-respected families, now, but old Charlie he was a good bloke too. But he manufactured this tobacco, but he went in in a big way. And he started taking it around towns out west. And of course the Customs men got onto him and I think it cost Charlie about five hundred pound.

KH: What in fines?

JB: Yep, yep.

KH: That ... went right out didn't it, tobacco growing?

JB: It went out in this district. The seasons weren't really suitable for it here.

KH: So it was always a marginal sort of thing.

JB: It was marginal. You'd get a bit of a cold snap or something, even in October or November when you'd be sowing and it got a disease they call the Blue Mould. And it'd kill it, it'd dry right out. Hailstorms were another thing. It'd just about be up and fit for harvest in the late summer time and a flaming hailstorm would come - well, you could imagine what that would do to tobacco, big broadleaf tobacco plants.

KH: Yes, even worse than what it does to fruit
.

JB: That's true, yes. Oh, yes, it'd smash it to the ground.

KH: And in those times, I mean, in those jobs you had, you would've worked, what? From sunrise to sundown, I suppose?

JB: Oh, yeah, well before sunrise. Be delivering milk into Tumut, we'd be up at daylight to get the cows in and delivering the milk into Tumut when you're finished.

KH: How long did you do that work for?

JB: I done it for a couple of years, for ten bob a week.

KH: Did you? And that was your first main job, wasn't it?

JB: Yes, yes. I got up to fifteen shillings a week eventually... fifteen bob and tucker. And then I took casual work around with the farmers, mostly about eight shillings a day. Cutting millet, broom millet, or corn-pulling. I well remember the first bloke that paid me ten shillings a day. He was a good boss and he'd feed you well, down on Tumut Plains. he was the best boss I ever worked for. He was the first bloke to pay me ten bob a day. A dollar.

KH: You wouldn't have had any - would you have belonged to a union or something? Or something that improved your working conditions or - ?

JB: No.

KH: You just accepted what was, I suppose.

JB: That was quite true. There was no talk of unionism in those days although Dad was a great union man. He always took the *Worker* which the - when we were in the bush we didn't buy newspapers the way you do today. The *Albury Banner* - everybody took the *Albury Banner* , it'd come in the mail. The *Albury Banner,* and the *Bulletin*, and the *Worker* - I don't suppose they took the *Worker* either. Dad always, always took the *Worker* .

KH: Did he belong to a union? Like the Australian Worker's Union? .

JB: I don't think he ever belonged ... Well, he could have belonged to an AWU but he probably didn't have really any need to except maybe when he worked on the Forestry, when they were planting the pines in Yarrangobilly and things like that. He probably joined the AWU then. I never belonged to a union in me life. And I never had any occasion to. It's not that I wouldn't have but I was never asked to and I never had any occasion to. When I went up to Queensland in

the Depression days, that was, well, I'm getting onto politics now, don't know whether it's time for that, but every second bloke that you'd meet, like bagmen and that, were verging on, verging on Communism. Yeah, every second bloke, unemployed bloke, and a lot that were not unemployed. As a matter of fact I joined the Party for two or three years and then I didn't -

KH: The Communist Party?

JB: Yeah, yeah, went to meetings. I was a card-carrying Communist for two or three years.

KH: That was part of the mood of the times, I suppose.

JB: I think it was, I think it was, and, you know, a lot of the poor buggers they thought 'Well, there's gotta be something better than this' and, this system that we're living under, you know. And they were looking for something different. But I don't think many of them ever carried on in it to any ... I voted for Communist on one occasion only, the only time that there was a candidate. And I'd only done that more or less just to annoy the old cockies that were around, to wonder who in the bloody hell had voted ...

KH: And that was up north?

JB: No, no, that was on Blowering, after I came back from up north. I just sorta - more bedevilment than anything else.

KH: Yes, yes. With regard to working, I suppose there was quite a separation between what women did and what men did? Like, for instance, you did your dairying and milking and so on. Would the women participate in that, too?

JB: Oh, my word they did, but not as a profession. Mostly only the farmer's daughters, you know, he might have four or five daughters that would take part in it. They'd do all sorts of farm work. Whatever I was doing, they'd be doing, too.

KH: Would they do things like ploughing?

JB: Oh, yes, on occasions. But not very often, no, that was a man's job.

KH: And conversely, did the men come into the household and help with the cooking? Or anything to do with what might be considered more domestic things?

JB: No, no, I don't think so. ... Strangely enough, the girls and the women were better, better milkers than men and boys.

KH: More sensitive hands, or something?

JB: I think so. Or maybe they got on better with the cows. Maybe the cows understood them better, or something. I don't know. But the girls were better milkers than the blokes. The cattle were more .. they got on better with them.

KH: As far as the teachers were concerned, were there tended to be more men amongst the teachers than women?

JB: No, I don't think so. Not in my experience, anyhow. ... Probably towards the finish of my education there would be more man teachers than girls.

KH: Where you worked on this dairy, were there girls employed there as well?

JB: They weren't employed, no. They were only the farmer's daughters that were helping and they'd only be doing it for their keep, I suppose. A bit of pocket money, as well.

KH: And how far - that was quite a way from where your home was, wasn't it, at the time? Where you first went to work, that was down Adelong way wasn't it?

JB: Yes, out on the Adelong road there.

KH: That would have been quite a distance in those days, with poor roads.

JB: Yes, yes, first time I ever was on a train. I must've been fourteen, I'd only just left school.

KH: You caught the train from Tumut, did you?

JB: Yeah. Yeah, I got on the train at Tumut and there was a little siding, Gadara, where I was supposed to get off, and the train didn't stop there. I didn't know. And I got over-carried to the next station, about two miles farther on. It wouldn't stop there only he had a loaf of bread to leave for somebody or other. I had to walk back. But after that I made sure I got in the guard's van with old Jack Hickey. And made sure he stopped.

KH: So, you lived on that farm?

JB: Oh, I wasn't there for very long on that particular farm.

KH: But mostly with, where you were in more permanent work -

JB: Tumut Plains was -

KH: -You lived there.

JB: At Tumut Plains.

KH: Yes, you lived on the farm.

JB: Yes, yes. I lived with whoever I was working for, more or less. You might live in the barn but you lived on the property anyhow. There might be a hut or a workman's cottage, something you slept in, but ...

KH: And did you eat with the farmer, or the owner of the property?

JB: Oh, yes, yes. When I was working for my keep I did. Afterwards, when I was only on day work, well then I would do for myself, you know. Then I'd, well I'd camp. I'd probably pitch a tent if there were no hut or anywhere about to camp in, or a shed. Quite often you'd camp in a shed. A corn shed, or hay shed, or something else. Or if there was nothing else available, you'd pitch a tent. And you lived in the tent. But you cooked, you cooked for yourself. You'd build a bit of a galley outside the tent and you done for yourself.

KH: What about after work, I mean what sort of social activity did you have then? Would you go back into Adelong or into Tumut for - you mentioned your dances once a week.

JB: Well, the dances were, that was more or less when I was a child. I was still going to school - they used to have these regular Saturday night dances. Afterwards when I, after I left school and started to work, they started to build halls, dancing halls. Every locality, Blowering, Tumut Plains, Lacmalac, and every place round Tumut would have a hall. It was the, what d'you call it,

Agricultural Bureau, built these halls. And they sort of paid for themselves through functions that were held there. And the dances were then, you had to travel to the halls. There was even one up here at Talbingo. And you'd drive a horse and sulky up to twenty miles sometimes to attend a dance in the hall.

KH: So a lot of the halls that you still see in tiny little places in the country were actually built with government money?

JB: They were built by the Agricultural Bureau. What sort of money that was, I don't know. Whether it was government money or not, I don't know. I suppose it was... I'm not too sure about that. I think the Agricultural Bureaus around here were just, all the cockys sort of got together. But there must've been a government body called the Agricultural Bureau.

KH: And this, what happened after your job on the Tumut Plains? Was that when you went up north?

JB: It was, yeah. I went up to Adaminaby for a spell there for a year or so. And I worked around Adaminaby on bush work. Fencing and scrub, cutting scrub, and that type of thing. And the bloke that I went to work for, he was having a hard time too, and eventually he couldn't, he couldn't afford to pay me. Although I was only getting maybe a pound a week. And he said, well - he got a job on the roads, he was out working for the Main Roads Board or something or other, and he said, "If you'd like to stay on here -" - because his wife would be there on her own anyway -He said, "If you'd like to stay on here," he said. "I can't afford to pay you but if you got nothing else to do you can stay here and get your tucker." I done that for quite awhile and while I was still living there at his place, I took bits of jobs for some of the other farmers around. Cutting scrub, that type of thing.

KH: And then how long did you go up north for?

JB: Then I came back to Tumut from Adaminaby and that's when I started share-farming.

KH: Oh, I see.

JB: And I share-farmed for a year or so there. And that was 1933. But a mate I went to school with - he was younger than me - he said "I think we'll hoist out of this place" so we - He owned the horse and cart by the way. And when we traded it for the T-model Ford, I put in the five pounds so we sort of were equal shares in the T-model Ford. We went up to Queensland in '33 and as soon as we arrived there he got a job droving with a mob of cattle to go all the way to Adelaide. And I got a job with a boss drover with thirteen, eleven thousand sheep. To go from Cunnamulla to St. George, or Dirranbandi, way out east anyhow. I was six weeks on that job. And I came back. And in those days in Queensland they had a different dole system. For every two weeks you worked you got a stamp in a book, an employment book. And, when you were unemployed, every stamp you had in your book, you could draw ten shillings a week. Which meant that if you worked for eight months, for the other four months you could go into Cunnamulla and camp on the river bank and fish for codfish in the hot part of the summer. Some of them used to do that. And they'd get ten bob a week for the stamps that they had in their book. Every two weeks they worked, they could get ten bob a week.

KH: So those stamps would be quite precious, wouldn't they? They'd be like cash in your pocket.

JB: I should too have them. I kept them for years, you know. I wish I had them now. They were, they were cash in your pocket. You could get ten bob a week.

KH: Oh, you had some left over, did you, that you didn't use?

JB: Oh, you didn't have to hand them in, they stamped your book(?), they stamped them or something in your book and you'd get ten bob a week for that. I never used them, actually. I never had to. It was(n't) a very fair system either, I suppose, because a lot of blokes that were working permanently all the time, they weren't realising on their, on their stamps at all. It was the unemployed were reaping the benefit and I s'pose the same thing happens today. To some extent. We were up there - then I got a job fencing out on Dynevor Down - it was eighty mile west of Cunnamulla.

KH: Dynevor?

JB: Dynevor - D-Y-N-E- The Dynevors. Pronounced "Dinnovers". Eighty mile west of Cunnamulla, out near Thargomindah.

KH: This is all in Queensland?

JB: Oh, yes. South-west, south-west corner of Queensland.

KH: Right.

JB: And I was eight months fencing on Dynevor. And when my mate came back after he delivered the cattle, he came back and he came out and joined me there. And we made good money on that fencing job. It was all piece work. So much a hundred for standing posts - digging the holes and putting the posts up. So much a hundred for cutting the posts; we were only little three foot six fence, little mulga and gidgee posts about three inches in diameter. About two pound a hundred for cutting the posts. So much a hundred for putting them up depending on how hard the ground was. It varied from thirty bob a hundred to fifty bob a hundred. So much a hundred to bore them. So much a mile to run the wire. And this was the piece work. And we worked and we worked; you'd put up fifty posts and you'd say to yourself, "Now, that's so much I've earned. If I can get another ..." And you'd be lookin' at the sun and you'd think "If I could get another ten posts up,now, it'll ... And I'll put down a strainer post and I'll have a good start for tomorrow." And, you know, you'd work and you'd get home at nearly dark and you'd be that bloody tired, you couldn't be bothered to cook a feed.

I remember one bloke, the first time that I ever found out how good grog was. There was one bloke who used to periodically go on a spree, Jack Roach his name was. And he'd go a couple of months and then he'd have to go. And he'd get into town - he was a bloke that had seen better days, too - the first thing that he done when he got to town, he'd dress up. He'd get in and he'd play the piano and sing classical songs and then he'd get on the grog. And he'd fight everyone in town. He had a black and white dog he called Fleabag. He had to fight every dog in town. And then when Jack's spree was over he'd come back to the job. The publican would set him up with a bit of tucker and a couple of bottles to taper off on. But once he finished his spree he wouldn't have another drink. We'd come in late, knocked up, and he'd, he'd pour us out half a pannikin of rum and we'd drink that and in a few minutes' time we'd get up and we'd light the fire and cook a feed.... But we made good money on that job. We come back from Queensland a lot better-lookin' than when we went away.

KH: Did you? Wow. When did you come back from Queensland?

JB: Well, we come home for Christmas two years later.

KH: That was what, 1936 was it?

JB: Yes. '35. End of '35. And we took the train to Brisbane. And we were coming home, we

were coming down to Sydney by boat. We went down to the boat to get on and my mate said, "Bugger it, I think I'll go back." He didn't come home. He went back to Cunnamulla. I come home, come down to Sydney on the boat. I'd never seen Sydney before. Didn't know what to expect. And I came home for Christmas. Fully intending to go back to ...

KH: You just came back for a holiday? To see the folks.

JB: I came home for Christmas fully intending to go back to Cunnamulla. And I never ever got back. And my mate worked there for a long time. Ends up the poor bugger shot himself, I don't know why.

KH: He did? What up there?

JB: Oh, no, he left there and he was driving a taxi somewhere up on the North Coast, something like that. I never really found out.

KH: So, '36 you were back on your old stamping-ground?

JB: That's right. I went back into the work I'd been sort of used to. I had a bit of money by now, after coming back from Queensland.

KH: Oh, you saved a bit up there?

JB: Oh, I'd saved money. I had a bankin' account all the while - even before I went up there I had a bankin' account which I transferred to Cunnamulla, there'd only be a few bob in it, uou know, maybe twenty pound or something like this. And, oh no, I come back with a couple of hundred pound.

KH: That was a lot of money at the time. My God.

JB: Mmm, that was a lot of money. I went to Wagga and I bought an A-model Ford. It was practically new, too. It was a, it was single-seater with a dicky seat in the back, if you might remember. I paid a hundred dollars for it.

KH: A hundred pounds.

JB: A hundred pounds. She was a bloody beauty. And I used that then for travelling around. I took up the work that I'd been doing before I went away. Contract fencing and farm work and so on. Until. Until '39. April, 1st of April. April Fool's Day. I bought a truck - or I paid a deposit on a truck - and I started carrying in Tumut. And everyone reckoned I was mad. I'd go broke. And, this'll tell you how things were really better in those days than they are now. In about twelve months, I'd saved up enough money to buy a block of land. I bought two and a half acres this side of Tumut for fifty pound. They're selling the same land today for nearly that much a bloody building block. I mean, they're paying fifty thousand dollars now, that sort of thing.

But, I bought this block of land - two and a half acres for fifty pound - and I built a home on it and I'd saved up enough money to do it. The home, it was built from the ground up. The old bloke that built it - in those days you just drew it on the ground with a stick, the plan. There were no County Council regulations of how you had to do it and so on, you just built it. But it was a good home. It was all, all cypress pine and weatherboard. It was before, it was during the war, it was just at the time when you could buy stuff. A year later you couldn't, you know. You could, cypress pine and weatherboard for four big rooms with a hallway through it, three chimneys, back and front verandah, and he built everything from ground up, completed it, and painted it inside and out for four hundred pound. The same house was sold recently for thirty-five thousand.

Well, that's why I say things were better. You could, what young bloke could today, in twelve months could get enough money together to build a house?

KH: That's amazing. Oh, yes, that's very good. But you must have always been good at saving. I mean to save during the Depression, that was pretty good.

JB: I was always pretty thrifty. There was never - you see there was always hard up and that was why nothing was ever wasted, you didn't spend any money foolishly.

KH: But you see someone else might have splurged it. Gone to Brisbane and whoopeed it up, perhaps got into the grog or something or wild women ... But you were, that wasn't your - what you saved you made sure it was a good investment.

JB: I was a little bit ambitious, I suppose when I was young and I often wonder if these big business people today, I can understand you being ambitious when you're young but when you get up to my age you think well, what would of been the use of it now if I'd made a bloody million dollars? What good would it've been? But a lot of them today they, when they get up that way and they got, they still want to make more. They, a lot of farmers, they don't hand the reins over to their sons, who are just bustin' to go on the land. They just like to keep control of everything until they've grown up and then they clear out and leave home. Or did.

KH: So, '39 was when you built that house, was it?

JB: Yes.

KH: So that the two years, '36 you came back from Queensland -

JB: It was the end of '35. End of '35 .

KH: End of '35. For those couple of years you were really living in a number of places, I suppose, if you were here and there. Doing odd jobs.

JB: That's right. I was what they would call an itinerant worker, I suppose, in those two years. I was even, took on poisoning rabbits. I went up to Big Nungar, and old Sanko Smith had Big Nungar Plain and I was married, you know, that's right, but couldn't ...

KH: That would've been after '39?

JB: That was after '39.

KH: '39 you got married?

JB: No, it couldn't've been after because I couldn't have been married then because I started carrying in 1939. And I was carrying for twenty years. So it must've been before I was married. I must've been going with my present wife at that time. Because my father-in-law, he is, or was, now, he and I went up there. Yeah, I wasn't married then. Just friendly with the family. And he and I went up there one winter poisoning rabbits. The same up in Currango. We went up to Currangorambulla for two or three months in the wintertime poisoning rabbits. It was quite a good money-maker, rabbit skin, in those days. If it hadn't been for the rabbits, it'd have been pretty bloody hard on a lot of people... But he was a good poisoner, my old father-in-law.

KH: What was his name?

JB: Dave. LeFevre. Dave LeFevre. He was a very smart man. He was an expert bushman and he

was a wonderfully good rabbit poisoner. They all had decoys - patented decoys - poisoned with thistle roots and strychnine, of course. Now that was some things I done in that period, that two-year period, apart from - I took on quite a few fencing contracts around the district. I would split the posts and stand the fence. There'd be so much per mile, type of thing.

KH: Again, the sort of thing where the more you did, the more you got paid.

JB: Yes. That's true. I mostly worked for meself. And as I say I never joined a union because I never ever had occasion to. When I started carrying, I was twenty years carrying, and apart from that I was mostly doing piece-work. So much a ... whatever, the more you worked, the more you got paid.

KH: But you really didn't live in one place very much for those two years, did you, '37, '38?

JB: Quite true. My parents were living, were living up at Blowering and I went home, weekends, or at times. And I even lived with Dave LeFevre's, that was long before my wife and I were married. I lived at their place for a while. While I was working around odd jobs. She was away nursing I think, at the time.

KH: In that household, 'cos what - see, as part of this project they're interested in the residence that people lived in at that time, '37, '38. Now, in some ways that doesn't really apply to you but, would that place where your wife comes from, would that have been a house that you lived in longer than elsewhere at that time?

JB: Yes, I suppose it was.

KH: Like, did they have people employed to - you would have been employed there initially?

JB: No, no, Dave were, Dave was a share-farmer. He was more or less like myself. He was a share-farmer and itinerant worker too, and he was a hell-of-a good worker and a very smart man. He was very good at anything, anything he done with his hands, he was, he was clever at. He was champion at pulling corn or cutting millet or anything like that. He was in big demand for the work because he was a very smart bloke at anything he ever done with his hands. And - no, I was never employed there. I was employed for a lot of their neighbours around the place. I remember their houses, of course, very well too. The type of houses they were. Round about Tumut Plains that time, or at Blowering, most of the houses were weatherboard. Some of the older ones that had been built for a long time were built of slabs. My early home - the first home - was built of slabs. And, I went back there recently and there's not a sign of anything, where you could never believe there had ever been a house there, now. The same as the Holymount school that I went to. There's not a thing there, you couldn't believe there were ever a building there. Not a thing. But, the houses were quite comfortable. The, even the real early houses, they were built of slabs or stone or whatever, and they'd have a huge fireplace maybe about eight foot wide in the kitchen. And on each side of the fireplace there'd be a big redgum log or something for the kids to get in there of a night-time and they were actually sitting in the fireplace. On both sides of the fire. They'd be worn smooth from the kids sitting in 'em. And then around the table there'd be a, a long stool perhaps, for seating accommodation. But, the houses were quite comfortable and as I say, the kitchen was nearly always built separately to the rest of the house.

I remember when I was living out at Holymount, going to bed one night. We always had candles to go to bed with - which were pretty dangerous, I suppose, with kids - and one of my sisters set fire to her nightshirt, my younger sister. Before she got into bed with her candle, she set herself alight. And my elder sister, showing great presence of mind, done the only thing that was, er, that was, er, sensible. She grabbed the jerry from under the bed and threw that over her.

Put the fire out.

KH: Yes, I think that'd be preferable to being burnt.

JB: I think so.

KH: This Le Fevre, Le Fevre, Le Fevre household might be one we might concentrate on for that period anyway. Did you all have you own room in that house?

JB: Well, there sometimes there was not enough room for extra accommodation and there'd be a bed on the verandah, you know. And I slept on the verandah for quite a while there and I think we might have walled it in, put some sort of a, bit of a windbreak around the, around -

KH: Do you know when that house was built? How long had that house been there?

JB: Well, it was reasonably new. They had lived in an old, very old, old slab dwelling previous to that. They hadn't been living there very long at that stage. and this house they were living in, they were only renting it. And, the house had got, had been burned down. I remember the fire. It would've been -

KH: The old house?

JB: Not the old house where they were, no. The house that they'd rented. Before they came to live in it, I'm getting you a bit mixed, I'm getting mixed up here. But, there was an old lady was living in it with her son and, and she was pretty old and pretty helpless. She must've set it alight somehow and it was burned to the ground. And it, and Dave, my father-in-law, he, he built the house. He was a pretty handy bloke and he, he built this, this house. Rebuilt it, I should say. It was only a four-roomed, a four-roomed house, a kitchen and a couple of bedrooms and so on.

KH: Do you remember anything about the furniture in it? Do you remember anything about the furniture, like, did you, was it fairly simple furniture or did you have anything, anything special like sideboards or wardrobes or -

JB: Yes, they'd have a sideboard and wardrobes, of course, and a dressing-table, and, yes, they could buy furniture, you know, quite reasonably.

KH: They'd buy the furniture in Tumut?

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. There were furniture shops in Tumut. When I got married I bought the household, enough furniture, everything I wanted for about a hundred pound.

KH: And the dining-room was separate from the kitchen?

JB: Not on this occasion it wasn't, no. It was all, was all under one roof. It was separate to the kitchen, yes, yes.

KH: But was the dining-room the same as the living-room?

JB: Yes. Oh, you mostly, people mostly lived in the kitchen in those days. They made it, they made it very homely, these old homes. They, it was quite homely and they all sat around the kitchen fire. Later on, when I got married, I had a separate room for a loungeroom with the fireplace in it, we never used it.

KH: Did you have, what - So the kitchen in a sense was the main entertaining area, too, when there were visitors and so on?

JB: Yes, that's right. It'd have to be something pretty special to go into the, to the, they called it the 'front room', or the living-room, or something else.

KH: So the front room did have special purposes, did it?

JB: Oh, if they had some very important visitors they might put on a bit of an act and take 'em in there.

KH: Would a priest be an important visitor?

JB: A priest? Yeah, a priest or a parson. They didn't have, we didn't have much visits from priests or parsons. When I was living there, the only religious order I remember ever coming around were Jehovah's Witnesses.

KH: Oh yes. That early on? My goodness.

JB: Yeah, that's right. In the 1940s my mother was living with us and she - oh, that'd be a bit later, I suppose that'd be in the fifties really. My mother was living with us and these Jehovah's Witnesses came. They used to come out regularly and they just, they never talked religion, they'd just come out and talk to Gran and, you know, they were very good. I always had a lot of time for 'em after that. A lot of people condemn them but I could never see anything much wrong with them, not that I'm religious in any shape or form. But, one religion to me is as good as another, whether he's a Hindu or a Christian or anything else. But, these Jehovah's Witnesses they used to come there just to see Gran about once a week.

KH: Well, I suppose it'd be quite an occasion for her.

JB: Yes. And, when I had the caravan park here I had two or three families that were Jehovah's Witnesses working here on the Snowy. Yeah, and they'd go every second Sunday, they'd go around, they had put in so many hours, I think. And there was one particular family. They were here for about six months and I never knew that they were Jehovah's Witnesses. They never, thye never spoke to any of the other people in the caravan park or went around, as far as I know, talking religion. And then, they said they were leaving. And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry you're going. Where're you going?" And they said, "We're going out to Alice Springs for a convention." And I woke up that they must've been - And then a couple of years later the lady came back with another woman and they rented this cottage we're sitting in here now just for a couple of nights or so. I said, "Where've you been?" And they said, "Well, after we left here, we went up to Anakie in Queensland and we were scratching for sapphires and things," they said. She said, "We didn't make any money but we paid our way." She said, "My husband got thinner than ever and I got fatter." And she said, "And then, we were there for a year and then," she said, "and now we're migrating to Chile." ... And they were, and as I say, I could never say anything against the, any of them, because, they were, they were amongst my best customers as far as the caravan park was concerned. They would never cause any trouble or, and they never had as much garbage as most people either.

KH: What about power in that household in the 19 -, late thirties? Did you have electricity then?

JB: No. No.

KH: You would've had, what, gas?

JB: Kerosene. Kerosene lights. Yes.

KH: And you would've had a fuel stove.

JB: Fuel stove.

KH: What about a water, hot water system? Did you have an old bath heater or anything like that?

JB: They did have chip heaters. A lot of people had chip heaters and they were a wonderful bloody system, too. I don't know actually how they work but my God they were - they'd blow up occasionally or go off with a big poof but, gee, they'd heat the water quick. A bit of cardboard and a few chips or something and you'd have hot water immediately. But mostly people in the earlier days, they had big fountains which they hung on the open fireplace, maybe a ten-gallon fountain. Mostly about eight-gallon fountains. Still used in quite a few of them. My sister up at Adaminaby still has one on the open fireplace. But, no, if they wanted hot water they hung a four-gallon tin on, over the open fire for a bath or whatever.

KH: Did you have a wireless?

JB: No. No. They were just starting to, starting to get wirelesses around then.

KH: You had a telephone?

JB: Most people, a lot of people had telephones. We never had a telephone in our house. Like, when I, I never had a telephone until I was married and had me own home. My parents never ever had a telephone. But, my grandparents did. In Adaminaby. I - where we lived out from Adaminaby, Mum's parents had a property there. And they had a telephone. In fact. they had the telephone exchange. They had a post, sort of a post office. People used to come and collect their mail and -

KH: Oh, Fanny Pattinson worked there for a while.

JB: Where?

KH: At the Adaminaby Post Office.

JB: This, this wasn't the Adaminaby Post Office that I'm speaking of. This was my grandfather's place out in the bush. And he had a post office there where the neighbour used to come and collect their mail and leave their letters for Dad to pick up. As I say, he was running the mail. And, my grandfather, we used to have go down there every Sunday morning. He was a Methodist, my mother's father. And a very strict, very strict old gentleman, too, and we used to have to go there every Sunday morning. He used to read the service and so on. So I was christened a Methodist, to begin with. And the Dad never, probably never had much time for my grandfather, old (?) He was a pretty, bit of an old tyrant in lots of ways. So, after he died Dad had us all rounded up and mustered up and re-christened in the Church of England.

KH: We talked about the methods of heating and so on and we talked about the chip heater. We talked about wireless and telephone. Do you remember what sort of washing-machine you had?

JB: They had no washing-machines. We never had a washing-machine in my young days or even up until this time when I was in my twenties when I was living at my wife's parents' place. They had no washing-machines. It was all, all done by hand. They had a scrubbing-board that they scrubbed their clothes on. And the water supply, incidentally, in most places around there

was a well. On Tumut Plains in particular everybody had a well. A lot of them would have a rainwater tank where they caught enough rain for drinking water. But everybody had a well and they pulled it up out of the well with a bucket on a rope. Or maybe they had a hand pump. That was their water supply. And, they had no refrigerators either. And. they would hang the butter down the well to keep it cool, to keep it from going to oil.

KH: They didn't have a refrigerator?

JB: No. There were no refrigerators at that time. A bit later there were kerosene refrigerators that came on, oh, at the end of the, like late in the thirties. But, I never saw a, never owned a refrigerator until I was married in 1940. Hardly ever saw one. And I'd married quite a while, during the war and you couldn't get one, I went to Sydney, out to Halstrom, and I got a, a kerosene refrigerator. They had a home-made cooling safe. But everybody more or less had a, had a cool-safe. It was a water-drip, water-drip thing. It would keep things reasonably well. Or as I say, hang it down the well. They wanted to set a jelly, they'd hang it down the well.

KH: In terms of the land, the house that you lived in during that short time that we've been talking about, you would've had, I suppose, a separate fence around the house itself, that separated it from the paddocks, and so on. There would've been a vegetable patch as well, I suppose.

JB: That's right. It would probably be about an acre, all told, in the, in the little house block, little house block where they'd grow their, they'd have fruit trees, a bit of an orchard, and grow their vegetables.

KH: Did you have a tennis court there?

JB: Not there, no. At that time there was always a tennis court at the school. That was the main, main tennis court. And then people began building their own private courts. There was a recreation reserve which was a sports ground, on Tumut Plains. And there were tennis courts, there was one tennis court there. And a cricket pitch, etcetera.

KH: How close were you to your neighbours in that house? Like, how far was the nearest house?

JB: Oh, the nearest house would've only been half a mile away. Or a little more. But, it was fairly densely populated farms around Tumut Plains. It was very rich agricultural land. They didn't need very big farms to, to make a living off. They were mainly dairy farms there but even the ones that were just growing ordinary crops like maize and tobacco, millet and that, they were eighty acre, a hundred acre farms. Quite big enough to make a living off. On that type of country.

KH: Yes, yes. In terms of the daily existence, this is living in that house in '37, '38, you got up very early, and you mentioned that before. That would have still applied. You would've got up, just before sunrise or something like that?

JB: Yes, you would.

KH: And what sort of chores, did everyone, like when you got up, it'd be some time before you had breakfast? I suppose there'd be some people would go off and milk the cows ...

JB: That's quite true. There'd be a cow to milk and some wood to chop and maybe a few domestic animals to feed, a few pigs or cows or something.

KH: What sort of things did you have for breakfast? Was breakfast a big thing, like a protein-rich and ...?

JB: Yeah, everybody used to eat a good breakfast in those days. Moreso than they do now, I think. Lot of people now have very little breakfast. But, they always cooked breakfast, in those days. Eggs and bacon and porridge and that sort of thing, toast and, always cooked a good breakfast.

KH: And did you have a warm meal in the middle of the day? Like, did you have dinner at lunchtime?

JB: Yes. The midday meal was, was dinner.

KH: So would you come back from your work in order to have that dinner?

JB: No, no. Most blokes who were working carried their, took their dinner with them. Whatever they were doing. If they were corn-pulling they'd have their dinner. And very often they wouldn't stop for dinner, they'd just put it on the slide and more or less ate it as they went along.

KH: But they would then have a warm meal in the evening, wouldn't they?

JB: Yes, yes. The meal in the evening was always called supper when I was a young fellow. The midday meal was dinner.

KH: Like today, I mean just now, we've had a warm meal. Whereas at home in Canberra, I would generally have sandwiches or something at lunchtime. And then I'd have a warm meal in the evening.

JB: Oh, yeah. Well, I think it's always been the custom in the bush to have their midday meal their main meal. They'd have a light meal at tea-time or suppertime. Possibly a little cup of soup, a plate of soup or something light, you know, but it was always a light meal in the evening meal. I think it's a good idea. I think that breakfast - a lot of people don't have much breakfast now - I think it should be the main meal of the day. That's the one that you've got to go to work on. And, you don't need a big meal to go to bed.

KH: What sort of food did you eat for your main warm meal, your dinner?

JB: Well, it was pretty rudimentary, I suppose. Corned beef and plenty of vegetables. Everybody had pumpkin and potato, cabbage or parsnips, that type of vegetable. And, it was any sort of meat. Roast meat or chicken or chook as you'd call it, kill your own. It was nearly all produced on the, nearly all home-grown. All your meat. Everyone killed their own meat. Made their own corned beef and made their own bacon. And they're doing it again now, as a matter of fact. There's a lot of people now have gone back into - a lot of good butchers have developed in this last few years, since the price of meat has gone so high. They buy a beast and they, they can kill it and hang it up a gum tree. Quite legally. You're not allowed to kill it to sell but you can always kill your own. And there's a heck of a lot, a heck of a lot of 'em doing it now.

KH: What about after dinner, after supper I should say, did you ...?

JB: Played cards.

KH: Played cards?

JB: Play cards was the main occupation.

KH: 500s and ...?

JB: 500s.

KH: Euchre?

JB: Well, not so much. 500s was the game.

KH: But would you do that night after night?

JB: Yeah. My dad loved 500. He'd play every night of the week.

KH: What about you?

JB: Well, I liked it, too. I still do. I still play 500s. Yeah, Dad'd have a run of bad luck and he'd get crankier and "Won't bloody play anymore" and next night he'd be fidgetting around after tea and he'd say, "Well, how about a game of No Trumps?" he used to call it.

KH: Did you do any reading? After supper? Did you read much then in the thirties?

JB: Well, there wasn't a, wasn't a lot to read. You didn't have access to a lot of reading matter that you've got now. But, we all did, we all, everybody liked to read, I think. We had gramaphone, too. Everybody would play, play gramaphone. A lot of them could play instruments, too, play by ear, self-taught by ear. A lot of the bushmen, every second bloke could play a fiddle. Not only blokes either but a lot of women could learn to play - well, if they had a piano, they'd learn to play a piano, if they were a bit better, more well-to-do. But, the average people played an accordion, or concertina, or violin.

KH: Did you play anything?

JB: No. I was never what you would say was musical. I could whistle or sing a bit of a song but I was never very, I wouldn't say that I was musical. I learnt to play the mouth organ and sometimes when they were a bit short of music at a dance I'd play the mouth organ for them to dance to. But, I could more or less keep time, I was a good dancer, I had a good ear for rhythm and time but not a good ear for music. And that's a funny thing, too. A lot of blokes that had, that were musical, they couldn't dance. They didn't have that sense of rhythm and timing, although they had a good ear for, for a tune.

KH: So what time did you usually end up going to bed?

JB: Oh, well it'd depend a lot on what you were doing but on average it was fairly early.

KH: Nine o'clock?

JB: Weekends - yeah, nine o'clock. Weekends, I s'pose, we'd have later hours. We'd ride into town maybe on the Saturday, when I was living out at Blowering with Mother and Father, we'd ride into Tumut. And sleep all the way home on horseback.

KH: How'd you do that?

JB: Yeah, many the, many the time. Many the time I've slept for miles and on a horse walking along.

KH: Yeah?

JB: Yeah.

KH: Sitting up in the saddle? Dozing?

JB: Yeah. I remember one occasion the old horse, he'd been tied up in the pub yard, I suppose, half a day, and he wandered off the road to a creek to have a drink of water, and he put his head down and I fell off over his head into the water. Sound asleep.

KH: That'd soon wake you up.

JB: Yeah.

KH: But in this household in the late thirties, I suppose it was mostly the women who did the cooking and the cleaning of the house and so on?

JB: Well, there was only the old lady, and my wife was away at the time, she was away nursing.

KH: She was the only daughter?

JB: No, there was another daughter. Younger. A younger daughter. And she was home most of the time.

KH: Would she have had chores to do?

JB: Oh, yes. She had her work, no doubt.

KH: Would that family of your mother and father-in-law, would they have had other sources of income apart from what they earnt from different jobs? Like from investments or anything like that? Inheritances?

JB: No, no. No. Nobody, nobody in like, in my status ever had inheritances or they never had any money to invest.

KH: They had to really depend on what they could scratch together.

JB: That's right. Most times when the old folks died the family would all throw in to ... When I first went away to work, I was only getting ten bob a week and I was sending money home to help keep, help keep the rest of the family, would you believe?

KH: Were you? And you saved off that as well?

JB: Yes.

KH: My God, you must have been thrifty.

JB: I can remember my elder brother, he got a job somewhere and he come to me, I was workin' for ten bob a week and I lent him five pound to go, go to this job up in the mountains somewhere. As I say, when I had a few bob to spare, I'd send it home because they were always short of money at home. And the most families like that, when the old people died, as I say, the family would throw in to pay the costs.

KH: Of the funeral?

JB: Mmm.

KH: And in terms of the household, like, was it your father-in-law who had the reins of the money-bag?

JB: No, not so much, the mother would be more in control of the ...

KH: She'd control the domestic accounting, would she?

JB: Yes, because Dave was a , he was not a bloke to save money. When Dave had a few quid he was a millionaire, you know? Whereas the mother, she realised the value of money, she had to. But Dave was, he was not the least bit thrifty. He was, you know, he was an open-handed bloke.

KH: But he'd hand over so much a week to his wife, I suppose?

JB: Well, when he had it. She'd probably get whatever money was coming in and ... He never had much need for money anyway. He never, he might come up to Talbingo pub, fishing, and he might need a few bob to have a few drinks but ...

KH: And yourself, where did you buy your clothes, for instance? You bought those in Tumut, I suppose? One of the drapery stores there?

JB: Oh, yes, yes. The drapery stores - there were several drapery stores. And you nearly always kept to the one store. There was one good drapery store in Tumut and I bought everything there, I think.

KH: Your shoes as well? Your riding-boots and so on?

JB: Yes, yes. There were working-boots. There was a boot factory in Temora. Brookes's Boots. And they were the best boots ever made. And they were made of good leather and they were comfortable from the day you put 'em on, they were built to shape your foot. You couldn't wear 'em out. Brookes's Boots. They were, that was the only bootmaker that I ever, ever heard of that really made good boots. And he had a little shop in, in Temora. Naturally, he couldn't keep up supply. He only had three or four blokes working for him. And he got known far and wide and everybody wanted Brookes's Boots. But, the draper, there'd be the one shop that you'd deal at all the time. I don't think I ever, up until I got married, I don't think I ever had a made-to-measure suit. You bought 'em off the hook.

KH: And furniture, you bought that in Tumut, too?

JB: Yes. There was a furniture shop there and you could get anything you wanted there.

KH: Do you remember at all how much things cost?

JB: Well, I don't, I wouldn't know any individual items, what they would cost. But I know when I got married I bought a whole household of furniture, which would include the kitchen and dining-room furniture, plus a bathtub and a stove, I suppose, for a hundred pound.

KH: You paid cash for that?

JB: Yeah.

KH: So most things would've been cash, I guess.

JB: Nearly everything. There was very - I don't think I ever heard of hire purchase, up until then. That's one of the evils we've got today.

KH: Can you remember any big purchases? In 1938, or around then?

JB: No.

KH: Like, I don't know, an iron or a stove or ..?

JB: No. I can't remember any individual purchase like that. I have no idea what they cost now if I did.

KH: Did you buy clothes very often?

JB: No. No. We, at that stage you made your clothes last. And they'd be repaired and patched and darned and everything else.

KH: Did you wear overalls then?

JB: Not until I started carrying I don't think that I wore overalls and then I never wore anything else.

KH: What did you wear, what sort of ...? You'd have a shirt, you'd have some sort of farmer's shirt.

JB: Just a shirt and pants, long pants.

KH: Were there any moleskins?

JB: No, no, there'd be dungarees. Dungaree, we'd call 'em, or gabardine. Mostly. For working clothes.

KH: And jumpers, I suppose you wore when it was cold?

JB: Well, strangely enough, jumpers weren't the vogue as much then as they are today. You wore a coat. Everybody wore a coat and, or a waistcoat. Coat and waistcoat was the, men wore then. They didn't wear jumpers so much.

KH: And now instead of a coat you wear a parka.

JB: Yeah, yeah. Something like this.

KH: Yes.You wouldn't have had that sort of thing in the thirties.

JB: No, no, you wore just a plain suit coat and a waistcoat. If you got a three-piece suit, if you got a suit it was a three-piece suit, coat, waistcoat, and trousers. I never wore long trousers until after I left school, nor any other boy. Like today, they're wearing long pants when they go to school. And, I don't think I wore boots to school, practically the whole time I went to school. And, even the wintertime. Your feet'd be cracked and blue from the cold but kids never wore boots. I often tell people now that until I left school I thought that boots were only made for men to wear. Didn't know kids wore boots.

KH: Yes. I still know some children like that. But I think a lot of kids prefer not to wear anything on their feet.

JB: I think so. Yeah. They never seem to get the colds any worse or as bad as they do today.

KH: Did you have anything delivered to that household?

JB: Oh, the butcher. The butcher used to come around regular. I remember that. With two horses and a cart, a cuttin' down cart. Now it wouldn't be hygienic enough for people, it'd kill 'em. They'd drive all the way from Tumut to Talbingo in the summertime, in a horse 'n', horse 'n' wagonette. For their meat. Open the flap at the back and somebody with a bush keeping the flies out while he cut the meat up. And if it was a bit on the, if any of the meat was going off a bit, he'd give that to the people who couldn't afford to pay their bills. It never hurt 'em. Wouldn't be bloody hygienic enough today.

KH: Yes, it wouldn't necessarily be fly-proof, I suppose, the facilities.

JB: No. No. And, today they talk about decentralisation, they're doing it back to front. They've closed all these little butcher shops in the town, little towns. In Tumut, for instance, they had three or four slaughter-yards. And they were quite good and good enough for anybody. Well-kept and clean and hygienic. Now, we've got to buy our meat from Wagga or Cootamundra. It's all got to go to a central killing-station. Same thing with the butcher, with the bakers. All the baker shops were closed down. Now we're getting, they're making these big places bigger. And the little towns are going backwards all the time. Because the bitumen road, and everyone got a motor car, or two motor cars, and all the women can drive and they drive into the big towns to do their shopping. And the little towns are just going back and going back all the time.

KH: In terms of things that were done in the house, did your mother-in-law, or your future mother-in-law, have a set day for baking?

JB: Well, I suppose they had. Monday morning was washing-day and I don't know what day was baking-day but they would have had a routine, no doubt about that.

KH: There would've been one day when she would have baked for the whole week, I suppose?

JB: Yes. They were pretty methodical that way, I think, the old people. They had a time for everything.

KH: And, would she be the one - they had chooks, I suppose?

JB: Always had chooks, yes.

KH: Would he slaughter the chooks, or would she?

JB: No. He would do, he would do that.

KH: And then she would cook it?

JB: She - well, I suppose in different households it varied considerably. In some places the women would do, slaughter the chooks. But, in that case I don't think that she would've ever killed the chooks. She would'nt, not that she couldn't, but she didn't like to, probably.

KH: Would there have been bartering? Like, if you had a pig and someone else didn't, and they had something else that you wanted. Was there much exchange across the fence? At a sort of informal level?

JB: I don't think so. No.

KH: Everyone kept largely to themselves. They were fairly self-contained were they?

JB: They didn't altogether keep it to themselves. When it come to killing a beast, for instance, there might be four neighbours, "I'll kill the beast this time and you can have a front quarter and you can have a hindquarter , and next time, when you're killing, and I'll get the hindquarter and you'll get a front quarter" and this sort of thing went on. Between the neighbours. And no doubt they did barter to a certain extent, I suppose. If one bloke had potatoes and the other bloke didn't have any, he'd say, "Oh, come over and get a bag and give me back something when you've got it."

KH: Yeah, yeah. That sort of thing. ... But you still had rabbits, too, didn't you? And you would've had fish. Would you have been fishing in the thirties?

JB: Oh, God Almighty, I never stopped fishing. No, in the, down here in the Tumut River, when I was young, up until, up until that time the Tumut River was full of black perch and you could, you could go down there of an evening and light a fire on a bit of a sandbank and you could, you could catch a bushel of 'em. And cod. They've all gone now, it's trout now. Even the yellowbelly, not the yellowbelly, the catfish. There were catfish up here on the Tumut River, at that time. All those native fish have gone, now. All gone. Completely.

KH: Did you rely on fish very much? Was it a big part of your diet?

JB: Yes. Yeah, we did. It was trout mainly, like, later at that '38 period. It was all trout then. Oh, you could still catch the odd perch but my old father-in-law was a wonderful trout fisherman. One of the best I ever saw and he was wonderful with a shotgun. And he, he practically kept that family from what he could capture, you know? Hunting or fishing, and he'd go out with a gun and he'd come back with a couple of black ducks or a hare or something else. Or he'd come back with a bag full of trout. If it hadn't a been for that, they would've, they would've been on harder, hard times, you know?

KH: So rabbit stew was quite a common meal, I suppose?

JB: Oh, my word. Rabbits were good. Even today I still trap a lot of rabbits. Now, I was going to trap some this afternoon but you've got me all tied up. When I trap rabbits now I might get a dozen, one morning. And I might dress half of those. I keep the, what I call the 'good ones', half-grown, young. The old bawdy bucks, the milky does, I give 'em to the dogs, sort of thing. Boil 'em up for the fowls. But good young rabbits - my wife does them up like Colonel Sanders. She cuts them up and rolls them up in egg and breadcrumbs, and deep fries 'em, and they're just as good as the best chicken you can get.

KH: Oh, I like rabbit. Perhaps I should stop this and go rabbitting with you. I think that's a much better idea.

JB: I think so.

KH: Did you ever go and eat out in the thirties? Did you ever go into Tumut, or eat in a restaurant or something?

JB: Oh, when we went to town of a Saturday - We sort of made it a habit, when we could, to go to town on Saturday afternoon and we'd stay in there Saturday night, maybe go to the pictures. And we always had evening meal at a cafe. Not so much at a pub but mainly at a cafe, in my young day. Maybe some of the older blokes went to the pubs. The pubs always had a good dining-room. You could always get a meal at the pub.

KH: Was that very expensive?

JB: Two bob.

KH: Two bob for a meal?

JB: It was different - sometimes they had a, they had a sort of a bit of a class-system. They had a five-bob table for the upper crust. I know one particular old bloke down here. He was an old remittance man. An old English remittance man, if you know what that is. They were the black sheep of the family and they were sent out here from Britain. And, he got a regular stipend, if that's the right word, from home every month he'd get a cheque. And he was a real old gentleman. He was a real nice old fella. Well, the bloke that had a property - He had a bit of a hut there, this old, this old bloke, and he always had flowers on the table and a tablecloth. He was a bachelor, of course, so he was a real old, nice old gentleman.He was telling me the story. He went into Tumut and the bloke that owned the property next where he lived, he said, "Could you lend me five shillings?" So he lent him the five shillings, old Jim Cunningham, and he said, "Then I went up to the Commercial Hotel to have me dinner, " he said, " and I'm down at the two-bob table, having me dinner," he said, "and Arthur's upstairs at the five-bob table having his dinner with my five shillings." He said, "And then a little later," he said, "I hear him playing the piano and singing 'The Holy bloody City'." This old bloke, he was a bit of a religious bloke, he used to play the organ at the church, he said. And "Next thing," he said, "I hear him playing the piano and singing 'The Holy bloody City'."

KH: Did you ever have a five-bob dinner?

JB: No.

KH: You'd rather have two and a half meals for that price?

JB: That's right.

KH: Did you like eating out on a, did you like that ritual on a Saturday?

JB: Oh, couldn't say I particularly liked it, but it become a habit, I suppose. You had to eat something. Maybe you didn't always have a meal either. Maybe sometimes you just -

KH: I suppose you might go out to a film or something like that afterwards?

JB: Oh, we used to go to the pictures, yes.

KH: That would all be part of the same day?

JB: Oh yeah, that'd be Saturday's day and that.

KH: So, you'd go shopping, you'd have a meal, and you'd go out for -

JB: Have a few drinks sometimes. When I first started to learn how to drink whisky, I come home, I had to come home on the horse one time. I could sit on him, I could ride, but I couldn't walk when I got off him.

KH: Why's that? You were used to riding, weren't you?

JB: Oh, yeah. I could ride when I was drunk but I couldn't walk.

KH: I see, I see.

JB: I could get off the horse and I'd get down on the ground and it keep coming up and hitting me in the forehead.

KH: Well, on the horse I suppose, you just have to sit there, it does the walking.

JB: Yes, and the horse, he'd go home. They reckon there's a special providence that looks after drunks and fools and I was both.

KH: Do you remember anything about celebrating birthdays or the special days in 1938?

JB: Well, they always celebrated them. But not to, probably not as much as they do today, there was no, were no birthday parties much.

KH: Would there be a cake?

JB: Not so much in, not in my case anyhow. But I well remember the first time that Santa Claus didn't come to me. I was terrible, terribly hurt. I was working for people at the time and they didn't give me anything for Christmas. It was the first time I hadn't ever received anything for Christmas and I was really, really upset. But no, they didn't celebrate birthdays apart from twenty-firsts, and everybody had a twenty-first birthday party.

KH: What about Melbourne Cup Day? Do you remember that at all, back in the thirties, was that a big thing?

JB: No, no.

KH: You didn't have a wireless so you couldn't listen to it, I suppose. That might have been a problem.

JB: That's right. Yes.

KH: What about Easter? Did you get up to anything special at Easter time or Good Friday?

JB: No. New Year's Eve we might. We done all sorts of silly things on New Year's Eve.

KH: What sort of silly things?

JB: Oh, gawd, we'd go round and lift people's gates off their hinges. Vandalism, I suppose you'd call it.

KH: What about on Empire Day? Did you get up to any tricks with crackers and things?

JB: We always had a bonfire for Empire Day.One particular one I remember, it was a, a twenty-first birthday of a girl who lived a mile or so from us, and we had a - we used to often hold a dance at my parents'. That's because they had a good big room with a good floor in it. So we put on this dance to give this girl a twenty-first birthday party and it was Empire Night. And we built a terrific bonfire and this girl, Angela, she, her mother had died when she was only a young girl. She had two little, she had a younger brother and sister. And she more or less was mother to them. So we, that was why we done the party for her, she was such a good girl. They put this birthday party on for her and we gave her a wristlet watch. We took up a collection and bought her a wristlet watch. And a chap that lived close by he was MC for the night, he made the presentation to her. And I'll never forget what he said. You wouldn't think a bloke could remember a speech after all that time.

KH: Must've been a good one.

JB: Yeah. Well, it was quite good because it was poetry. That's how I remember, I suppose. He said: "And as I clasp this bangle upon your little arm,
I know that you will cherish it and keep it safe from harm.
And as the years roll on and time flies into space,
May it bring back memories of your home and childhood place."
I always remember that.

KH: Right, right. Do you remember any particular weddings? At that time? In the thirties? Well, you had your own later on, but before that.

JB: Oh, well. My wife's younger sister was married before she was, before we were. I remember her wedding very well. It was a very quite affair in Tumut. At the home of one, the wedding was in a church, that was right. We went to the home of some of their friends in Tumut afterwards. No, weddings were mostly pretty quiet affairs.

KH: Much grog? Much alcohol?

JB: No, not at those sort of functions. No, they didn't ... At the bush dances we used to go to they were uncivilised by today's standards up to a point. I mean, today you go to a ball and everyone takes their grog in and puts it on the table, or under the table, and they get drunk and they play up, too. But, in those days you weren't allowed to take liquor into, into a hall. So you had a bottle of plonk or a bottle of rum and you planted it away round a paddock alongside a fencepost or something else. And, and of course you're drinking it neat out of the bloody bottle, and they, fights, every dance I ever went to there'd be two or three fights. And mostly it started over grog, someone pinching another bloke's bottle of grog. So, I think they're a little bit more civilised today in their drinking habits. But not otherwise.

KH: Do you remember Anzac Day being celebrated? For you or your relatives then in the thirties?

JB: No, no. They never celebrated Anzac Day in the bush. They might have marched in the town, I suppose, but I were never in the town.

KH: No. What about the Eight Hour Day? Was there any ...?

JB: No. No. I saw more of that in the latter years. I've seen marches on Eight Hour Day. I seen them up in Darwin a few year ago. A heck of a lot of people marched on Eight Hour Day.
KH: But not in the 1930's?

JB: No.

KH: Do you remember any baptisms?

JB: Well, I remember me own. Well, yes, I do. I remember a few babies being christened. It was mostly in the home. Like the parson would come out to the home of the people, the parents. I remember my wife's cousin's. They were, the mother was a Roman Catholic, the father a Church of England. And, they wanted, this lady, their next-door neighbour was a Roman Catholic, and she wanted this latest child baptised in the Roman Catholic church. But the father didn't want it so, so they got the parson to come out to their house and, bugger me, he called at the next-door neighbour's place. He got bushed and he called at this next-door neighbour's place and he said, "Is this where the little boy is to be christened?" and she thought he was being christened into her faith, of course. So that's the way how that one stands out in my memory. And the two other

brothers, the two elder brothers, they were christened at my wife's mother's place. And the two elder boys, they were under the table, and they were bloody villains of kids. And the mother's trying to keep them quiet, and she's, she's kicking them under the table to keep quiet. He said, "Don't you kick me, you old bastard." When they left the parson said, "That Mrs LeFevre's got dreadful children." He thought they belonged to her.

KH: Oh. ... Do you remember what sort of magazines or newspapers came into the household then, in the thirties? Did you get them delivered once a week?

JB: Not very many, not very many newspapers. We used to get the *Australian Journal* , That was a great, it was a story-book more than anything else, the *Australian Journal*. We didn't get any daily papers delivered. If anyone was going to Tumut they'd, into town, they'd bring one out for you. But, the local paper, which was the *Tumut Times* , it would come in the mail perhaps. People took the *Albury Banner* , it seemed to be a popular paper. And, as I say, earlier, it was the *Bulletin*. Papers like that.

KH: What about books? Was there a local library that you used by then, in the thirties?

JB: Not to my knowledge. There probably was, but ...

KH: Were there many books in the household, like in the house of your parents-in-law?

JB: Oh, yes, yes. They were always pretty well-read people. The mother came out from Scotland, my wife's mother, and, er -

KH: Were they educational books or were they novels, or were they escape stories?

JB: All sorts of books, she had, yeah. She was pretty well-versed in all sorts of literature, I think, and she even had Robbie Burns's books. And I've still got 'em. ... No, we didn't have much opportunity for reading newspapers. We didn't know very much in those days. You know, I can remember in the early Depression days, and the government when Jack Lang was having trouble, we'd hear about it on the radio and, maybe, or hear 'em talking about it, and we didn't know what to, what was going on. We were pretty ignorant, I think, in a lot of ways. We didn't, we didn't know much about what was going on.

KH: And when you went into town on a Saturday, the children went as well usually? Like adults, I mean were there many activities where..?

JB: Well, the children would go in with their parents but they'd be home again by, they'd go in on Saturday morning and they'd be home again. But I was thinking of a teenager or ... After twenty we'd go in in then in the afternoon and stay the night. But the parents and the kids they'd mostly come home again. Before dark. See, they'd be going in in a horse and sulky, they couldn't be coming home in the night with a mob of kids.

KH: Whereas you'd ride, would you?

JB: Oh, we'd go on horseback. There were less motor cars about. I can well remember, I must've been six year old before I saw a motor car. I went in to Adaminaby to the show and there was someone was running a car for hire from the town to the showground. That was the first motor car I ever saw. I wouldn't get in the damn thing. They wanted me to get in to go up town. I wouldn't get in the blasted thing. I thought it should've had a horse on it.

KH: Well, it had horse power. ... Did, this is in the thirties now, after your childhood, were the children of that time, did they belong to Guides or Scouts or that sort of thing?

JB: Well, there again. I suppose they did in the town but they didn't, they didn't in the bush.

KH: Church groups or anything like that? Did they go to Sunday school?

JB: Yes. They went to Sunday school. A lot of 'em, anyhow. The ones that were interested in that sort of thing, they attended Sunday school.

KH: And in that household, were there particular people that you were closer to than others? Like, did you get on better with your mother-in-law than with your father-in-law?

JB: Oh, I got on better with the father-in-law, I suppose, because we were always out together fishing and shooting.

KH: Even though you were considerably different in ages? You were good friends?

JB: Oh, yes, oh yes. All along before I married, we were always good mates, and up until he died he was my fishing mate and I've been bloody lost ever since. As far as good mates are concerned for fishing, you get blokes now, you go up in the hills on the river and you never know what they do or where they go or when they get back or anything else, you know. Dave was my best mate, we'd go fishing together and we'd, we didn't have to say, Now you'll be back here in such and such a time, or make arrangements like this, we'd both go off, you go that way and I'll go this way. I'd catch enough fish and I'd arrive back at our vehicle, whatever it was, Dave'd be coming over the hill. You just sort of worked together and if we were fishing on a stream, didn't have to say, Well, you fish this hole and I'll fish that one. We'd know if I was on that side of the river and he was on this side, well, it was better for him to fish it or better for me to fish it here. And, we didn't have to tell one another. But now, you go with blokes, you never know what they'll do. Where they'll go or when they'll come back.

KH: That was a nice introduction towards, you had a good relationship with your wife's father before you had a relationship with her, in a sense.

JB: That's true. That's quite true.

KH: Rather unusual.

JB: Yes.

KH: But you got on all right with her mother as well.

JB: Oh, yes. She was a wonderful, a wonderful woman. She was the greatest woman that ever graced the soil of Tumut Plains. For people in trouble, she was always there. All the neighbours, doesn't matter what sort of trouble they were in, Sally was there. And if they died, she was there, and done all the, whatever had to be done. Laid them out and .. I remember when she died, Bernie Harris who owned Wermatong Station here, said she and Dave were both working on Wermatong when they were young.That was when they first, when they married, I think. She came out here to work on Wermatong, when she came out from Scotland. And when Sally died, I remember Bernie Harris of Wermatong went to her funeral. And he took some soil from Wermatong and sprinkled it in the grave. And he said afterwards, he said, "She was the greatest lady that ever graced the soil of Tumut Plains." And that was a pretty good statement because his own mother was reared on Tumut Plains. And she was.

KH: Would she have been, sort of, the, would she have, if you like, in terms of, who had the greatest authority, would she have more than her husband? Or was it a fairly equal sort of situation?

JB: A fairly equal situation but I suppose she would have had more authority. It's quite often the case. The men are not so, the women are more capable in looking after home matters than the man, in a lot of cases.

KH: So I suppose in some ways it was the mothers who had more to do with the values and upbringing of their children?

JB: Yes. Yes, I think that's true, too. I think in the case of Dave, most of the men were pretty easy-going. They didn't care much one way or the other, what church they went to or that type of thing, you know. They were pretty broadminded and easy-going, most of the blokes.

KH: I suppose when you were a child, it was mostly your mother who told you how to behave when you went out into the public arena?

JB: Yeah, I don't know about that.

KH: Would your father reprimand you, too?

JB: Oh my word he would. Yeah, he was pretty, pretty good that way. Pretty strictly, pretty strict in your behaviour.

KH: What were the sort of things that they believed in for you? I mean, what sort of things, can you remember any thing in particular they were strong on in terms of social mores and habits?

JB: Not really. No.

KH: Were they very particular about clothing?

JB: I suppose they just taught you right from wrong and hoped you'd do, make the best of it. No, they weren't, they weren't fussy about your clothes or ...

KH: So, the late thirties were quite a peaceful time for you, weren't they? There were no major crises or anything?

JB: Yes. No, that's right. Strangely enough I can remember less about that period than I can about any of the other periods. 1939 I started carrying and I remember the date and everything and I remember and I can tell you my history of the twenty years I was carrying in Tumut. You know, every, right through. And then when I came to Talbingo. And even up until the childhood days, right up until the Depression days. I can remember that quite, quite plainly. But, those years sort of, are a little more vague for some reason or other. Just the years that you want.

KH: Well, the late thirties, yes. What about the parents of, well, the parents both on your own, the parents of your parents and the parents of your wife's parents? Did you see them very much? During that time? Like, was there much sort of getting together of the different generations?

JB: Oh, yes. They did. People went visiting in those days. A lot more than they do today. They visited their neighbours and they went around in that regard. They saw more of their neighbours than people do today. Today they only meet in the club or somewhere else but they, they went visiting one another on Sunday afternoon. Put the horse on the buggy and all the kids in the back and they'd go and visit their neighbours. And stay for supper and bunk the kids down perhaps, and maybe even stay the night in a lot of cases. They were more sociable in that regard.

KH: When you were living with your parents-in-law, did their parents live there as well? Were they looking after their parents at the time or did this come later?

JB: Oh, no. I never knew Naomi's grandparents at all. And her mother came from Scotland so naturally I never knew her grandparents from there. Her mother came out from Scotland when she was only a girl. Just recently some of Naomi's cousins came out from Scotland to visit us and stayed a month or two with us. But they want us to go over there but my daughter went over and stayed, or worked her way around, and stayed in Scotland with the cousins, Naomi's mother's people. My grandparents, I never, I never knew my grand - I knew my grandmother on my mother's side and that was the only one of my grandparents that I knew. I suppose I was only a little toddler when Mum's father died and Dad's parents lived down here at Bowler's Flat and we were living at Adaminaby and I don't ever remember seeing - I don't ever remember seeing my, or having anything to do with my grandparents. The kids today will, my grandchildren'll remember me.

KH: Yes. What about your own parents' parents? Ever have much to do with them either in the thirties?

JB: No, they weren't around.

KH: Well, what happened to them in their older age? Like, your grandparents, who looked after them?

JB: Well, both of my grandfathers died reasonably young. Dad's father got thrown out of a buggy, coming home from Tumut. And they come to the house where he lived down at Bowler's Flat; he had a whistle he used to blow and the kids run down and open the gate for him, for the two horses and buggy. And, when he went through the gate he handed the kid a bag of lollies. And something frightened the horse, and it sort of took off and the buggy tipped over at a bit of a cutting it went around and it rolled down the hill and he got killed. And, you know, he wasn't an old man by any means. And I don't think my grand - , my mother's father, he couldn't have been old because I remember my grandmother for a long, long time after that she was the only one that I remember.

KH: What about affection between people in the household? Was there much open sort of affection, say between your father-in-law and mother-in-law? Or between your mother and father?

JB: Oh, yes. Probably even more so than today, I think.

KH: Like, did they, would they give each other a hug occasionally, that you would see?

JB: Yes, yes. Oh, yes, they'd walk off arm in arm, you know, and that type of thing.

KH: Did they? Even after they'd been married for a long time.

JB: Oh, heavens, yes. I remember my mother and father walking down onto the picnic area there, --- there of a Sunday evening, you know. A lot of the old fellows were the same. I remember an old couple over there at West Blowering. God, they were sweethearts till they died.

KH: What about, I suppose there would have been, what about between brothers and sisters, like, there were nine of you?

JB: Well, that's another thing, they were closer, too, I think, and more affectionate, you know? I remember, a fellow used to come to our placeand afterwards he was saying, "Gee, they're a funny family," he said, "They just act like they're friends." Which they didn't as a rule.

KH: I'm sure there were other times, though, when you fought like cat and dog, too.

JB: Oh, of course, yeah.

KH: So, as far as your parents were concerned, they were quite open about, it wasn't necessarily that affection was something that was shown in the bedroom. It was more open than that.

JB: Oh, yes. There was no prudishness in those days.

KH: Now in terms of your relationship with girls, can you remember when you first discovered that you were different to girls? Arethere any particular things that -

JB: Oh, my gawd, in those days when we went to school, we knew what they were like. If we didn't, we'd find out.

KH: How would you find out?

JB: Well, today if a little boy pulled a little girl's pants down or something, God, the parents get to hear about it, there's hell to pay. But in those days, we used to go to school, there was one girl, we thought we'd have a look to see if she'd grown any hair. And sure enough she had. But she never told the teacher and she never told her parents. And we grew up and we were good friends, you know, and we were young and ... a lot of that sort of thing went on and no harm.

KH: But would they, would the girls pull down your pants to see what you were?

JB: Oh yeah, they'd want to have a look, too. And we were, that was in the bush, you know, I don't know but it was probably the same anywhere, but ...

KH: I suppose you didn't think much about it, you just did it. It was sort of a natural...

JB: We didn't think anything about it. Of course, it was nothing.

KH: Do you remember when you first found out about how babies were made? Or did you kind of accept fairy tales for a long time?

JB: No. I think in the, well, if I thought about it at all, I don't know what the ... I suppose most kids in the bush saw enough of that sort of thing around, and round about 'em all the time, they more or less... They learnt from the bigger kids,I think, the elder kids'd tell you all about it.

KH: Would they?

JB: Yeah.

KH: I suppose you'd see it in the cows and the bulls, too, would you?

JB: That's what I mean. You could learn from the stock around you, and you'd learn from the talk of the bigger boys and girls, going home from school, that sort of thing.

KH: Would this have been when you were six or seven, as young as that?

JB: Oh, no, no. It'd be later on when I should've been beginning to understand anyway.

KH: What, nine or ten or something?

JB: Yeah, yeah.

KH: Did you discuss, I mean, was, you know, was reproduction and topics like that, was that discussed at home at all, in any way?

JB: I don't think so. It was discussed among the kids but I don't remember it ever being talked about at home.

KH: Like, your father didn't take you to one side one day and say, now, come on, this is all about it and ...?

JB: No, no. No. I don't think he did with any of 'em. I don't think he needed to really.

KH: They just assumed that you'd pick it up somehow?

JB: Yeah, yeah, you'd learn. I remember going home from school, one girl was a bit of a larrikin. And she, she's tellin', she said to the other boys who were going, "I'll give you an f--- comin' home from school soon." She said, " But I won't let Harry, he's gettin' big," she said, "He might make me fat." That's how you learned.

KH: Allright, so you're talking about f---ing and things like that, did you learn anything about methods of birth control or, like, condoms and so on?

JB: Oh, yes. That was all, that was all they knew about. That was the only birth control they knew about.

KH: Not, there were certain parts of the month that were safer than others, and anything like that?

JB: No. We didn't know anything about that, no. I suppose the girls did, perhaps.

KH: This is sort of, what they're after here is sort of some idea of how people's, sort of, values with regard to sexuality and so on in that period, particularly in comparison to now. These other questions now are optional. If you don't want to answer them, don't. Did you, like, with regard to sexual intercourse for instance, would you have had sexual intercourse before you were married?

JB: No. Only when I was a bloody bit of a kid. That was all.

KH: When you were a kid? So very early on, like when you were what, thirteen or fourteen, or something?

JB: Yes, that's right.

KH: When you were, part of playing around as you were?

JB: Yes, yes. ... Oh, there were lots of blokes that did, no doubt. And I knew them pretty well, but, I was maybe a bit shy or backward, or, not for the want of, or not that I didn't feel that I'd want to, but it was probably that I was more shy or backwards than anything else.

KH: But you would have had the, there was the occasional time very early on, and then it wasn't until you were married.

JB: That's right.

KH: So, by then, of course, you were in your twenties, well, your late twenties. You were twenty-eight? No, yes.

JB: That's right. Twenty-eight.

KH: Twenty-eight by the time you got married. And, does that stand out strongly in your memory, that first time, like when you were just a kid? Was it a big event in your life?

JB: Oh ... no. No.

KH: Did you feel, did you tell anyone about it?

JB: Oh yeah, the kids all talked about it, they were quite open.

KH: How did they react?

JB: Oh, it was a part of everyday life, I think. They didn't, didn't feel one way or another, or much about it.

KH: I suppose they'd be going through the same sort of things at that age, I suppose.

JB: Of course. Yes.

KH: Do you remember anyone ever having a miscarriage, in the twenties or thirties?

JB: No. No.

KH: Anything like that?

JB: I suppose they did, but I wouldn't get to hear about it.

KH: What about abortions? Remember anyone, any women around who had abortions?

JB: Never remember, never remember one. No, I never ... I suppose they did, but I can remember one or two occasions when I knew that something had happened but, I was never very clear about it, you know?

KH: People didn't talk about it much.

JB: No, they didn't talk about it.

KH: The women would, of course, know more about that sort of thing, I suppose.

JB: That's how, that's how it was. And, some of the men were interested enough to know, I suppose, but it didn't concern me what other people done, you know, so much that I was never interested to that extent.

KH: What about homosexuality? Did you know of relationships between males? When did you first learn about that?

JB: I never bloody learned about it till bloody late years. I didn't, I couldn't believe it. It never happened in my bloody young day, I never experienced anyone that was homosexual. Bloody, bloody pigs and the dogs wouldn't even do it.

KH: So it wasn't until, what, until the last ten years or so that you were -

JB: That's quite right. It's in the last ten years that I've become aware of it, more or less.

KH: What about amongst females? That would be even more unusual, I suppose?

JB: Never, never heard of that, till the last - Didn't even know what the word meant.

KH: Lesbianism, for instance.

JB: Yeah, I didn't even know what the word meant until bloody four or five years ago, or ten year ago. Never heard of it. I never saw anything like it. I never saw bloody girls cuddling up to one another. I did once in, in Sydney. I went down there and there were two girls on a bloody Manly ferry and I thought, they're bloody queers bloody going on. That sort of stood out in me mind because that's the only time I ever saw a bloody girl behaving like this, cuddling one another.

KH: When was that?

JB: Oh, that was maybe thirty year ago, I suppose.

KH: Oh. After the war.

JB: Oh yes.

KH: And what did you think about male homosexuality, or any homosexuality at the time? I mean, when you -

JB: Well, I never had a think about it because I never heard of it.

KH: What about when you first heard about it? In the last fifteen years.

JB: Well, I had a bloody job to believe it. ... Well, I suppose, if they're bloody well built that way, they can't help it, I don't know.

KH: I see, so, 'cos in the thirties you would never, well, you just wouldn't have discussed it.

JB: No. People never discussed it. I never, even, when I was like, in my young days I might have heard somebody say "Oh you're a bloody queen" or something like this ...

KH: You would've had words like "queer" and "queen", I suppose.

JB: Yes, that's right. You were a queen or queer or something.

KH: What did you think about what that meant at that time? Did it just mean that they talked funny or ..?

JB: Well, I had an idea what it meant, you know. That it meant something like that. But, I sort of didn't bloody well believe it.

KH: So, it wouldn't have, even in recent, more recent times, would homosexuality and things like that be discussed very much? Like between yourself and your wife?

JB: No. No. We never discussed. You hear it every bloody day on the bloody radio or television without talking about it yourself.

KH: Do you remember anything about homosexuals being ostracised? You know, males who might have, might have been what might be a more softer sort of personality, who might have had a different tone in their voice. Do you remember them being sort of ill-treated or anything like that?

JB: No. I remember one or two blokes that were like that, you know. I didn't know why. They never grew a beard and were soft-spoken and that. I thought like long afterwards they must have been but I didn't know at the time, sort of thing. And maybe they, they kept to themselves more than they do today or something. I don't know.

KH: 'Cos, see Cecil talked, told me about, 'cos he was in the army then, in the forties this was, where, you know, there was actually a case of a guy who was virtually kicked to death. Because he was, you know, he was a declared homosexual.

JB: Oh, they were. I could believe it. I could believe it.

KH: Which seems incredible.

JB: It does. I think people are, on the whole, more tolerant today of things than they were in those days. They were pretty conservative, most people, you know. And I think today people are more tolerant to other people's behaviour, type of thing.

KH: Now, over to a bit of class and politics away from all the sexuality business. Did you own a car or did your father-in-law own a car then in the late thirties?

JB: No. No.

KH: You owned a car very much earlier on which you then sold up in Queensland, didn't you?

JB: The T-model Ford which we swapped the horse and cart for, I got in '33. As I say, it wasn't registered, I never had a driver's licence. And then I left that up there when I came home '35, I left it behind. And then a year or so later I bought this A-model Ford in Wagga. That was when I got a licence to drive it. I drove it home from Wagga. Went to Wagga and bought it and drove it home without a driver's licence or registered. But, no, the father-in-law, well, my mother and father never owned a motor car. And they never had a telephone.

KH: Did you talk much about class or was there much class consciousness in the thirties?

JB: There was a lot more class consciousness then than there is today. I mean, today there's very little class consciousness in my, in my, what I see anyhow. I mean, it doesn't matter how big a property he got, he looks on his men as equal and the men talk to him as an equal. Which they couldn't do when I was young. The boss or the manager would come out and you were expected to say "Good morning, Mr Pegler." And he'd say, "Good morning, Bridle." But he would never speak first, you know. And, if you didn't, if you didn't address him, or I think sometimes you even had to call him "Sir". "Good morning, sir." And he might grunt a bloody reply to you and he was, he was the upper class of course. But that's not the case today. People are, as I say they're, they're much more democratic today. In what I see of, anyhow.

KH: How many classes would you have considered there to be in Australia in the thirties?

JB: Two only.

KH: What, the workers and the squatters?

JB: Yes. The bosses and the slaves. Or, the workers and the squatters.

KH: And you belonged to the workers?

JB: Yeah.

KH: Did anyone belong to - We may have talked about politics before but did your father-in-law or your father indeed belong to a particular political party?

JB: Well, you didn't have to belong to a party in the sense that you do today, I don't think. Today you're a member of the ALP or you're a member of the Young Liberals or whatever party that you fancy. You're a member and you pay a yearly contribution to belong to, to that party. But, in those days they were, they belonged to a party in the sense that they believed in it and they always voted for it but they didn't, I don't think, anyone ever paid a contribution to belong to a party.

KH: No, but in terms of, I mean more in terms of allegiance. They would have had an allegiance, what, towards the Labor Party?

JB: Oh, well, both, both my families, like, my wife's father and mother and my father and mother, they, they were Labor voters all their lives. And, as I say, they belonged to the working class and, I remember my wife's mother when she came out from Scotland she went to work for Wermatong. And came election time, and she said to the manager, she said,"I don't know anything about politics. I don't know how to vote." And he said, "Well, it's always a good plan to be guided by your employer." And she thought, well... She thought, well, I, I thought it should be the other way. Though she probably came from a background in Scotland that was the same, similar, I don't know. But, no, they always gone for the Labor Party and as I say, in the case of my father and my mother's brothers and sisters, they grew up in the era when the Labor Party was first introduced.

And, as I say, Australia was the first country in the world to have a Labor Party. And, during the 1890s - 1891 and '92 - was the birth of the Labor party, up in a little town in Queensland, (?), during the strikes, the shearers' strikes - was the Depression time - and there was almost civil war. I think they called the army out to control them. They burnt down shearing sheds and they played merry hell. Much like the days of the Eureka Stockade. That was another occasion where the underdog was fighting against the -er, what do you say, the system. And Eureka Stockade, it was ninety percent of the blokes that were killed there were Irishmen. And they'd been brought up on the same sort of a thing, fighting against authority or fighting against oppression. And, the, my parents and all my aunts and uncles, they were brought up at that time and they were probably influenced a lot by, by the writings of people who wrote at that time - there were some very good men of letters who were writing at that time, apart from Henry Lawson, and Ray, and Daly and all those fellows. But there was a lot of, a lot of good Socialist writing at the time and they were probably influenced a lot by that, I don't know.

I think going back a generation further than that, they would have been more inclined towards the, towards the Conservative Party, the Tories or whatever they were, the National Party they called it. They were the National Party. And then the National Party was changed to the U.A.P, the Australian party, not Australian, the United Party. And then Bob Menzies changed it to the Liberal Party. Which was the first bloody, which was the first dishonest thing he done. And, and now they've got another National Party, which is the most conservative of the lot of them, probably, the Country Party.

KH: You didn't like Menzies very much?

JB: No, I didn't.

KH: Who was your hero in the political, sort of, spectrum of the thirties?

JB: Oh well, most Labor voters would say my hero was Ben Chifley. And John Curtin. Even the Opposition today would say, oh, he was a great man, Ben Chifley, but they didn't say it when he was in there. ... Jack Lang was my hero, too, at the time. At the time, when Jack Lang was in power, and they formed the New Guard, they were an extreme right-wing organisation in Australia, the New Guard. And when this bloke de Groot opened the Harbour Bridge, he was a member of the New Guard. And, they were a Fascist organisation. And, I remember one bloke come to me and he said, "We might have to go to war." He said, "You're a pretty handy bloke with a gun," he said. And I said, "Well, I voted for Jack Lang," I said, "And I'll bloody well vote him back in again, too." And that's how they were, that's how they were talking in those days, it was almost bloody rebellion, you know.

KH: So - Curtin , of course, was during the war, wasn't he?

JB: Curtin, yes. Bob Menzies walked out on him during the war. And Ben, -er, John Curtin formed more or less a minority government.

KH: Do you remember much about Joe Lyons?

JB: I remember him. I don't remember a great deal about him because he ratted on the Labor Party. He went over to the other side. Oh, yes, he became, he was a Labor man, you know, to begin with, Joe Lyons. And, he ratted on them and went over to the other side. What I remember about him , they used to cartoon him in the papers, as they always do, and they always drew him as a teddy bear, he had this white hair, sort of, it stuck up, and they always drew him as a teddy bear, Joe Lyons.

KH: Did you think he was doing the right thing for Australia? During these times?

JB: Well, I don't think I knew that much about it at the time. I can't remember that much about Joe Lyons really.

KH: Was there much discussion of politics in the household? Like, did you discuss it after supper or during the day?

JB: Oh, yes. Yeah, Dad was a great, he'd talk politics till the cows come home. And he was interested in it and he knew what was, he knew a lot about it. He could, he could baffle blokes with science when it come to talking politics because he knew what he was talking about, you know. But, oh, it was discussed quite a bit.

KH: Did you talk about McEwan and other politicians?

JB: Oh, yes, old Black Jack, he come a bit later I suppose. Same with Earle Page. They were good men. Old Jack McEwan was a good man. And so was old Page. I can see the good and the faults on both sides, you know. Our present Labor Government, they want to put their bloody house in order or get, get their act together. They, they all want to be bloody leaders. Now why, why in the hell everybody wants to get to the top and be the leader, I don't know. And, they don't sort of pull together better than they do. They've always had that trouble, of course, the Labor Party, the left and the right wing factions, which is caused a lot by religion, a lot by Socialism and Communism, you know. Half the time it's mud-slinging and that sort of thing, but they always, somebody wants to go Socialism, somebody wants to go to the right and so on. And they've had that faction for as long as I can remember and they probably always will.

KH: Did your father go to political rallies and things like that? Meetings and -

JB: He loved to, loved to go to a, I remember we were going to a, going to a, a speech, I think it might've been Jack Lang came to Tumut, spoke in the theatre in Tumut. And I had to, we couldn't get in the hall. I drove Dad in and we had to sit outside, we couldn't, couldn't get in the hall. But he loved, loved to hear that sort of ... if we'd had television he'd have some whale of a time with *Nationwide* and *This Day Tonight* . He'd have done some swearing, old Dad.

KH: What about, did you know of other Premiers? There was Lang, and there was also people like Stevens and Bruxner. Do you remember any of those?

JB: I remember Tubby Stevens, Tubby Stevens. I don't remember much about Bruxner, no, I remember Stevens pretty well. They called him Tubby.

KH: And on the sort of municipal level, on the local level, were you very involved in that, in terms of local elections, shire council stuff and that sort of thing?

JB: No, no. Not in this district, in this shire anyhow. That's more or less, I suppose there're always political factions in the local government and I don't think there should be. But that's where they start, they get into local government and then they go on to other politics. But there's too much politics in local government now, you know. In my opinion. And, I don't think there was so much in the earlier days. There could've been, there could've been. I mean, most of the local government then were made up of squatters and the money class.

KH: So you wouldn't have gone to any official sort of shire functions? Any offical openings of things?

JB: No, no. No, I've been more interested in politics in these last few years, you know, in the last ten, twenty years. I've even nominated blokes for shire elections, you know, this sort of thing. But, no, I've never been to many official functions around the town, shire dos.

KH: In terms of health care, do you remember the first time that you went to see a doctor?

JB: First time I went to see a doctor I can remember. It was when I fell off a horse and broke me arm. I was eight year old. Funny thing, my elder brother he done the same, fell off a horse and broke his arm eight year old and my next brother done the same thing. The three of us. Broke our arm off horseback.

KH: Must've been a jinx of some kind. Three times in a row.

JB: Yes.

KH: And you would have gone into Adaminaby or something? To have it seen to?

JB: Oh, I was down at Blowering then. But my elder brother was up in the bush, at Adaminaby. He was, he was galloping after a cow and the horse run under a limb or something and pulled him off. Broke his arm.

KH: But mostly with medical things you would've gone into Tumut?

JB: Well, when I broke my arm there, I went the rest of the way home. I didn't cry until I nearly got home and I could see it was bloody well sticking out like this and then I howled. And Dad had to put the horse and sulky and go to Tumut, it was sixteen mile... And, I stayed in the hospital until I got it right. But, you had to go to Tumut, of course. Had to go to the nearest town. In a horse and sulky it was a long way to get to very often.

KH: But the doctor wouldn't come to, you wouldn't have had a doctor coming to your farm?

JB: No. But I suppose possibly he would've if it was, if it was urgent. I think a lot of the early doctors, they'd, they'd come to Talbingo on horseback for urgent cases. In the middle of the night sometimes, oh yes.

KH: And as far as delivery of children was concerned, this was mostly done by midwives, was it? Say with your mother with the nine children?

JB: That's right. It was always done by the neighbours. Or there may be one woman that was the local midwife, more or less professionally she went round doing this type of thing and, and got paid. Not by the medical profession, I suppose, the parents would pay what they could afford or, or whatever they thought was a fair thing. But one thingI remember, Dad had to gallop up to the next-door neighbours in the middle of the night, and I was just talking about the younger brother was born. If no-one else was available the father would have to do it, I suppose. And often did.

KH: Did he? Your father did?

JB: No, no. Not that I remember. He may have on one occasion.

KH: What about the chemist? Did you have, did you have a particular chemist that looked after all the household's health care needs in Tumut? What was the role? Do you remember a chemist having much of a role in health care?

JB: I don't remember them having much of a role in it but, no more than they would've, no more than they would today. Or not as much as today, of course. They're more involved today in health care because they're agent for various medical funds or sickness funds, benefit funds.

KH: Did you have any special home remedies as far as illnesses were concerned? Like cold and - I mean, did you have to have your obligatory dose of castor oil, things like that?

JB: Oh, regular. Saturday morning was Epsom salts, whether you needed it or not. Bloody castor oil was a cure for everything. Yeah, I was talking to a bloke here recently. These blue bottles have become very valuable now. I said, "Where we used to live out at Blowering," I said, "There ought to be blue bottles about there somewhere." And, "Oh, yes," he said, "my mother was a great believer in it." He said, " I think we were better for it, too." I said, "I'm not too bloody sure about that." I don't think we were one bit better for it.

KH: Did you have any other, like, did you apply any particular herbs or, did you believe in any particular ointment?

JB: Well, Dad was a bit of a herbalist. There was a various things that he got out of the bush. Now, what we call peppercorn, you know what peppercorn is, grows up in the mountains, a bush that grows up maybe eight or ten foot high with bright red stems like a little hickory tree, and the leaves are as hot as fire? And it has a little blue berry on it at times.

KH: Yes. Yes. I've tasted them.

JB: Well, that's peppercorn. Well, Dad swore by that for curing, for colds. And he always had, he'd pull a few branches and come home, leave them hanging up and they dried. And when we got a cold he'd pull a handful of these leaves off, and put it in a cup, and put boiling water on it, brew a, brew a drink with it.

KH: Would he?

JB: Oh, yeah, bit of sugar in it. And you'd drink that and go to bed. It was hot, but you'd drink that and go to bed and you'd sweat, it was, it was a bloody good cure for a cold.

KH: What about honey in it?

JB: Bit of honey in it, bit of sugar, or whatever. But, it's better than bloody lemon and Aspros, for cure for cold, my word it is.

KH: You wouldn't use it for an inhalation? You'd drink it?

JB: Drink it. Yes. Brew it like, out of the dead leaves. Another thing that he, that he used to gather was a little pink flower, it grows about a foot high, which he called quinine weed. You'd know it but you probably don't know it by my description. You'd know it when you see it. And it was his cure for diarrhoea. And he'd do the same with that. He'd brew it. Put boiling water on it and brew it.

KH: With the peppercorn, did you use much of it to brew up a brew? Like, how much would he put in a teapot?

JB: Well, he mostly made it in a pannikin, you know, a pint pot, sort of thing. And, I suppose, a handful, a good handful of leaves, maybe a couple of dozen -

KH: Just the leaves, not the seeds?

JB: No, no, just the leaves. Probably a couple of dozen leaves'd make a good strong brew.

KH: Was it a cure for anything else apart from cold?

JB: Well, 'Acorn' snake-bite cure. Naomi's father used to gather acorn, used to gather peppercorns for old Acorn. You've heard of 'Acorn' snake-bite cure?

KH: Oh, no. No. But I've heard of it as an antiseptic, I think.

JB: Oh, yeah, they used it for all sorts of things but it was a snake-bite cure. Old August Acorn or Eichhorn. Old August Eichhorn, he lived over on the Batlow road. There's still a couple of posts standing where he lived there on the way to Batlow. And he could cure snake-bite. There was no bloody question about that. And he used to go to the show and they could bring in any bloody snake in they like, tiger snakes, anything else, he'd let 'em bite (?).

KH: Really?

JB: Yeah. And he was covered with medals, I don't know how people had given 'em to him but cures, he wouldn't accept money for cures. He could cure blood poisoning with snake-bite cure. And his remedy - after he died though, somebody took it but it was nothing like the stuff he used to make - what he used to make was black and heavy, you know. Now, it's more of a lighty colour but still good.

KH: Would he administer this on the skin or would you have to drink it or something?

JB: You'd do both. You'd drink it or you just put it on the bite.

KH: It was mostly - the main ingredient was this peppercorn thing?

JB: That was one, that was one of his ingredients anyhow because Naomi's father used to bring him in peppercorn. When he was out in the bush he'd bring 'im in bundles of peppercorn.

KH: What else might he have used?

JB; Well, I've heard that he used the young bracken fern, you know, when the bracken first comes up in the little, little coiled thing. I've heard that that was one of his ingredients.

KH: He'd boil all this up somehow and make it, distill it or something, or make a concentrated mixture.

JB: Eichhorn Snake-bite cure, still available, you can still buy it for various things. That was the only other herb that I know in the bush that they used for medicinal purposes.

KH: Did your father, did they believe any sort of poultices, anything, you know, that you wrapped onto yourself and that would draw out poisons and things like that?

JB: Oh, yes, what was that one that they used to always use for poultices? It's got a, it was a over-the-counter job, but I can't think what the hell it was now, what they called it.

KH: Well, there is a black thing, there's a black sort of substance that they used to put on boils. To draw out the poisons.

JB: Oh, yes, that's right, we used to use that too.

KH: But that's more recent, perhaps.

JB: Oh, yeah. What the hell was that plaster they used to put on you, it was for boils and things ...oh, they put all sorts of damned things on. If you cut your hand, Mother'd put pepper on it. And all sorts of home remedies they had.

KH: What about if you burnt yourself?

JB: Well, they, they'd probably do better things today than they did in those days. They used to put cream on it, you know, fresh cream, or something like that. And the greatest thing in the world for burns was just bloody cold water and the colder the better and the quicker you get it on the better. Which I do now if I burn meself. I go straight for the bloody tap and, but they never did in those days. They'd plaster it with flaming cream or something else. They weren't always right, home remedies. They even pumped kerosene on to some things.

KH: What about - was there a greater proportion of herbal, was there more home remedies than there were bought medicines?

JB: There were quite a few bought medicines too. There was bloody Mother Segal's syrup and De Witt pills and these sort of things which were stock items, you know, they more or less kept in the cupboard.

KH: Any particular ointments that had magical qualities?

JB: Oh, Rexona, Rexona and Zambuck was -

KH: Zambuck. Zambuck, yes, I've seen old tins of that.

JB: Yes, it was the, it was the standby for all abrasions and that type of thing.

KH: And I suppose the most common things at the time were colds, were they? Colds and the flu and that sort of thing? In terms of diseases?

JB: Yes. Well, as I say, a lot of, a lot of kids died in the, died in infancy. If you go into some of these outback places, you go out to Bourke and have a look in the old cemetery there. Gawd, you'll be pleased to get out of it. You'd think, well if I live to past forty I was doing pretty well here. They didn't have the doctors, especially in those out-of-the-way places, you know, they didn't have the availability of doctors or cures or things. But kids, a heck of a lot of kids died in infancy from scarlet fever, scarlatina, whatever's the difference, and diptheria, and things like that. And kids used to get, er ... what did the kids used to get? Ar, buggered if I can think , but, a lot of kids died in infancy, a lot more than do today anyhow. Things that they didn't have cures for that they can now.

A heck of a lot of kids got drowned in the Tumut River in those days. There was my, one of my aunties, and she was only twelve years of age, she and another friend of hers, they were both drowned together in the Tumut River. Reckon my grandfather dived and dived and they had to hold him down or he would've drowned himself. And, in those out-of-the-way places they died by accident a lot of the, lot of the, men anyhow. All drowned in rivers or got killed by horses, shot by a bloody bushranger -

KH: And shooting, there were accidents with rifles, too, weren't there?

JB: Oh, yeah.

KH: Getting through a fence, people shooting themselves accidentally.

JB: There were, there were a lot of, lot of accidents that way.

KH: Did you <u>really</u> have any problems with constipation? I mean, did you really need all that castor oil?

JB: No. No, it was just a bloody fad they had and they had to do it every Saturday morning. .. It was Epsom salts that was my bugbear. That was every Saturday ... No, Epsom salts was a ... They'd reckon your blood'd be out of order. A lot of people used to get boils and things in those days which you never hear of today. Why, I don't know. And they reckoned your blood was out of order, you needed medicine, you neede Epsom salts.

KH: Yes, boils aren't around very much anymore, are they?

JB: No.

KH: I mean, when we first came to Australia in the fifties, a lot of people had boils.

JB: Yes. And when I was going to school all the bloody kids had bungy eyes in the summertime from flies or something or other. You never see that now.

KH: Bungy eyes?

JB: Yeah, bunged up.

KH: What was wrong with them?

JB: We'd get fly stings, flies stinging us, or houseflies.

KH: What, infected?

JB: Infected, yeah. That must've been mainly because of hygiene or something, better hygiene now. The toilet systems we got or something else, I don't know, but a lot of kids had bungy eyes.

KH: What about ringworm and things like that?

JB: Yeah, ringworm's another thing they had. ... Sandy Blight they used to get. You know Sandy Blight, it's another eye complaint that they ... It's a bloody cruel thing they tell me, I never had it. When I was working up in Queensland, I had German measles out in the bush there. That's the sickest ever I was. The other bloke went off and left me in the camp - we were camped out in the bush - and I was that sick, when the sun went around I couldn't, I didn't move with the shade. When they come home, I'm lying out in the sun. I was too sick to move with the shade.

KH: You didn't have a doctor?

JB: No.

KH: You just waited for it to go away again?

JB: Yeah, they called it German measles, don't know why. They must have had a different type of measle. And I had the measles again when I was about, I was about nearly fifty. I was sick for a week and I didn't know what in the heck was the matter with me and next-door neighbour come over one day and we were sittin', I'm sittin' by the fire, wintertime, and he, he looked me up and he said "You've got the measles!". I was pleased, I was pleased when I knew what was wrong with me. And then a couple of year ago, would you believe it, I had the mumps.

KH: What, just now? A couple of years ago?

JB: Yes. Yes. And I think at that time I lost, I completely lost my sense of smell. Can't smell a damned thing today. Used to be one of the pleasures of life, to be able to smell things.

KH: Were there any funerals that you remember in the thirties?

JB: I remember when I was a kid going to, I was going to my Sunday school teacher's funeral. Marched all the way, about two mile and, all the kids, dressed up in their Sunday best.

KH: She would have been buried, I suppose? Mostly burials around that time?

JB: Yes. Yes. That was Adaminaby. Of, of course. That was Adaminaby, there was nothing else. But, coming home from the funeral, there were waterholes along the road and all the other bigger boys were jumping these waterholes. And I lined up to have a go at it and they said, "Oh, you better not go," they said, "you're too little." I wasn't wanting to have them tell me I was too little so I went for me life and landed in the middle of it. Got a hiding when I got home.

KH: But, I suppose in general, in terms of the elderly, they would have been generally looked after in other people's households?

JB: They would, yes. They were, there was, somebody would come and nurse them.

KH: Or they'd move in with a son or a daughter?

JB: That's right. Yeah. There were no old people's homes for anyone to go to, and they couldn't stay in hospital. They, they were mostly cared for by their family.

KH: I mean, this is still going, this continues now like, I'm amazed at the devotion for instance of Irene Harris. You know, who nursed Billy? Billy died six months ago. Incredible.

JB: Incredible. Poor little old fellow, he was crippled up with rheumatism. He only must've weighed about five stone or something. She nursed him, looked after him.

KH: He was like that for a long time, wasn't he?

JB: Oh, a long time.

KH: I think that started, he was sick in the forties.

JB: Yes, would've been.

KH: Was it the same thing?

JB: Well, of course, he still run the dairy farm there, in the forties in Tumut.

KH: But on and off I believe he was in hospital and things like that?

JB: Yes, yes. That's right. He got around on foot. Mainly rheumatism. And Jessie, his sister, she's even more crippled now than Billy. She's still living with her and, dear, she's crippled up with rheumatism. I don't know if it was the life in the snow or what the hell, why they suffered so much.

KH: But the Taylors have been in the mountains too. I mean Tom Taylor, if anyone's seen snow and cold, and he's, he's certainly not suffering from that.

JB: Tommy looked after himself a bit better than Billy has. Billy was a bit of a wild boy when he was young. Billy and Bung. Billy was wilder than Bung in his, on the grog.

KH: I think we've talked about religion a little bit. Did your parents or your parents-in-law go to church on a regular basis?

JB: Oh, my wife's mother was a good church-goer. She went to church, oh, she used to go regular, I suppose, pretty well every Sunday. And on one occasion, she met the minister and she said, and he said to her, "Mrs LeFevre, I haven't seen you at church lately." And she said, "Well, the last time I went, " she said, "In the middle of your sermon I was thinking about the Monday washing." And she said, "When that happens," she said, "I think it's about time I give it up."

KH: He'd like that, I'm sure. Did he change his tune?

JB: I don't know.

KH: Did he get out a new bible or something?

JB: No. No, and of course, Dave, Naomi's father, he never was a church man at all, he never ... Not that he - he was a very tolerant man, you know, he didn't, he was not, not bigotted in anyway, or none of them were. But, my parents, oh, they believed in religion. They sent me to Sunday school, you know, and I was a good little boy too. But, trouble was, I grew up. And I'm pretty tolerant of all religions.

KH: Oh, that's right, we talked about Jehovah's Witnesses and things before.

JB: That's right. We did speak about that. But, I mean, no religion to me is one any better than the other. They probably were a bit more bigotted in the old days, I think maybe the church leaders are more tolerant now. I got a brother-in-law who was a, his parents were Scottish, and he's, he's a hell of a good bloke but he's the most bigotted bloke I ever saw against Roman Catholicism. You know, I can hardly believe it sometimes but to me I don't care what religion they are. And Christianity's got a lot of things that it can be condemned about, too. And as far as these missionaries going in and trying to ram their religion down to people who've already got a good religion, I think they'd be just as well left alone.

KH: We talked a little bit about religion. Was there any, as a child, were there any particular things that you couldn't do on a Sunday? Like, was there a great observation of the Sabbath?

JB: Well, there would've been while my grandfather, my mother's father, was alive. As I say, he was a very strict, very strict religious man. He was a Methodist. And, of course, I was too little to remember anything about his - I didn't even, can't even remember him. Well, I can. I can just remember going down there to church on Sunday morning. But, he didn't, he didn't have any influence on, well, I don't know on the Sabbath, etc. But Mother has often spoke that he wouldn't let, he wouldn't even let the boys go fishing on Sunday. So they'd take their rods down to the creek on Saturday and plant them. Go without him knowing. And, my wife's mother, from Scotland, she said that her father was just the same. He wouldn't even let them whistle a tune on Sunday unless it was a hymn. They were very, very straight-backed old fellows some of these old ...

KH: What about sport? Were you allowed to play sport on a Sunday?

JB: Well, I was. My parents never had any objections to any, anything that happened Sunday. It was no different to any other day as far as your behaviour was concerned.

KH: Did you - I may have asked you before about parsons and priests, they didn't really feature very strongly in the family life?

JB: No. No, they didn't. I used to go to church when I was, when I was a teenager I went to church. But, they didn't have any great influence on me, I don't think.

KH: You alluded to the conflict between, that was often caused by the different religions. Was this very marked, say, in the thirties? Amongst some of the people that you knew? You know, you mentioned that people would fight when they'd been drinking for a while. Or would there be differences amongst politicians and so on? Was this often, had something to do with different beliefs?

JB: I don't think so. I don't think it had - I don't think they ever fought or rowed over religion. Not any people that I knew. They kept, they kept their religion to 'emselves pretty well. They'd fight probably or quarrel over politics, but I don't think they'd ever quarrel over religion.

KH: What about in terms of when you went up north, like, when you were up in Queensland, for instance, you would've come into contact with the aborigines. What was your impression of the aborigines at that time?

JB: Well, at that time they were no different to us. I mean, I was on drovin' trips and there'd be just as many black fellas as white fellas. And, and we treated 'em - they treated us as equals and we treated them as equals. They couldn't go in a pub, of course, in those days. But when we were in town, that was about the only, the only difference. That they weren't allowed to go into a pub and many the bottle of plonk I took out to the poor buggers, you know, from the pub. They'd give me five bob to get 'em a bottle of plonk and take it out to 'em when I was in Cunnamulla.

JB[cont.]But, they were, they were terrific good stockmen, probably the world's greatest stockmen and horsemen, the aborigines. And they worked on stations, every station, they still do. Up in that country, you know, in the Territory and North Queensland. They're still working there. In those days, you know, they couldn't've done without 'em. They were, they were the world's best stockmen and horsemen. And bushmen, of course. And, there were no discrimination, well, I suppose there was discrimination against them. But not amongst the work - not amongst the blokes they were working with.

There was one bloke called Baker Lewis that was with us on a droving trip. There were two blackfellows on the trip. And, Baker Lewis, he was the best stockman, the best rider in the gang. And he done time. After he came home and found a bloke with his missus and he shot him. And I think he done eighteen months in gaol for it. And I went up there recently to Cunnamulla. I hadn't been there for about forty-five year. And I said to someone, I said, "Is Baker Lewis still around?" I went to the one pub there where all the blacks drink now in Cunnamulla. - - - (?) and I got talking to someone and I ask 'em is Baker Lewis about. "Oh, yeah," they said, "He's still over there at Hollywood." They got a camp over the river, they call it Hollywood. Still going.

KH: What about with regards Japanese? Was there much consciousness of the Yellow Hordes? Or the Chinese and the Japanese? In the thirties?

JB: Well, of course, my old grandparents, and of course they were pretty conservative old folks, and they were always talking about how the yellow hordes were going to come down and gobble us up. This has been going on now for time immemorial. Like, they built that thing in the middle of Sydney Harbour there to repel the Russians way back about a hundred years or more ago.

KH: Fort Denison?

JB: Fort Denison, yes. And this is the sort of a thing that they, they stir it up every now and again just for political reasons. They'll, they'll bring up the, the red bogey again. That the Russians have got to come down and gobble us all up again.

KH: But did you believe in that red bogey and the yellow hordes in the thirties?

JB: Well, I wouldn't have enough bloody sense to know, I suppose ... But, I didn't believe in it, no. Religious orders are a lot to blame, more to blame for that than anything else. There was people came here when I had the caravan park and they were some sort of rare sort of religion they called Philadelphians or some damn thing like that. Christadelphians, I think. And they were mad on bloody religion. This woman, she used to give me literature to read and, according to the Book of Matthew or Mark or something, that these people from the north were going to come down. And they interpret that as being the Russians, see, the people from the north. And what it was in the Bible. I used to just take this stuff just to sort of, for peace sakes. Finally she got that bloody much I had to tell her off and you know, that I think it's just a lot of Communist, anti-Communist propaganda you're feeding me. And she admitted that that was right. So I think, you know, that religion was a lot, a lot to blame.

KH: Behind these feelings in the thirties, too?

JB: Yeah.

KH: Would you, would there have been much discussion, in the thirties, about that sort of thing, about the possibility that some of these might come to Australia? Some of these groups?

JB: Well, I think there was quite a bit of feeling, maybe, in some of the older folks that really believed that that would, would happen. You know?

KH: What about the Jews? Was there any - What about the Jews? Was there any concern?

JB: I don't think there was any -

KH: Mainly for the yellow hordes and the red Russians was it?

JB: That was all, yes. It was the Russians and the Chinamen that were ... And the most peaceful people on earth, the Chinamen that came to Australia here, and the best citizens, you know, that you could wish for. And the most honest bloody men in the world. But, they still, well, they weren't Communists at that time, they were just, you know, just an idea that they had, that they were, that they were gonna run out of land, they'd want to come down and take us over.

KH: What about Greeks? Or Italians?

JB: No, we never had much to do with Italians. The Greeks were, they were mainly only in cafes in, in every little country town was a Greek cafe. But, no, there was no, there were no ill feelings against, against any of those minority groups that I can remember anyhow. The early settlers that came here, in the very early days, like the Germans came and settled Adelaide, and various other places. Even Holbrook here was called Germanton. And that was changed during the First World War. But there were no better citizens in the country than the Germans that came here as settlers in the early days. But then they were all good, like the Dutch or Swedes, or whatever they were, they were all bloody good settlers. And good workers and honest. And there were no ill-feeling against any minority groups in the bush, that I can remember anyhow.

And when I had the caravan park here - in 1966 I started the caravan park - and I had thirty-five family living here for a good many years while this dam/power station project was going on. And I had just about nearly every nationality you could think of in the caravan park here. Even Chinese, and Japanese, and a lot of Irishmen, Yugoslavs, and Germans, and Italians, and just all the folks that were working on the dam. And there was never a moment's trouble with any of them. And I never had any ... They paid their rent regular, every fortnight, their rent for the caravan park. And then they all were budgetting - they were living in caravans and they were all sort of saving up. They didn't hope to be living in caravans all their life I suppose.

And, if they were a bit short, they'd come and say, "Well, you know, I'm a bit short of money this, and can I leave it go?" And they'd pay you next time, sort of thing. They were always straightforward about it, especially the Irishmen. Yeah, they'd come and tell you straight away. But, there was never any trouble - there was a little bit of friction in the Yugoslavs, between the Serbians and the Croatians, as there still are in places, I suppose. But they never ever - they might say to me, "Oh, she no good that one, you know" or something like this, some of the women might say. But, they never had a cross word, they didn't talk to one another but they didn't cause any trouble.

KH: What about the White Australia policy back in the thirties?

JB: Yes, well a lot, a lot of good blokes too, like maybe even my dad was probably a White Australia Policy man. And Henry Lawson was a , as I say, I'm a Lawsonian by religion, but Henry Lawson was a racist as far as that goes, you know. He believed in the White Australia policy.

KH: Did he?

JB: Oh, my word.

KH: He wouldn't like what's happening now.

JB: No, he wouldn't've. And, you know, he was against the Chinamen. He even wrote poetry about foisting out the Chow and this type of thing.

KH: Do you think the White Australia policy was successful?

JB: Was it successful? Well ...

KH: At the time?

JB: At the time, yes. But, it, you couldn't, you couldn't keep Australia, well, I don't know how in the hell you could, maybe it would've been better if they had've, but, I don't know.

KH: Did you like the policy then? I mean, in the thirties? If you thought about it?

JB: I never thought that much about it, I suppose.

KH: I mean, the idea of, you know, keeping Australia just for a particular type of person when there were thousands or millions of Asians who could have a higher standard of living if they were allowed into Australia.

JB: Yes, that's right. It couldn't, it's not right. But, it probably would've been right for the, for people that lived here, I suppose. For the white people who wanted it that way, it might have worked. But I don't think it was the right policy. Britain's got all sorts of troubles now by, and mainly through her own fault, for colonising these places in the first place. And now they're British subjects and they're coming home to live, and she's overrun with 'em, you know.

KH: Yes. So was there much discussion at the time of refugees coming from other parts of the world to Australia? Would you remember much consciousness about that sort of thing?

JB: I don't remember any refugees coming to Australia. Only refugees, I never heard of refugees coming to Australia until after, after we'd made a mess of bloody Vietnam.

KH: Oh, well, you would've talked about it, I suppose, after the war. I mean, there were all the migrants who came in the late forties, early fifties.

JB: Yes, that'd be all. But before that I never heard of refugees. The 'refos' they called 'em in the press.

KH: Yes, yes. Do you remember the sesquicentenary? The 150 year celebration in 1938? When European history was 150 years old in Australia. Were there any celebrations in Tumut?

JB: No. I don't. No. Only centenaries I remember is the Tumut centenary and the Tumut sesquicentenary. That was, that dates from Hume and Hovell. 1824, see. And in 1924 Tumut had a, had a terrific celebration for the centenary of Tumut. When I was up in Cunnamulla they had a, had a week's celebration in Cunnamulla, centennial celebrations. Buck jump shows and rodeos and balls and dances and God knows what-all. I was real mates with Lance Skeerthorp there at the rodeo in Cunnamulla. But, and then, they had a sesquicentenary in Tumut. Just a few year ago. That'd be, er, what year would that be?

KH: Well, if it was 1824, 150, 1974.

JB: '74. Yeah, they had sesquicentenary celebrations in Tumut in '74. I don't remember any national centenary celebrations.

KH: What about the Aboriginal Day of Mourning? Which coincided wih that.

JB: Yeah, no, I don't remember anything about that. Not, not here, anyhow. I don't remember.
KH: Would the most important city as far as you were concerned have been Sydney? You know, within the Australian context?

JB: It would've been. For sure.

KH: And would New South - which state would have been the most important as far as Australia was concerned?

JB: New South Wales would have been as far as I was concerned -

KH: Not Queensland or Victoria or - ?

JB: No. I didn't, I didn't know anything about 'em. I'd never been there. Well, I had in the, in the thirties of course, I'd been to Queensland, and, but I've never been to Melbourne yet!

KH: Is that right?

JB: Yeah! I've been to most of Australia but I've never been to Melbourne.

KH: But Brisbane was your first city wasn't it?

JB: It was Brisbane. I've been to Darwin, I've been to Perth, and I've been to Adelaide but I've never been to Melbourne. And I've no ambition to go there much now. I would like to go to Tasmania and I'd nearly have to go through Melbourne to do that I suppose.

KH: Have you been overseas at all?

JB: I've been to New Zealand. That's all I've been overseas.

KH: What about other members of the - ? Has your wife been ? Well, she would've gone to New Zealand, wouldn't she?

JB: No. She never, she never been overseas. My daughters have been, oh, they've been for holidays to Fiji, and New Guinea and places, and my younger daughter went home to Scotland. She went to Britain. She, she was a nurse too, and she worked as a nurse around England. Then up to Scotland and see the family. And then she decided to come home and she wrote and asked me if I could send her a hundred dollars. She said, "I could easily earn it but it's not much point me sitting in the one place here to earn a hundred dollars, you know, to come home." So I sent her the hundred dollar and she paid it back to me after she came home. Started work again.

KH: Back in the thirties, you wouldn't, it would've been very unusual, wouldn't it, for anyone to have gone overseas?

JB: Yes. True, for sure. Very unusual. Yes, I often wonder how they did. How Miles Franklin went over there. And this New Australia. Remember they went over to South America and started a new Australia? And that happened, old Jack Lang was a young fella. Jack Lang and Henry Lawson were brothers-in-law, I don't whether you knew that or not.

KH: Were they?

JB: Yeah.

KH: Brothers-in-law?

JB: Yeah. Yeah. And, Rose Scott and the women that were fighting for women's rights. And, Mary Gilmore was one that went to Paraguay, or Uruguay was it? Wherever they went to.

KH: Yes. I can't remember it. I've read about it but I ...

JB: And they reckon it was, they was forming, they were forming a sort of a little Communist state there, actually, among 'emselves. Socialist, socialist state in South America. I don't know how they acquired the land or anything but they ... And it worked for a long time and I suppose then they started, some of 'em wanted to become capitalists or somebody else wanted to ... But if you go back to that same place today, they say, they say that you almost think you're back in Australia. They still, the ones that stayed there, you know.

KH: But Miles Franklin would've been the closest to you that went overseas. Would that be right as far as a relative was concerned?

JB: She's the only one that I can remember and I didn't know her. I read her but I didn't know her. No, I can't remember any of my uncles or aunts, or aunty - my three brothers, as I say, went over there in the war. But I can't ever remember any of 'em travelling overseas.

KH: What do you think were the most important aspects of Australia in the late 1930s? What were the sort of outstanding features about Australia? Like, did you think it was a lucky country then?

JB: Oh yeah, I thought it was the only country, I suppose. I was always fiercely Australian as far as love of country's concerned. I suppose I, you know, I loved every bloody rocky knob and every dry gully, and every bit of it. But, of course, I wasn't fiercely nationalistic as far as being patriotic's concerned, I suppose. But I still thought it was the only country in the world. And I don't know what I thought about its future but I ...

KH: Do you think it was freer then? Than it is now? Like, did people have more options then in the thirties than they do now?

JB: Well, I think it was freer but I just don't know in what sense I would think it was.

KH: You had this fantastic opportunity of course, after '38 when you earnt enough money in one year to be able to build your own house.

JB: Yes. Yes.

KH: And that's pretty unheard of now.

JB: Yes. No, I thought it, I thought it had a wonderful future. I'm not so sure now. I don't think anyone, I don't think anyone can cure our social ills today. Government-wise. I don't know whatever government gets in I don't think they can, I don't think they can, er, society's sort of gone bad, I think. I don't know whether anyone could cure the ills -

KH: You think it's too complex now, do you?

JB: Well people on the, well, I suppose there's not much difference in their behaviour. But they don't work like they did. They have different ideas of pleasure to what they did in those days. There's not the bloody homeliness of our people and, er, anyway that's too deep a bloody subject.

KH: What about, what were your thoughts, would you remember what your idea of a typical Australian male might have been in the thirties? What were the characteristics of a typical Australian male?

JB: Oh, well, yeah. Yeah. Well, I suppose Paul Hogan'd be -

KH: Ah! He wasn't here then!

JB: No. I suppose that was my idea of a typical Australian male.

KH: Someone macho? Muscular?

JB: Oh, well, an outdoors, you know, an outdoors man was my sort of a, what I'd say ideal, you know ..

KH: Bit of, got on the grog occasionally?

JB: Yes, yes. And, er, bush, bush type of a bloke, I suppose, was what I'd ... Never thought of, thought of 'em, you know, the city, city bushman or city bloke.

KH: Would you have considered yourself that sort of Australian male?

JB: Oh, well, I think that the other blokes, I think, would've fitted it better than me, my idea of it. People lacked the opportunity, possibly, you know. I didn't play a lot of sport because I was always too flamin' busy doin' workin' or doin' something else. Not that I, not that I thought sport was a typical Australianness, I suppose, but, no, I never got an opportunity to be what I, not that I'd like to do.

KH: What would you have needed to have been more that sort of person?

JB: Well, good question, but -

KH: What would you have done, I mean?

JB: I don't think I was cut out to do, to do the work that I did do. More or less fate or circumstances or, that I got embroiled in the type of life that I did do. I think I was cut out for something different but I don't know what it was.

KH: What were your secret aspirations, if you had - ?

JB: Well, I should have been more bloody exploring the bush or something, I'm the greatest bloody bushman in the country as far as, there's not a damned thing in the bush that I don't know about, trees and shrubs and - I was cut out for something different to what I got involved with and I, I should've been taking these guided tours around Australia or something like that.

KH: What about your idea of a typical Australian female? What sort of characteristics did she have?

JB: Gawd, they're hard questions unless you've got time to think about, I suppose.

KH: Well, what sort of, like, let me prompt you. Would it be a submissive woman or a woman in your own head?

JB: No. Not a submissive woman by any means. I think they were bloody kept under too much as it was. I think the, the men wanted to rule too much. I don't think how the women were quite submissive enough but ...

KH: Was it someone who forgave a lot or was it someone who could also sort of be quite firm?

JB: Oh, I think, I believe, you know, that they would need to be firm in their, women should stick up for their beliefs and, probably more so than they did.

KH: It might be a bit hard to think of this now. We've had a long day, haven't we?

JB: Mmm, yes, Quite, yeah.

KH: It's a bit hard on the spur of the moment. But there would've been some, perhaps it's easier to approach it from, there would've been some characteristics that Australian males and females had that you didn't like. Would they be easier to identify? Like, perhaps the boozing? I mean, would there be, you talked about Hogan, there are aspects of that sort of Australian male. You like all those aspects?

JB: I suppose, suppose that carries it a bit too far but, I don't know.

KH: Bit hard. Right. Which country did you think was the most important and powerful in the world? At that time, in the 1930s? Was it America or Great Britain?

JB: Well, no, Great Britain I think.

KH: Not Russia?

JB: No. No.

KH: Were you a royalist? Did you believe in the Royal Family?

JB: Well, I did. I still, I still, I'm not an anti-royalist now. I, I think the monarchy is a, has got a role to play and I'm not anti-royal in any, although I'm not, I wouldn't say I was a strict royalist either, you know. Wouldn't worry me if we became a republic, put it that way.

KH: What about the relationship between Australia and England in the thirties?

JB: Well, I think we were, we were tied too much to Mother England's bloody skirts, you know, from earliest times. We, when we went to the Boer War, in my opinion we should, we had no right to be in there fightin' them poor bloody old Boers. We'd only be going because Mother England, the diamond mines or something else, she wanted a say in in there. Australia, we had no right fighting the poor bloody old Boers.

KH: You might feel the same about Gallipoli, I suppose? Fighting the Turks?

JB: Yes, I do. Even in the last World War, Australia has been involved in about eleven wars and probably the only one that was ever justified was when the Japanese were actually bombing, bombing Darwin, bombing us. But, we went over and fought the poor bloody old Maoris and the Sudan war and the Crimean war and lots of others. And we had no right ever being in any, in any of 'em. And ... "Man's inhumanity to man," as Robbie Burns said, "makes countless thousands mourn." So, they'd, they'd go to war over bloody pride and prejudice and, and greed and power and all sorts of things, but, if they'd only try and see the other bloke's point of view sometimes, it'd avoid a hell of a lot of trouble.

KH: Did you really feel that Australia was threatened by other countries in the 1930s?

JB: I never felt they were threatened by any country until the Japanese were, were on the, on the warpath here and why they came I just don't know the background or what brought on these, these wars, you know. But certainly we were, we were threatened by, by Japan at that time. But, the First World War for instance, I don't think Australia would've been any worse off or maybe any different if we'd had lost that bloody war. If Germany had conquered Australia. I don't think we'd've been any worse off or, or I doubt if we'd been any different. It was all a bloody waste of human life. Cream of Australian bloody manhood. Died in thousands and thousands.

KH: Did you try to enlist or anything in the Second World War?

JB: I did. Well, I didn't, I got a call-up actually and I was prepared to go. But I was in the - I was carrying and I, I started carrying in April '39 and the war broke out six months later. And because I was in a, in a job where I was carting cream, I had cream-run six days a week from Blowering, Tumut Plains, Lacmalac, carting cream to the Tumut butter factory. And the old, the factory manager sort of didn't want me to go because they'd already lost one or two men that'd been cream-carters and I was in the sort of job where -

KH: So it was considered an essential service, I suppose?

JB: Yes, that was right.

KH: But if you'd had your own way, would you have been a pacifist?

JB: I would have been a pacifist, yes. But, I probably would've went all the same. I mean, my three brothers had gone away, they were probably pacifists too. But they went because, not because they were patriotic or, I suppose they didn't want to know, because they didn't know what it was, the hell it was all about, I suppose. I quite likely would've went had I been - when the brothers went - had I not been in the position I was. And, er, but I would've been a pacifist.

KH: I think we might finish on that note.

JB: Very well.

KH: I think that might do, eh?

JB: Yep, that'll do me.