

This is a conversation including Leo and Mrs Crowe and Graham Scully, held on 7 October 1989.

GS: I might show you where you think your hut is now. Did you go through Bugtown and past Robinson's Hut?

LC: Yes. Robinsons lived there, didn't they. They had a hut at Bugtown, didn't they? Is it still there? It's not a hut. It was a big house.

GS: What was it built of?

LC: Oh I don't know. Weatherboard I think.

GS: So the track comes up the hill to Robinson's Hut, and then just went over past - this one says New Hut, but we think it's Mackey's - did you remember going past Mackey's?

LC: No. there was no hut between Bugtown and where we had ours.

GS: Now we think Crowe's is halfway between Gavel's and Schofields.

LC: That would be right.

GS: Good. So Gavel's is about a mile south, and Schofields is about a mile north.

LC: I've never been to where Schofields had the hut. But I knew that they had a lease that joined ours. There was the dingo fence between our lease and Schofield's. That was put there might have been 100 years ago. The dingos were bad up there.

GS: I took a photograph of the hut and that. You can see that it's fibro.

LC: There wouldn't be much of it left, would there?

GS: No. You can see the frame and it had wooden stumps. When I get that photo developed I can give you a couple of copies. And you had some real big yards up there that Ernie Brayshaw showed me. They called them Crowe's yards.

LC: Yes, they were right in the corner of the lease. You hadn't been over there. Where the hut was.

GS: Yes. According to Ernie, it's up this way, towards Big Bugtown Hill.

LC: Yes, that's right. That's where Clancy keeps his lease there somewhere. I didn't know where it was. Oh yes, I don't know who built the yards there. Robinsons from Gundagai had it for years and years, as far as I know. If I remember right I think that's who it was. Those people must have built the yards there. They were big yards too. We used to use them to drench sheep and the races.

GS: The Robinson yards?

LC: Well, I don't know whether they were, but I say Robinsons built them there, because they had that lease there for years.

GS: How many sheep did you and your dad put in those yards?

LC: We used to muster them all in one mob. The four brothers and ... We were only allowed to take up 1500. That was the quota. On 1800 acres you could run 2 or 3 thousand on it, but they just wouldn't let you have it.

GS: So you only took 1500 up.

LC: Oh we could put 1500 or more in the yard at once. the yard would hold thousands.

GS: So Robinson had the yard before you.

LC: Yes, as far as I know. I might be wrong, but most of those blocks people were out of the district, Gundagai or Wagga way. That's Circuits Hut there, did you see it?

GS: Yes, we had a look at it. It's a house, isn't it.

LC: Yes. They used to go up there, I don't know who they were or where they came from, they used to go up there and live there in the summertime. They had the stock there.

GS: It looks as if it has about 4 bedrooms.

LC: Yes, a big place.

GS: Did you hear that story about Sane Smith's son hanging himself?

Mrs C: Yes, we knew him well because they were our nextdoor neighbours.

LC: I didn't like to mention it to you. Yes, he hanged himself there where those yards were. High posts joined together by wire at the top. He rode his horse in underneath that, put the rope around his neck and tied it up and kicked his horse from under him.

Mrs C: He and his father could never agree, because his father was a bit of a rogue.

GS: Yes, Ernie Brayshaw said his father wasn't a real nice bloke.

LC: He had hundreds of head of cattle and he used to run them up there on the snow leases. That's how he used to run his stock.

Mrs C: They were our nextdoor neighbours when we lived in Adaminaby, long before I got married. And I used to work for Mrs Smith. We were only a stone's throw away. Her family and us, we all grew up together. Anyhow, he and his father couldn't agree, and he'd go out, Harold would go out to Bugtown. (Harold was the boy.) He's never have anything to eat if his father was in the house. And he used to have meals at our place. He'd just have a shower when he came home and then he'd come down to our place.

LC: No, he used to ... I suppose he'd knock them about a bit, but sending those young fellows, the kids, on their own, anything could have happened to them. Out there in that scrub. But he must have got sick of it and that's

what he did.

Mrs C: He'd just got the bedroom in. But he was a terribly nice chap. It was sad. We were upset when it happened, for the simple reason that he grew up with my brothers.

GS: And how old was Harold when he killed himself?

LC: Oh round about 20, I'd reckon. He used to be a great mate of mine. We used to go and have a drink together.

GS: Who found him?

LC: I don't know. Someone was going through. I don't think he was there long. There were always people going through there. People who had their blocks way out there. I don't know how many different leases there were.

GS: And those yards were out on the plain. You could see them for miles.

LC: They were in the corner of our block. They used to go through this gate, someone must have been going through and found him.

GS: Those big wooden posts with the wires are still there. They've fallen over on the ground.

Mrs C: Would they use those for killing stock?

(Loud noise, tape interrupted)

GS: And up the middle of the yards is a big sheep race.

LC: Yes. That's where we used to drench all the sheep. We got up there, <sup>(we'd leave home</sup> ~~R~~ early in the morning, two or three would ride up, others would go in the car, muster the sheep. By the time we got there they'd have them in the yard.

GS: Why were your yards so far away from your hut?

LC: I don't know, unless ..

GS: Unless they were there already.

LC: It might have been a community yard. Everyone I think used to go there. Neighbours, the Joyners, used to drench their sheep there. That was before we got it. They were big yards. You didn't find the old yard that Dad built there where they used to yard the sheep years ago? They used to yard their sheep every night from dingos.

GS: Oh, one of the old breaks.

LC: the middle of our block.

GS: No, we didn't find that one.

LC: There's nothing there. It all fell down when we were there. All the old posts and rails and things fell down and rotted.

GS: That was in the middle of your block, was it?

LC: Yes, near the track as you went through to Circuits Hut. I don't know who decided to build the dingo-proof fence.

GS: Yes, we saw the dingo-proof fence.

LC: They reckon the dingo could have got over it. I don't know anything

about it, but they reckon the dingo won't try to get over the fence, but he'll come to a fence like that and he'll follow it right along, go to the end of it.

GS: Did you ever have to shoot dingos up there?

LC: No, we were never troubled with them.

Mrs C: Did you ever hear about them getting the dingo out Eucumbene way, not long ago?

GS: I did. Morris Fletcher shot it. Mrs Fletcher showed me. The skin's nailed up on the wall. That was only last week.

LC: It was about a month ago it was shot.

Mrs C: Well there was a dingo in a block belonging to our son.

LC: It killed a hog and had a feed.

Mrs C: They used to get out late at night or early in the morning to try to get it. And Gordon said he saw it. But there was only him and Harley Hedger. They used to go together. And they were down there. But then when it got known that the dingo was around, it was in a property belonging to John King, just out along the Jindabyne Road. It went right through from where Gordon had his block, right through the paddocks and went up that way.

LC: I asked Gordon last week if he'd had any more trouble with it, but he said someone's still getting their lambs killed, so there must be another one there.

LC: This dingo-proof fence, a chap up there one time, and he said he tried. He put his dog over the fence, just to see, and he rode away. and in no time the dog was over the fence following him. So he said dingos could have got over it without any trouble. But they wouldn't. they'd go up there and follow it along.

GS: Well now we've found on the map where it is, I must send you a photocopy of the map so that you can show your son. He might like to go up there one day.

Mrs C: Oh yes, he's always asking about different things. He was so interested from the start .

GS: He could have a holiday up here and do a bit of bushwalking. It wouldn't take long to walk there. From this road, this is the Tantangara Road to Tantangara Dam off the Snowy Mountains Highway, he could drive up here, about 4 kilometres, it's a couple of kilometres from the road. Or he could follow this firetrail, past Gavels, the trail goes quite close to Crowe's and Schofields.

LC: Beautiful country up there, isn't it. In the best season it would be white with clover.

GS: Was clover planted there?

LC: No, I suppose it was carried in by stock years ago. In a good season

about Kiandra would be white there with white clover.

GS: There were a lot of white paper daisies too, weren't there.

What would be nice to track down now would be one of the old maps that showed your land, showed the boundaries of it.

LC: Yes, I had the map myself, when we put in for it. I don't know what became of it. Moving about ... mislaid somewhere.

GS: Your land wasn't freehold, or was it?

LC: No I don't think any of it was freehold, was it? It might have been. Circuits was.

GS: Brayshaws was freehold, more or less. But you and your dad, it was snowlease. On the map that you had, did it have Crowe's name?

LC: No, this was an old map.

GS: Do you remember the name that it had on that lease?

LC: No. Father got it somewhere, I don't know. PP Board or somewhere.

We used to call that block we had here the SheepStation. It was known as the SheepStation. It was really the best block up there I think. It was the closest block to Adamin aby. When we used to go up there there used to be an old couple lived up there at the hut at Bugtown. We used to call in there. I forget their names. They originally came from Gundagai, they used to go up there looking after stock. They put in all summer. We'd call in and have a cup of tea.

GS: And that would be the last hut before you'd get onto your land.

LC: Once you left the hut you had to go up that big hill.

GS: Yes, you just leave the hut and there's about 100 or 200 yards cleared area, and then you get into the trees.

LC: Yes, there was a gate just up from the hut, or the house.

GS: Did Tommy Taylor used to meet you at the gate and count the sheep in?

LC: I don't know whether it might have been Tommy Taylor that was there living there. I forget. Tom and Molly Taylor. I don't know if they were living in the hut.

GS: No, I don't think it was the Taylors.

LC: Tom and Mrs Taylor put in nearly all their lives up at Curango. they're still up there I think.

GS: No, they've moved to Tumut.

Mrs C: She's having terrible trouble with her eyesight. She's had operations on her eyes. I used to see a lot of her, because she had a sister in the hospital, when I used to be there. Her sister came from Katoomba. Anyhow, she broke her leg. She was in there for treatment, and she got gangrene. They had to take one leg off. This all happened while I was in there.

And then just after I came out of hospital she had to have the other off.

That was Molley's sister. She used to be a lot down this way, but then, she went

the other way because she had sons. They lived in Tumut.

GS: Yes, a lot of Taylors are in Tumut now. There was one other hut I wanted to ask you about and that was Mackay's Hut. Do you remember that?

LC: No I don't. That's the only hut and then there was Ossie Kennedy had a hut. It was down on the Murrumbidgee River, miles through there. We went past Circuits Hut to get up there. And Harry Shandley, they had a block up there. They all had huts on them.

GS: Yes. On the map there's one called New Hut, and apparently it was called New Hut because it was made of new iron and all that. Ernie Brayshaw says it was built by the Mackays. You mightn't have known it because it was built after the 1940s. I think it was built in the 1950s and you didn't go up there after ..

LC: We were there for six years. We did have a block at what they called Little Mungar. It was further, way down. We used to go in off the Adaminaby side, on a road up Providence. Turn off there and go into it. That creek, Mungar Creek, used to run down what they call the Little Mungar, where we had the sheep.

GS: And you used to get into it from the Adaminaby Road, did you?

LC: Yes, we used to get in through Providence.

GS: So would you take the sheep up the high way? Yes. And you'd leave from Providence.

LC: We'd turn in to the right from Providence.

GS: So was it south of your lease here?

LC: But we only had that for one year because of the damn dingo up there. We didn't know he was there. We took the stock up, and went to bring them home and half of them were killed.

END OF RECORDING