Buster Day

BUSTER DAY
Interviewed by Klaus Hueneke in Tumut.
14 May 1985

KH: I was going to start with when you were born, that's an obvious place to start.

BD: Well, I don't remember much about that. It was 1912. We were living at the caves at the time. I was born here in Tumut, on the corner of Richmond and Russell Streets. The home was still there where the nurses - what do you call it, baby shop be. From then on I don't remember much more, like being a bit young. I can remember a few things. I can remember my uncle - everybody seeing him off when he had to go to the First World War, that was about 1914 or 15 when the first ones went away. I can just remember him dressed up in his riding gear, in the Light Horse. Then I can remember, you know, never seeing him any more. Like when he came home he was a stranger. I was a bit young for remembering those sort of things but I knew he was still at the caves then.

KH: You were?

BD: Yes. We lived at Yarrangobilly, there was a home there, that's where my grandfather lived.

KH: Yarrangobilly village?

BD: Yarrangobilly village. He took the caves on to look after it, about 1904.

KH: What was your father's name?

BD: George Day. And my grandfather was Walter Hoad. He was the one that went to the caves first. And we seemed to live between the two places.

KH: So your father married a Hoad?

BD: My father married a Hoad, yes.

KH: What was her name?

BD: Gertrude Isabel Hoad.

KH: What was she known as?

BD: Gert, Gertrude, yes. There was a big family, eight girls and two boys.

KH: In your father's - - -

BD: No, in my mother's family, in the Hoads.

KH: That's why there's so many still around, I believe.

BD: Yes. There's two Hoads in Tumut here now. The oldest boy's son's, Leo. He was caretaker of the caves until he was too old to probably go into 'em, you know. I think it was around - I can't tell you properly but it was well into the '50s when he give up.

KH: So there's two Leo Hoads?

BD: Leo Hoad, and then his son went in, Bruce, and he become caretaker for a few years. There wasn't much for young fellows around the caves. He wanted to get away from there I think and he came down here to Tumut and they put somebody else on then, as a caretaker, a man by the name of Butler. And as long as I was there he was there, and after. I left there in 1956, June.

KH: Were you the second or the third child in your family?

BD: I was the third boy, Three boys and I'm the youngest.

KH: Is George the oldest?

BD: No, I think George would be 77 now and I've got a brother would be 79 now, my oldest brother, Greg.

KH: Greg Day. Did he only die a few years ago?

BD: He hasn't died.

KH: Oh, he hasn't died.

BD: No, he's half way between here and Wagga, on the Murrumbidgee side, you see. Greg they call him.

KH: Is he married to a lady who was a Pattinson?

BD: Yes, Edie Pattinson. Their father was a storekeeper in - Edie's father a storekeeper in Kiandra, in the gold-digging days.

KH: There was a Kath too, wasn't there?

BD: Yes. She married a policeman that came there by the name of Schumach. Then there was Jim Pattinson, he lives in Canberra now.

KH: Yes, I've interviewed Jim. But Kath, what happened to her?

BD: Well, Kath died about two years ago. She got cancer - I think in the lungs or throat, I don't know which. But she died.

KH: Where did she go and live?

BD: They had to go wherever a policeman goes, but she ended up in Sydney, I don't know what suburb it was, just out of Sydney. But he was very sick for a long time. He became an inspector and I think he had to retire before he was retiring age, you see. I don't know exactly what was wrong with him.

KH: So there was Greg, then there was George, then there's you.

BD: Me, and then I've got a sister. I've got a sister Joan. She's a Mrs Thompson. She lives in Sydney, Pennant Hills, now, at the moment. She's nine years younger than me. That's the family.

KH: So your mother had children over quite a long period, well spaced out?

BD: Well, she had three, us three boys, and then there was nine years between - I'm the youngest boy and there was nine years between us and my sister.

KH: So she had quite a handful, didn't she, when she was little? With three strapping brothers around.

BD: You see we lived at the hills, there was no school. The two older boys, they were sent to Adelong to a friend of my mums, who boarded them there. They put in their school time there. Things were pretty tough those days. I didn't get to school until I was 11, I was sent down here, and I went to one of my father's brother's places and they boarded us.

KH: You lived at the village this time?

BD: And the caves. Home was wherever you - whichever place come night on, see. There was a post office at Yarrangobilly and an older sister to my mother, she took that on for the telephone business and that was home for any part of the family. You see, probably my father'd be up there doing work for old Mr Hoad, grandfather, and then probably be down at the caves. But mum - when he took the caves on, mum went there in 1904 with him and they stayed there until - I can't be sure whether it was '20, I know I was at the caves in 1923. I should remember, but I think it was 1920 or '21 that the government decided to run it themselves. It didn't work out. Then they put it up for tender and a chap got it and it didn't work out for him. They put it up for tender again and my grandfather and my mother got it in partnerships then. Then he retired after a while and went to Cootamundra to live on retirement and my mother stayed there until 1955 and she decided to get out and have a bit of a spell. Then in November 1955 she didn't feel very well and we took her down to Sydney and she seen a doctor there and she was operated on a fortnight after for cancer. It was just a bit too far advanced and she died in 1956 in June.

KH: How old was she?

BD: She was 72 at the time. She wasn't much different from when she was 42. She could go into the kitchen and cook for about 80 people and serve the stuff up to waitresses or anything else. It wasn't much trouble for her to go and mix up 60 loaves of bread and cook it in an evening. That's all they knew, I suppose, all those times.

KH: From about 1924, was it, when they got the tender - in the early '20s they got the tender?

BD: I know I went from there to school, from the caves, because - it was 1923 when I came down here to go to school. There used to be teachers come and go up there. You know, you might get six months in and then there wasn't enough kids and the teacher'd go away. Only one man to move out and take four or five kids away and the teacher had to go. A little bit of knowledge and what you got from your parents.

KH: But they had it then for - - -

BD: From 1923 till 1956 and I think 1st June we would have handed over in '56.

KH: 33 years your parents had it?

BD: Yes. Well then, actually, my mother was there for 52 years. She went there with grandfather in 1904 and it was a family affair. Grandfather and my grandmother, you see, and then mum worked for 'em and another sister. You know what it is, a big family job, my father or any boys or anybody else that was about. The family come home for a holiday, they had to work. That's the way it used to be.

KH: Did you mother go up to the Chalet very much to help George?

BD: That's how George come to get that job. The Government Tourist Bureau - actually the director at that time - it might have been a bit of a wrap-up for mum - he said, there was one person, he said couldn't make a mistake as far as being successful. And they built a chalet up there and they came and asked her would she manage it for the first year, or longer if she liked, but they'd like her to go for the first winter. So she moved out in the autumn and went over there for that particular job. I don't think it was quite lively enough for her. She stayed there and then she - next year she wouldn't go back. She said that they got a start on with it. So she sent a sister and her husband over there and they stayed there the next winter. They didn't like it. Winter time was all right but the summers not too good. You're a long way away from anywhere and no tourists you see at these places,

very dead, not like it is even now. Well, they wanted somebody, they give her another go. So she got George to go over there and he stayed there then for 19 years. He put in 19 years there.

KH: So that got a good job for him, I suppose.

BD: Yes. Well, it was a pretty good - it took the worry out of what you had to do. I think he made a success of it. He's seen a lot of changes there, you know, from carting the stuff in on your back all winter, what do you call it, I had a bit of a go at that. What do they call you - a snow porter.

KH: With the sled?

BD: No. 60 lbs on your back in haversacks.

KH: You had to do something like that, carrying the food in?

BD: Yes, do that as many times as you could a day.

KH: Really, from down at - - -

BD: Smiggins.

KH: The transports came as far as Smiggins?

BD: That's as far as you could get.

KH: You didn't have to go as far as the Kosciusko Hotel?

BD: Sometimes it was big snows and the road wasn't open you had to go to the old hotel, you see, and stock up from there. They had a limit of 60lbs on because you might get somebody run all the way down there and come home with nothing on, you see. So you had to earn your money that way.

KH: They had transport up as far as Smiggins, did they?

BD: That's when they could get there, yes.

KH: What with a truck or something?

BD: They could get a truck to there or whatever they wanted, it might be horse and slide behind him. But you always had to go there, no further, they couldn't come any further. And even after they got snow mobiles and Caterpillar tractors, you'd be working from Smiggins. But you get two weeks of snow falling and no fine weather, everything gets blocked up.

KH: Did you ever use the dogs at all? I mean, they did that when Ray Adams was up there?

BD: Yes. Well, then Ray Adams started off with these dogs, you see, and he had all sorts of dogs. Then they brought the huskies in, these big white fellows, very powerful.

KH: What were they, Samoyeds?

BD: Samoyeds they were, yes. The Russian husky they call them, or something, Samoyeds. Great big white fellows, very strong. They tried two dogs on a sleigh with seven men on it and they raced down from the Chalet to Betts Camp and back again without them having to get off and walk, just to give a bit of a trial. That's not too bad.

KH: How many dogs?

BD: Two.

KH: Two dogs! Good heavens.

BD: Just one of those little things, how much they'll carry. I suppose when you had 15 or 16 in, well the front dogs then are not pulling very much are they? You could put half a ton on them or a bit more. And, of course, over the tight pinches or where there's drifts, you give them a bit of a hand yourself with the handle bars.

KH: Did you ever get caught out in a blizzard?

BD: I've been out, yes, of a night.

KH: You had poles along the road, didn't you?

BD: They had poles. You would never see them of a night. The worse time was when we got those tractors, business, you know, Caterpillar tractors? You know, you throw a track off or something goes wrong, then you're stuck. George looked after that. Once he got going he built these big sleighs to put behind and they were tinned in with a roof on them and windows in. Well, you could sit out a blizzard as long as you liked in there. You had sleeping bags and a bit of tucker in there, you were right. But then you get so many people th - "Oh, I'm going to ski up to the Chalet - oh, I'm too tired, I'll get in here." Well, you've them on your hands you see. A lot of that went on.

KH: Did you ever ride with them over down to Geehi and down Hannels Spur?

BD: No, I would have liked - I should have done that some time but I never did that trip. George used to go down every autumn with all his horses and things.

KH: What was he doing - they weren't brumbies, were they?

BD: No. He couldn't be without horses, he had a whole lot of them there, all summer, you know. They'd go out fishing at Geehi and wherever he was at and always had his horses, lots of them. And then they had their own cows there and they milked them of a winter you see, fresh milk all the time.

KH: But the horses 'd be taken down to sell at the end of the summer?

BD: No, he'd only take 'em down to friends he had there, to put on the grass, see. He'd be down as soon as the snow got melted enough, he would be down and bringing them home again. Plenty of people down round Khancoban 'd board your horses for the winter.

KH: Did he usually go down via Hannels Spur, or by Dead Horse Gap?

BD: Dead Horse Gap, I think, somewhere down that way.

KH: And then he had rodeos too, didn't he, up at the Chalet?

BD: Yes, he had rodeos.

KH: Was that an annual thing, was it?

BD: I think he had it every year, yes. He used to follow rodeos himself.

KH: That would be something to do in the summer, I suppose?

BD: Oh well, he was a very good rider. Yes, he could ride most horses. I never ever seen him thrown off a horse, fair-dinkum. He didn't always win, but that depends on the horse, but I have never seen him speared into the dirt, not even away from rodeos. We used to break in lots of horses, hundreds of them.

KH: The rodeo would be a way of getting people up to the Chalet in the summer too, I guess?

BD: Well, yes. All the rodeo people that go there and then there's a lot of people from Jindabyne. There's a lot of stockmen up there with their sheep and cattle and things camped about there. Oh yes, it was pretty good. They used to have good rodeos at Jindabyne and that's not far away.

KH: There's a marvellous collection of photographs of the riding at the rodeo and rounding up the horses in that album of George's. He said a lot of photographs would come up there.

BD: He looked after himself with that, didn't he? He got a lot of good ones.

KH: And did you do much skiing?

BD: I used to do a bit.

KH: You did a trip you were telling me, on the phone, across to Kiandra?

BD: Oh yes, with Reg Gelling and Dr Hyatt. They asked me to come across. I had a dog, a heeling dog, a big blue heeler and I took him with me over there.

KH: Took him with you on the snow?

BD: Took him from home at the caves. I should have left him there but I thought he might follow somebody and get poisoned. It's bad in the winter time, people poison dogs and rabbits and things, so I took him there with me. And after we were about three or four miles away from the Chalet, on this trip to the White's River - we were going there the first day, we didn't leave till after dinner in the day time, about half past two on the Wednesday, and we were going to go to White's River hut. We got over and across the Snowy and the dog arrived. They must have let him go when I was gone. You wouldn't think he'd pick the scents up on skis, would you? But he came with us and he got his name and photo in the paper. This old Dr Hyatt, he thought it was a terrific thing, to think that a dog could find his master when he was on two pieces of board, skis, rubbing along on the snow. There's no part of you to touch the snow and he must have had some idea because he was right on us.

KH: You had to take him back then, I suppose?

BD: No, he come on with us.

KH: He came right across the mountains, did he?

BD: Yes. We got to White's River and it was too early and we went to what they call the Brassy or something. There was a place there where skiers camped, they went in from Snowy Plains.

KH: Alpine hut? There's Tin Hut, Mawsons Hut and Alpine Hut in that area.

BD: This had been built for the occasion. I can remember it was a long place.

KH: '39, yes, it would have been just built. '39 you did the trip, wasn't it?

BD: Yes.

KH: That hut would have been just built.

BD: Yes, it was only new.

KH: The Alpine Hut, the Big Brassy just up behind.

BD: Yes. Well, then, we stayed there the night in that and then we went to Snowy Plains Hut, then - Boobee Hut. We spent the night in that and I know the next morning we got up and had some breakfast about daylight and we hadn't gone very far when we had to cross a river and the snow had broke through.

KH: Happy Jacks River?

BD: Happy Jacks River. The snow had fell in, it was over the river, it was about 9 or 10 feet straight wall of snow on both sides of the river. So we threw what we could across from one bank to the other and then the worse thing of the lot, you know, you had to take your clothes off, you had no more, no trousers on and your shirt right up over your shoulder, tied round back of your neck so as it couldn't get down and you had thrown your boots over and everything. And when you hit that water you felt pretty small. It was just about around your waist and then when you got to the other side you had to claw a path up to get to the top.

KH: Never again I say to myself.

BD: But I remember getting up the other side, you know, and you didn't know you had any legs or feet. And the old doctor said, he said, "Hang on for a while," he said, "and give them a bit of a rub in between and just above the knees," he said, "with your hands and get a bit of friction going," he said, "and they'll be that hot you won't be able to bear it after a while." It was a fact, your feet went all blue and burnt, you know, you feel them, red hot. They weren't hot but they felt like it, blood coming back into the cold could system, I suppose. But I'll never forget that.

KH: Then you went to Happys Hut, did you?

BD: We come into the Kiandra that evening.

KH: Oh did you, you went all the way through from Boobee?

BD: From the Boobee to Kiandra.

KH: So you did the trip in three days?

BD: That'd be two and a half.

KH: The first day to the Alpine Hut?

BD: The first day because we didn't leave till 2 o'clock, I think, we left the Chalet, in the evening.

KH: Oh you went to Pounds Creek Hut the first night?

BD: No, we went to that Alpine Hut.

KH: That far in half a day?

BD: Yeah. Oh, well, you roar down there into the Snowy River, you know, it's all down hill and then you do a bit of a climb up to Whites River Hut. You got up past it and it was pretty good going, we were pretty fit, no sore heels or blisters.

KH: You didn't muck around to get to Alpine Hut in half a day. That poor old dog.

BD: Then we only went slow all the way, like from there over to the other place. They wasn't trying to break any records, they were just having a look. There was a very big winter, '39. Most trees there was only - wouldn't be as high as your head when you went through them, what was left out of the snow.

KH: So if you had gone up stream, up the Happy Jacks a bit, you probably might have found a crossing?

BD: Might have. But it looked the same, you see, it only broke just the width of - where the air got at it underneath, where it follows the stream up, see. And I think it just crashes in. Sometimes it's overhanging on both sides, not as wide at the top as at the bottom.

KH: How do you spell this Dr Hyatt, how do you spell his name?

BD: H-Y, I think it is, A-T-T, H-Y-A-T-T I think it is. He had a practice at Glebe.

KH: What was his christian name?

BD: Matt.

KH: Matt Hyatt?

BD: Yes. And then there was Reg Gelling and I think he came from out West Wyalong or Hay, or somewhere out that way.

KH: Yes, he lives at West Wyalong now. I had a letter from his daughter some years ago.

BD: And then he had a sister who used to come there always with him, Marie Gelling.

KH: Yes. She was a very good skier, I believe.

BD: Yes. She used to knit socks for me. That was pretty good, wearing her socks on the trip.

KH: She was the first woman up on Jagungal, I think, in the winter. I think so. Was that the only crossing that you did, from the Chalet to Kiandra, you only did it once?

BD: Yes.

KH: Was there anyone else with you? Just this Matt Hyatt, just the two of you?

BD: Yes. I don't think either of them have been there before, they might have, I wouldn't know. But I know Matt Hyatt hadn't been.

KH: And who was the other fellow?

BD: Reg Gelling. A great big tall fellow, have you ever seen him?

KH: No. I've seen photos of him.

BD: He'd be about 6'4" and about this wide. I think for those things you never know - you know it can be a beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky, and that evening there'd be a blizzard. But you had precautions. You had to carry a pretty heavy pack, although you didn't want it, but you might've if you - you could get a blizzard and not poke your nose out for two or three days. You had to have a fair amount of food with you. If you know the route and know how long it's going to take you, if you've only got a day to put in, well, then, you might be all right with nothing on.

KH: And the other two, did they go back by car or something?

BD: Yeah. We got to Kiandra and then get a car into Cooma. There used to be a service there. As long as you could get out at Kiandra, at Adaminaby, you were right.

KH: And you went on to the caves, I suppose?

BD: I went to the caves and I had a week there before I went back.

KH: Did you ski down to the caves from Kiandra?

BD: Yes, I had to. Then I didn't get back for another week. It was getting into the spring then and I think I ended up with my sister driving me to Cooma, then you get the bus - there was buses all the time up to Kosi. Once I was up there I was right. I didn't want to - perhaps I needn't have gone back but I wanted to get into the sports, that 8 hour day, you see. I'd been doing a bit of training.

KH: What sort of sports, what were you in?

BD: The ski sports, you know, the Australian Championships.

KH: Oh, you participated in them, did you?

BD: I usually go in 'em but I never done any good. There was a lot in 'em. There used to be about 80 odd (that used to get) into those things, but there is only one that could win. So there was a terrible lot of 'em disappointed. But, no, I never went in with the idea of winning anything, but I went in because I liked it.

KH: Were there many other people doing the crossing, the long trip from the Chalet to Kiandra at that time?

BD: Never very many that I know of that ever done it just because they wanted to. But, of course, those good skiers like old George Aalberg, they used to do it for just a bit of training run, you see. They do it in so many hours, you see, and then they go again probably or a few weeks after to see if they could do it a bit less. That's the sort of thing they used to do.

KH: George had the record for a while, didn't he? I think he did it in 15 hours or something like that.

BD: I think he used to go over and back again, you see. He'd let them know that he was there in Kiandra and turn round and head back.

KH: Was he a quiet sort of guy or was he a big fellow?

BD: I don't know that much about him but he had a great big wide chest on him, you know, stuck out. He was a pretty heavy built - like you see most of these Italians that's not tall and thin, solid blokes, like them, you know, not very long in the legs, short.

KH: And he was doing it on pretty heavy skis, wasn't he? Not like the langlauf skis today.

BD: Oh no. Things are better all the time. Being odd people, I suppose, with langlauf skis made of birch or something like that, you wouldn't know you had 'em in your hand. And then the other fellow was coming out on red-spotted gum or something like that, you know, about 10 pound each. It made a big difference. And the spring, you get it in 'em, you have got to have plenty of bow in the middle of them so as you can get a bit of grip going up hill.

KH: I notice you call them shoes, still?

BD: Yes.

KH: That was still common in the '30s, was it, to call them shoes.

BD: Snow shoes they were, and then they become skis.

KH: When did they become skis?

BD: Well, I never heard of it 'till, you know, Kosciusko got in full swing and all around Kiandra you just had the - you had the ski, or the snowshoe as they called it, and you had a bit of leather that went over your foot and you put the screws in the side and you just drove your foot into it. If you fell over it'd come out, then the shoe went to the bottom of the hill without you, and all those sort of things.

KH: But you were already skiing with two stocks, weren't you?

BD: No, I never had them before either.

KH: But in '39 you had two stocks or one?

BD: There was plenty of them about because they were over there, but over Kiandra way we never ever thought much about 'em, you know.

KH: You still had one stick?

BD: One stick, bit of a paling (pole?). When you wanted to go a steep hill, instead of going each way - you see, when you've kicked your feet in you only had to try and turn 'em and your foot come out, you see, because the leather

used to get wet - the one that went over your foot - and out it'd come. So you'd go straight down the hill and you put the stick between your legs and sit on it, that's your brake. You could regulate your pace to suit yourself, that's mainly what the stick was for. But it was so simple when you tied your feet in, to be able to turn.

KH: Do you remember Bill Patrick?

BD: Yes, I remember Bill.

KH: Him skiing - he was supposed to be a bit of a legendary skier?

BD: Oh well, you get on the top of the hill and you point 'em down and you just go straight and if you're still standing up when you go over the line, you're right, you see. But if he had had to go round and through pegs and those sort of things, well, you know, at whatever pace they travel, he wouldn't be in the race. No, they knew nothing about it in the old days, it was just something that turned up, you know. If there was a brick wall in front of you, you had to hit it, that was it. Now, you would go at it at 60 miles an hour and just turn sideways and bend your knees into the snow and pull up, wouldn't you? That's what they do now. Now you even see 'em up there turning back somersaults, skis and all. In those days you was brave if you went over a jump, you know, and shot out there about 100 feet somewhere, straight out. The next thing they'll be doing two turns in the air, it'll be like the trapeze act in the circus, once they get the one finished, they'll want to do two then. But I wouldn't think you'd want 'em very long, you'd want the skis to suit you, wouldn't you, for that job, short. You'd want to be well up the front of 'em. I don't see - well, I don't think there's too many people want to do that, it's only a sort of dare devil trick, isn't it?

KH: Were you ever involved in getting cattle out when they were snowed in, where you had to use skis in the winter time to get stock out?

BD: Oh, I tell you truth I've never had to use skis but I've got plenty of stock out of the mountain. We had plenty of our own, the summer of 1968. I had 2000 sheep up there and they were snowed in under a drift for about three weeks.

KH: Where was that? (oh, it snowed)

BD: In front of Rules Point. It snowed there for about a week without stopping. But it wasn't the actual snow - the amount on the ground that stopped us from bringing those out. They went down on to the Murrumbidgee and the wind coming from the west had blew the snow - you know how it makes the drifts? and for the full length of the Murrumbidgee there, from .... down to

the hut, it was all running the same way. And this westerly came in and the drift of the snow - and our sheep were all down underneath it, between the water and the drifts. Well, these drifts on a long sloping hill, you see, you've got to dig the snow all the way. Well, I put in about two days trying to dig a channel up through these big drifts. Well, they were 20 feet deep, see. Anyhow I got sick of it and I rang my brother up and said, "You'd better come up and give us a hand." By the time we rode out there and back again and rode out to where they were and back again, we was cunning enough to stay one down on the other on all the directions, you see, and we used to shovel this stuff and stamp it down and get it hard and break it. And we forced a few sheep into it and dragged one up with a bit of rope and got another one to follow him, you know, on top of the hard snow through the gap that we built in it. And when we got one up on top it was just a matter of sitting there to wait till they all went up one at a time and when they got up on top - you see, the snow, instead of being 10 or 15, 20 feet deep, it was only about six inches or eight inches. All we had to do then was tie a bit of a log on the back of the horse's tail and ride him home and they followed. They knew where they were going when they got that. They just followed out in single file. Well, it takes a long way to go with a couple of thousand sheep in single file.

KH: Then you took them out on the road?

BD Well there was chaps come up as we were going out. There was fellows come up and they said, "Oh, if you can get your sheep out we can." I said, "Oh, you should have been here long ago having a go." But the creeks are the only thing to worry you - hard to get them to go over water. But luckily we didn't have any.

KH: You took them out on the main road then?

BD: Yeah.

KH: The road was clear?

BD: Yes, we took a truck up the road with chains on it, see. Once they got in, those two, you see, we had two rows of sheep following the wheel tracks. That's only in 1968, as late as that.

KH: You must have been one of the last mobs in there before the park closed it all up.

BD: We were, and we got caught because we knew that country. My brother and I, we had sheep - we pulled a big mob of sheep in 1939 and we ran up there on spare country, you see.

KH: You and George?

BD: No, the brother Greg. There was 8000 acres went with the caves. Then all these big graziers that went up there like A.W. Austin, and Fred Lamp and those group. When they used to go out we used to take our sheep up and put in the paddocks where they come from. They didn't mind, it didn't worry them, they were gone.

KH: You would only be able to do that for a couple of months before the snow came, wouldn't you?

BD: Yeah, but we were never worried about getting caught in the snow. If we did we knew we would get 'em out. A lot of people was frightened they'd never get them out. You've only got to wait for a good frosty night and you'll get them out then, run 'em over the top of it. But if you're going to go up and say, "I'm going to bring my sheep out tomorrow" well then, you're in trouble.

KH: So they'd get out in March or something - the bigger ones would get out in March - - -

BD: Well, you'd want to get out in April because if it snows heavy in April it's going to go before the real winter sets in. In 1939 it was a big winter and my brother and I had 1000 sheep at Yarrangobilly and when we - it snowed for two weeks and never stopped and it was three feet deep on the flat there at Yarrangobilly village. That's the first time since 1903 there was three feet there and that's the only time it's ever been that deep since, that was 1939. That's my old uncle, Leo, you see, he lived at Yarrangobilly and he said the wallabies died in mobs there because they used to hop on the top of the hard snow and when they come to where the snow had bent the bushes over a creek, as soon as they landed on that with the bushes, you see, underneath they broke through. And when it came the spring all the little wallabies and kangaroos were in the creeks. They couldn't get back up again, so they perished, you see, down under there. When the air can get under the snow it melts from the underneath up and then if the bushes are turned over like in those little creeks so wide that they meet. And, of course, when he comes hopping along and he hits there, in that particular spot, he's straight through. And I've seen that since then too, in odd ones in different creeks where they've made a mistake and hit in the snow and gone in.

KH: Have there been years as big as that at Yarrangobilly village since 1939?

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BD: No, never been - 1946 was a heavy winter but it was more south. Kiandra it was nearly level - the Kiandra Plain. You hardly seen any ups and downs at all between Bullock's Hill ..... and Kiandra, it was level, but there wasn't so much at Yarrangobilly. We could come out to Tumut but you couldn't go through to Kiandra.

KH: What about in 1964, which was a big year in the ski resorts?

BD: Yes. Well, really they haven't had a big heavy winter as far as I know through Kiandra since 1946, that's a good one.

KH: And that winter in 1903, there's a lot of photographs around that Charles Kerry took about that time; the hotels - tunnels into the hotels and so on. Would that be about that time?

BD: That's about the time. That'd be it, you know. They talk of going from the store over to the pub in the main street of Kiandra, you know, under the tunnel. That'd be about the time.

KH: Did your grandfather talk of any years before that which were big snow years?

BD: No. Well, my grandfather, he never sort of - he'd know more than his son. I suppose he was there years and years before but Leo was the one. He was a sort of a crank on that business.

End Side 1, Tape 1

Buster Day

Side 2, Tape 1.

BD: Oh, Yes. There was another big drought in 1914 and another drought in 1928 and all this sort of stuff.

KH: He wrote down a fair few things, didn't he?

BD: Do you know his son Bruce? Or his son Colin?

KH: No.

BD: Well they both live in Tumut, they're terrible nice blokes. I think Bruce, he'd be one that if they've got any books or things of their father, they'd have 'em. He knew a lot. He was a dictionary on this up here, you know. He knew everything, about when the roads were cut, and who worked on 'em. Yes, if they had any notes there you'd get some marvellous stuff off them.

KH: Bruce Hoads probably be the best one?

BD: He'd be the best one off the two. He's more cooperative in that sort of thing, I think. He's interested in, you know - He went up here and gave a talk to, what was it? A hundred years when the caves were, 150, a while back. They asked him to come up there and say a few things. I heard his speech, a little bit of it, over the, on the TV. But, you know, he valued the, what, he knew a little bit about those sort of things.

KH: Were you involved in any long droving trips or long horse rides across the mountains?

BD: Well, I've done some droving, plenty of that. I took a mob of cattle from Yarrangobilly to Quandialla - that's down on the Bland, when I was only 16. Three hundred—

KH: From where to where?

BD: Quandialla, that's down past Cootamundra, about 60 miles past Cootamundra on the Bland. That's nothing, you're in amongst lanes and things, you know, like there's nothing to it. You wouldn't call that droving. They talk about fellows going to Queensland years ago and bring a mob of cattle up here to Tumut and that. Well, a woman and kids could do that, actually, you're in lanes, but droving trips is when you've got no fences and you've got no reserves. That's when it becomes awkward. But my brothers and I, we used to buy cattle from Jindabyne in - well, it might have been 1948 or '49 when we started doing that. And we used to go there on Friday night and be up at daylight on Saturday morning, myself and George, and by dinner time on Sunday we'd have 2000 bought. And in a reserve at Jindabyne we made a proviso with the blokes we bought 'em off that they had to bring 'em there to that reserve, you see. So as soon as you bought

'em and paid for them they'd set off with them and you wouldn't - we would be a week going gathering 'em up. And you always went to the furthest blokes away first, you see, and then the ones that was closer. You dealt with them on Sunday morning and by Sunday night everything should be there. Monday morning you set off, about 14 or 15 fellows'd come with you for the first half day because most of them were calves and they want to get back all this time. If you've got, say, 12 1400 calves all looking for their mother there's not much fun in it. And then you ride them every night, you know, like two or three fellows just go round and round and round them because they never settle. Then after you've had 'em out about two days or three days they settle down and you can go to bed then.

KH: And where would you take them to?

BD: We'd bring them to Talbingo.

KH: That's when you had the property down there?

BD: Yes, at the property there. Then we'd put a sale on about September/October, a sale of our own cattle out there. We'd yard all those and then put 'em off. And we've done that for a few years.

KH: You take them along the road pretty well, would you, through Adaminaby and through Kiandra?

BD: We used to come through where they bloked the road now - Eagle Hawk they used to call it, through Snowy Plain, and down across F'ying Pan Creek, that's all under water. That's the way we came in. We lost a mob one night, two or three miles out on the Yaouk Road from Adaminaby. We had them in a reserve there and there was a hill in the reserve and they were all camped up on it. I don't know, we were down the bottom - we were stupid to be there - but they took off in the night and they came down the hill and I must've seen the dogs barking, the horses there in the camp, and they must have swung round and went back. I think, at that particular time, I think we had 2200 and in the morning we had 17. That's all that was left in the reserve.

KH: 17?

BD: 17. It was break of day, you know. We was having our breakfast in the dark, you know - we knew they were gone - couldn't see anything, couldn't find your horses, and we just got finished having a feed and saddling our horses up and we could hear somebody coming. There was about half a dozen fellows from Adaminaby. They'd got their horses and they rode out and they said, "We come out to give you a hand." We said, "How did you know?" They said, "We heard

the rumble in the night." One fellow said, "I said to my brother here, 'I said, their cattle have gone on them, we'd better give them a hand in the morning'." We was two days putting them together again.

KH: Where had they gone to?

BD: Some went out to a place they call Bug Town and Providence. We were bringing them this way and that's the way they broke, towards Providence, - Bug Town. And, of course, there was lanes and when they got on the road - a lot of them stuck to the road, they come down to Providence. Well, that's where we wanted them, that was the next reserve. Somebody was down there pointing 'em into the reserve. The trouble is with them they keep on walking, you know, they get upset and even if they get on the road, if you wasn't there to put 'em in they'd keep going on and on until they could get off the road and that's when you'd start to lose them, up round Kiandra. But in a couple of days we had them all.

KH: You got most of them back?

BD: Yes. They were all right, anyhow.

KH: They were calves?

BD: Mostly calves. But we always bought a certain amount cows but the cows are good to lead 'em along the road but when anything happens like that, of course, the calves are way out in front. They go mad, they just don't care what they do. If there's a fence there and they hit it, if it's running across exactly opposite to what they're going, they hit it. But if its going with them or a bit like that, they won't make a right hand angle to get over it.

KH: They just walk the fence down?

BD: They'd follow it, full gallop. They run till they drop, you know, then they get exhausted and then they steady down. You see, we had to sit up with them every night after, they never settled. As soon as it come dark they'd start and walk. It's a very bad thing to have 'em.

KH: Did you do that very often, buy cattle at Jindabyne and bring them over?

BD: We done it for years.

KH: From when on, when did you start doing that?

BD: Well, we actually - we used to make good money out of that, see, and we done it till we split up. When our mother died - it was G.I. Day & Sons, you see, the property, Talbingo and Glen Mary and everything we owned. And then when she died we found out what this one had and that one had and that's how I come

to be here on my own. I owned a third of Wantabadgery and I owned a third of Talbingo and George was established at Talbingo and my brother Greg was established at Wantabadgery and I was in the caves with my mother, you see, I hadn't got my position worked out. So George said to Greg, "I'll give you my share of the and you give me your share and that makes him two-thirds up there and two-thirds down there. So I was about to sort of give my part to George, I'd reckon that's what I wanted to do, but the Snowy came you see. Well, they solved that problem. They bought it up and we settled with money, See. And My brother, Greg, - I sold my third of that place, I sold it to him, and I was out then, I didn't have anything to do with them any more. So that's when all this dealing and business sort of ceased. So I was in this little place here and I was satisfied to sit it out, you know, but I might have been a bit early in life when I'd been so busy. I went down town one morning and I was having a drink with an old chap by the name of Butler - and I usually used to come home for dinner about 12 - and I didn't get home until about two. He said to me, "Come on up to the Country Women's. My brother's place is being sold, he's dying, I want to see what it brings." I sat down there with him and they finished reading out all the conditions and everything. I said, "What sort of a place is it?" He said "Oh, she's a good little property. We were twin brothers but we couldn't agree. And," he said, "He divided the place up and give me first pick." He said, "That was fair enough. I took all the sheep country and," he said, "he wanted the cattle country." Anyhow they started it off you know, £30, £35, £40 and £45 and it seemed to me the hammer was ready to go down and he said, "They won't sell it for that." The executors. He said, "Give them a bid, you know, and see if they'll go on with it." So I put my finger up, and that's how I got this place I got here. I said, "What am I going to do with it? I haven't had a look at it. You better race me out there before I sign any pieces of paper. Let me have a look." When I got out there I thought now this was not too bad. I come back and signed up and I'm still here.

KH: How many acres have you got?

BD: Only 535 acres I had.

KH: Has that got a house on it too?

BD: Oh yes, a nice house on it, six room brick house, double brick.

KH: You're renting that, I suppose, are you?

BD: No, I've got a son that lives in the house. He works for a big contractor in the pines, these timber mills here. He's very good with what he does and he can make more money there than he would out here, the way things are going, the price of diesel and the price of all the things, you know, the way they've gone up. And I suppose he'll end up with it. I've only one son.

KH: Do you remember any other stories, things that Leo Hoad talked about? He must have been quite a person with so much knowledge. He probably talked about the building of Three Mile Dam, wouldn't he?

BD: Well, that was my grandfather. It's his father that done that. He used to tell us how he got up there with all his - he got the contract, I think, off these people, this firm.

KH: Who was this?

BD: My grandfather, my mother's father. He and his brother-in-law who was named Hayden - I think it was Hayden - well, they got the contract. Well, they had to get up there with the - I think they said they took 16 draught horses, 11 tip drays and all the tools and things they wanted in it and everything. And then had plenty of men up there, you see, fellows having no luck with the gold. Their greatest trouble was getting up that Talbingo Mountain with all this gear. They used to take one cart or probably two a day up the hill, that's about all they could manage, with about six horses on one dray. I think he said it took them over a week to get to the top, that's four miles. Eventually they got it all up. There was no road cut at that particular time, at all, not even started on.

KH: This was in the 1880s, wasn't it?

BD: It must have been the 1870s I think, round about that time. Because Kiandra boomed in - what was it?

KH: 1860.

BD: '65, I think, it was at its peak. That's when they reckon there was 30,000 people there. I don't believe it, do you? They reckon there was - what was it?

KH: Well, over 10,000.

BD: Seven banks and 20 pubs. I think it might have been stretched a bit. The biggest part around Kiandra would have been the cemetery, wouldn't it, come winter, if there were people like that.

KH: I believe there were 27 miners died in one day, when the winter came. That was the worse day they had, I think.

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BD: Well, you see, that Three Mile Dam would have never been there only for two new chums that come to Kiandra. Have you ever heard that one?

KH: Yes.

BD: They asked the old fellow down on the creek where was the best place to dig in and have a bit of gold. They had new shovels and new dishes and new clothes on. "Right to the top of that hill" he said, "and sink a hole there. You'll get all the gold you need." And what was it? They got down 25 feet or something and they got these colours of gold and then they got plenty of gold, like grains of wheat laying about. They sold out to this big company and then that's why they put the Three Mile dam in. They started at the foot of the hill then and washed it away. They got 19 tons of gold out of that hill.

KH: 19 tons?

BD: Yes, out of that particular company.

KH: And they built the dam with big - - -

BD: Dirt?

KH: Big sort of shovels dragged behind horses, wasn't it?

BD: Scoops. Rippers and, oh, they used to use what they called road ploughs, those days, like a single .... plough only it was made more robust, two or three horses. They ripped the ground and then they had these big scoops that you had two handles and then when you get up to where you want it, you throw the handles up in the air and turn it upside down. Well, then, that's how they built the dam. The more times you go over it with the horses, the better, they was tramping it down as they go. But it's not that big a feat. Like the same dam they'd build - one fellow in a couple of days with a bulldozer, wouldn't he. But then the trench cut around the hill.

KH: Was that done with a big plough?

BD: No, I think that was done with the pick and shovel. They might have done a little bit with a horse where they could get at it, but it's round a steep hill, see. And there's lots of places where a gutter come down and they had to pipe it. I never knew that till years after. I never walked along that thing to have a look. But my brother and I wanted to build a shearing shed and a fellow from Kiandra said, "You want to come up and get them old pipes out of that race where they took the water round the hills." I never knew there was any there. And we went and there were these big pipes, they were about that high, but not very heavy steel, you know, like. We took them out and rolled them down the hill until they hit the bottom and then we took them home on a truck

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and then we went along with a cold chisel, you know, with a block inside and cut 'em - no oxy then. And when we opened them up we had 10 or 15 or 20 foot long pieces of steel, six foot wide.

KH: They were big pipes?

BD: Great big pipes.....

End Side 2, Tape 1

Buster Day

Tape 2, Side 1

BD: It's a pity with those caves, that they're not open.
KH: Yes, they're not open very much.
BD: Like the boarding house there.
KH: Yes, that's right.
BD: We were booked out year after year.
KH: Most of the time, were you, all year round, during the week as well?
BD: We could put up 80 comfortably - you'd get 100 in if you want to get people who're satisfied to double bunk, you know, like to go in to four or five in a room, like probably who are people in a party, no wives or anything, blokes that want to go fishing or something. You would get some that would do it that way.
KH: Just to go back to Three Mile Dam, I don't know that I got all that on tape. You were talking about the race lines, the big pipes.
BD: The race was very wide and they wanted to keep it straight so as the water wouldn't have any hold-ups going around sharp bends so they piped it across these parts. And when they really got around to where they want it, they worked three nozzles off it, down to the bottom of the hill. They got these - they brought these nozzles out from New Zealand, I believe, old Uncle Leo told us, and they put - working with a long handle, and cut the hill down, keep boring in, boring in. And the third one was for pushing the stuff up a ramp to get it to drop down the other side to get the gold out.
KH: A sluicing box?
BD: They had sort of a box built and cupboard and the water shot up that from the ground, in a hole down the bottom and everything that went in there got on that - the water is sort of more suction for the pressure and it took it to the top.
KH: Do they call it jet elevator?
BD: Jet elevator or something, yes, that is what it's called. You know when you're trying to clean a drain out with a hose you push everything ahead of it, the same thing's happening there. And when it reaches the top it goes down the other side over all these batten filters, See, and the gold gets caught on the battens. And, of course, when it finishes up at the bottom they give it another go later in case they missed any. I think they were getting enough, mostly, to satisfy them.

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KH: And you got these pipes out of the sluicing trench and opened them up and used them as roofing material, did you?
BD: Put walls on a bit of an old shearing shed we made, yes. They were terrific. I don't know whether they brought them there made or whether they made them on the job or not, but that was nothing to do with old Walt Hoad, I don't think he cut the race, he might have. I think they might've had other men doing that ready for when it was finished.
KH: Oh, that was Walter Hoad, that's right, yes. They had a header dam, didn't they, above where they were working. They had the race line and then they had a small dam just above - on New Chum Hill above where they were working?
BD: That's where they end of the race come, yes.
KH: What did they have for valves? They had the three pipes coming out of that dam, didn't they, the three nozzles?
BD: They had three coming down the hill.
KH: What sort of valves did they have, do you know?
[Interruption]
BD: There used to be a fellow in Kiandra, the Yans. I suppose they were pretty old people in there. There's one they call 'Jink' - it was a nickname - they used to call him Jink Yan, everybody knew him by that. They used to have bullock teams. They'd take them down into the Riverina in the winter time to get them out of the snow and the wheat cockies were just clearing the country, you know, taking up selections, And they used to pull the trees down all winter for the pine trees. I wouldn't have liked to be pulling them down now when you go to buy a little bit of cypress and pack 'em and burn 'em, see. It wasn't as valuable as it is now. And they'd give them grass, you see, and then they'd have fat bullocks for the spring for all the fencing material and salt and food going to the mountains. You always used to say - you'd sit around the fire at night and then the farmers'd come over and they'd be sitting there talking to you. "I'll be pleased when this ground's cleared up," he said, "I've only got to have one good year, you know, with the wheat and," he said, "I'm set for life." He said, "It puts you right on your feet," he said, "if you can get one good year," he said, "then you can suffer two or three bad ones." And he said, "Once you get on your feet you're right." And this Yan fellow spoke up, he said, "I don't know about you and your good years," he says, "to get on your feet." He said, "It took a real bad one to put me on me feet. 1914," he said, "when that drought was on, all the rivers and things dried up, I only had one horse and it died, that put me on me feet."

KH: That was Jinks Yan, was it?

BD: Yes. What was his name? Frank. Frank was his name. They used to call him Jink, nobody seemed to know him. He reckoned it took a bad year to put him on his feet, the drought killed his horse and that. The cocky was wanting the good year, one good year - "one good year" he said, "it puts me on me feet." He said, "It took one bad one to put me on my feet. I had a horse and he died in the drought."

KH: Who was the main bullocky of that family, was it Tom who was mainly with the bullocks, or were some of the other Yans too?

BD: I think the two old Yans, George and Frank, the two old fellows, they used to have horse teams. But the boys, Tom and this Jink, Jink used to drive the bullocks for Currango Station, he was the bullock driver over there, you know. You take charge of the bullock and cart posts out to the fence we're building out here and wood down for the winter to the station and do the roads up out there" and all this sort of things. They wanted log fences shifted. He was the bullocky over there.

KH: George was the one that had the shop, wasn't he, he had Yan's store for a while?

BD: Yes.

KH: And Frank was his brother?

BD: Frank was his brother.

KH: Was it George who had the big family?

BD: Yes.

KH: Five boys and two or three girls?

BD: That's right. There might be one boy left. I don't know where he would be now.

KH: Yes. I interviewed Tom some years ago, Tom Yan, but he's died since.

BD: Yes. There's some girls. Tom Yan was the oldest, you see, of those. He ended up over here at Adelong. There was Jink and Arthur and Les, who used to be at Yaouk with the Cochrans.

KH: Yes, Les Yan.

BD: ..... quote him a few times, what's his name, Sefton, might because he practically lived with old Bung Harris. That's where Herb Sefton was his main man, wasn't he? He worked a lot for - - -

KH: I've heard a lot about Bung Harris.

BD: Yes, his name was Henry ..... As far as I knew - when I seen Bung I always looked round the corner to see if Noel was there, or this Les Yan. There was always one or the two of them with him.

KH: Who was the mother of the Yans?

BD: They were Chinamen.

KH: They must have been about a quarter Chinese or something. Tom looked very Chinese around the eyes.

BD: Yes. Well, old George, he was the real one, you know, like, a little bit a beard and.

KH: Their father, George, he was full Chinese?

BD: I think so. And you see, their mother was a Hetherington, she's white, Australian. I think that's where they - - -

KH: So George Yan married a Hetherington. And then they had this big family of eight or nine children?

BD: Yes.

KH: So the children were half Chinese?

BD: Yes. About half, yeah.

[Interruption]

KH: ..and still run the hotel?

BD: Yes. Well, we thought we were all getting out, you know, and she sort of told the government she didn't want it any longer after the end of June. She'd go out. Well, that finished the summer and the bookings, you see. We thought this was great, let's get away from here, we've been here for, what, 46 years or 44 years. Lilly had been there for 25 after we got married.

KH: You lead a very public life in a place like that.

BD: And it's not like a hotel in a town because everybody that comes there you sort of in contact with them. You could have a pub in town and hundreds of people could go through and you'd never know one of them, would you, but up there you knew the people - after a day they'd want to know something, they've got to come to you to find out something. You get like - mates in no time, see, and then they come back again. We had a dentist ..... from Cootamundra. He had 27 Christmases there without a break, all the time, never missed, 27 years he was there for Christmas dinner.

KH: That's a bit like Tom and Molly's place at Currango. They've had that since 1949, they've had 36 years there with the people - - -

LD: Who are they?

KH: Tom and Molly Taylor at Currango.

LD: Yes, they've been there for many years, haven't they?

KH: They had the same situation where families keep coming and keep coming.

LD: We used to have the same people nearly every Christmas.

BD: Then the Snowy upset it. There was money but you didn't feel like that you wanted that way, see.

KH: How would they affect the caves?

BD: Well, When about 300 men drop in at about half past four and you know they're all nice blokes, but by 5 o'clock, they're all, most of them - you wouldn't want them, you wouldn't put them in your dog kennel, terrible.

LD: Some of them were all right, they were quite good.

BD: Quite good, yes. But you see in every pie there's a crook currant, isn't there, you know.

LD: You wouldn't get to bed till 5 o'clock in the morning through them.

BD: It goes with big gangs of men like that. Like, say there's 10. There's nine of them will come and have a few drinks and they'll get in the car and go home but the 10th bloke, before he goes he wants to fight, he wants to abuse you or tell you something's no good, of you know, "I won't go home" and tells the other fellow to go. "I'll miss tomorrow's work" and all this stuff, and he knows very well you don't want him there any longer. That's going on for the last six years. And if you keep up with them you become brutal yourself, you know, you get sick of pleading so you just say straight out, "Go, if you don't go you'll be sorry."

LD: Mind you, some of the men were good, though.

KH: Well, a lot of them, they went to the Kiandra Hotel, didn't they? I imagine that was a pretty popular watering place.

BD: They didn't have any there then.

KH: Didn't they?

BD: We were the only ones that had a licence up there and when we sold it the licence come to us because my mother bought it. The government said we can make one for 2/6d, you sell your licence and get your money back. We sold it to a bloke for £6000 who built a hotel at Campbelltown and the bloke that took the caves, house, took the leased it. They told us we would have to leave the licence there till he applied and got one see, off them. They only had to ask the government to give him a licence and it would cost 2/6d. And then the man at Campbelltown wanted a licence and we went to Tumbarumba to the court to have it transferred from us to him. And in walks this fellow from the caves with a barrister with him and the barrister gets up and objects to the licence

being transferred, that Mr Johnson won't have a licence. But then our solicitor said, "Well, why hasn't Mr Johnson got a licence, he's been there for three or four months?" All he had to do was to ask the government to give him a licence and they've given this licence back to the owners of it to see if they can sell it, to get a few dollars, you see, a few pounds out of it. Anyhow he stopped it and said it'd have - the licence'd have to stay there until he applied for one. So he didn't apply for it, he sold it to a bloke called Palfrey in Kiandra and he carted the grog from the caves into Kiandra and he put it in there. And then he didn't pay the licence fee and they took the licence off him and that cost us £6000, just through neglect, you see. Now, if a fellow couldn't go and apply for his licence he's got no hope of making a living out of a business, has he? Well, he went broke anyhow before he got started.

KH: Do you remember how many - I'm trying to track down some of the families from Kiandra. With the older Yans, like George and Frank, were there any more in that family?

BD: Not that I know of. I don't remember any more. I knew 'em pretty well, too.

KH: They would have just about come out from China themselves, wouldn't they? Like, they were full blood Chinese. They would be some of the last to come out here for some mining, or something, wouldn't they?

BD: Frank and George - George was - oh yes, he was a good-looking Chinaman, you know. But old Frank, he was a sort of a real, real deep Chinaman, you know.

KH: Do you remember if they came out for mining?

BD: No, I don't know. I don't know who would know. Tom Taylor wouldn't know, probably. He's older than me, he might know. Old George Yan was a good fellow. I think he done a lot of people a good turn, you know. They had a sister, I know that, she was a Mrs Quinn. She married a man by the name of Quinn.

KH: Ivy Quinn?

BD: No. Ivy was married to Ted.

KH: Yes.

BD: Well, Ted Quinn, his mother was one of the Yans. His mother was a sister to George and Frank and she married old Peter Quinn. She had Ted and Gladdie - Gladestone Quinn.

LD: They're both dead, aren't they?

BD: Ted died, yes, a few years ago.

KH: Yes, Ted died first and then his wife went a little while later, Ivy Quinn, yes.

BD: Ted went to a pretty big age because I remember going to his 80th birthday just after I came here. He lived a long time after that, I don't know how long. But then Ivy was a big healthy woman and then all at once she got something wrong with her and she deteriorated quick. She didn't look like if she was going to die for years, not long before she did die, see.

KH: Maybe she didn't like being alone.

LD: Do you know the Prossers?

KH: No, no I haven't met them. There's a Mrs Prosser, isn't there?

LD: No, She's dead now.

KH: The lady who was at the nursing home?

BD: Mrs Cotterell.

LD: She's from Yarrangobilly, yes.

KH: Oh, is it Mrs Prosser who died?

LD: Mrs Prosser died and Harry died, and Con, the son, died, the three of them.

BD: Well, the Prossers were there very early, just a bit after my grandfather came to Yarrangobilly. But their boys, Harry, the oldest one, he's been dead a few years.

KH: Were the Wilsons related to some of the Yans? Like there was a Jacob Wilson who had the hotel for a while?

BD: Jacob Wilson's wife was a Yan.

KH: Yes. Was she related to George and Frank?

BD: Sister.

KH: Another sister. So there's quite a big family there too, probably. She was ski champion for quite a few years, this particular lady.

BD: There's one of them in Tumut now. Mrs Livingston is one of Jacob Wilson's daughters. She's living down here in Fitzroy Street. She's one that will be able to give you the history of the Yans.

KH: Mrs Livingston?

BD: Mrs Livingston. She's in Fitzroy Street. An easy woman to get on and she has another sister there, Enid - 'Tiny' they used to call her. She lives down here - she'd still be living in Howard Street, I think. Then they have another sister, the oldest one, she lives in Sydney. I think she's a Mrs Thompson.

KH: But the mother was Margaret, wasn't she, Margaret Wilson, Jacob's wife.

BD: Maggie, yes.

KH: Maggie, yes. She died. I saw her funeral notice - or I got her funeral notice. She died very old, at 90 or something or 91.

BD: Yes.

KH: She must have been the last of that generation of Yans, I think. You don't know anything about that family coming to Australia, do you?

BD: No, I don't.

KH: Because it was unusual for - - -

BD: I tell you - I reckon Mrs Livingston, now Jacob's - that's her mother we're talking about, isn't it? I often see her. Would you like me to ask her?

KH: Yes. I'm interested to know how the Yans all relate because there is so many of them and I'm interested in how they came to Australia, you see.

BD: She's got a grandson. She only had one daughter, Mrs Livingston - that's the one I want to see. And this daughter married an insurance agent here at Tumut. And soon after the daughter died. Well, this one we're talking about now, she's looking after the grandson, you see, had one son. And he lives there. Then I have a grandson and they're great cobbers. He's always out at the farm with my grandson and they're mates so I have no trouble in getting him to say when Gradma's over, I want to see her and get some information from her, that'll be easy.

KH: I know that a lot of Chinese came out in 1861, when the big gold rush a lot of Chinese came out then, was on but they gradually went to other parts of Australia or they went back to China. And it was very unusual for there to be Chinese women in Australia. But somewhere along the line there must have been two or three Chinese women in Kiandra for there to be all these Chinese half, quarter, Chinese descendants.

BD: Well, this old George Yan he married a girl from Lobbs Hole who was a Hetherington, her name. They were in Lobbs Hole when the mines were in full swing, these Hetheringtons.

KH: The Lobbs Hole mine, the copper mines?

BD: Yes, the big copper mine there.

KH: There was also a poem about - or there was a race between a Hetherington and a Burgess or something like that, there was a ski race. Do you remember a poem that was written and Hetherington won the race or something like that?

BD: Yeah? No, I never heard it.

KH: I saw Bill Hughes several times, the Hughes family. You may not remember him?

BD: I know him, yes. Old Billy was the last one there, wasn't he?

KH: His brother, Bob, was sort of the main one in Kiandra.

BD: Yes, that's Bob, yes. That's the one I know, not Billy, Bob.

KH: Billy was a very much younger brother than Bob and he - we found him in Sydney a few years ago. He went away from the mountains for 30 years or so.

BD: I can remember Bob lived in - he bought the hall in Kiandra and sort of divided it up and lived in it at the last. Right against the hall he was.

KH: The dance hall?

BD: The dance hall, yes. By gee I've been to some good dances in Kiandra years ago. You know, they used to come in buses from Adaminaby and they had an orchestra there and everything. It used to be really good, big mobs of people. They'd have an MC there and he'd say at 11 o'clock at night, "Now, then," he said, "I'd like the ladies to dance with themselves for the next hour and a half, the boys are going around the rabbit traps, they're getting the late catch." You're pulling on the gum boots and away they'd go.

KH: That's when there was a good price in rabbit skins, was it?

BD: Yes, trappings all around you see. If they don't go they get a heap of legs in the morning, they cut off through the night, from them kicking. Not going to lose the rabbits for a couple of dances.

KH: They could go in and do some more trapping there now and they'd do all right.

BD: It's marvellous, isn't it? They won't let you trap a rabbit. Len Betts, he's the headmaster - was here and he's retired now. Out here, along Blowering Dam, rabbits up on the side of the hill and they're crossing the road in front you and laying dead there. He said, "Oh I sneak out there," he said, "late in the afternoon and I get down under there and I put a string of traps out." And he goes out daylight next morning and gets the bunnies out of them and brings the traps home. He said, "You're out there," he said, "you get summonsed if you've got a rabbit on the place. I only want to catch a few." He dresses them and eats them - a bit of rabbit's not too bad sometime. "Well," he said, "You've got to be a criminal to get one." He said, "If they come there and catch me I get me name in

the Tumut paper straight away." Fined for trapping rabbits from the park. The PP Board is talking about fining the Park Trust for having rabbits, you see, so you can't understand it.

KH: They could easily pay someone so much a scalp and go out there and trap them.

BD: ... You must know, if you hear a gun going off, to shoot the kangaroo or the wallabies and things or whatever might be there, that you don't want anything interfered with. You just couldn't confuse it with trapper traps, could you? If they let the people say, "Well, look if you want rabbits go and put your traps out." You can't do any harm, if somebody else hates them, that's not your fault. Just let them have a go and they'd pretty near clear the rabbits up, this crowd around Tumut, because meat's dear and it's only just over the hill there. And I'll guarantee there's 50 blokes here that'd have traps out if they were allowed and wouldn't get summonsed for it. And that's one way they'd have of getting rid of the rabbits or they'd drive them back in the hills where the inspector won't see them. But I don't know.

KH: In terms of people, do you remember Sanko Smith at all?

BD: Yeah, I knew him.

KH: He used to do big droving trips, didn't he?

BD: Well, yes. He used to bring always every winter a mob down from Adaminaby, but he used to get 'em in, say, down the end of the Murrumbigee below Gundagai or somewhere. There was his favourite spot he used to take them to. That was about the end - that was about his line. Aub Russell from Adaminaby, was a fellow that took big mobs of cattle through.

KH: Aub Russell, was he a brother of Mick Russell?

BD: No, I don't think so, I think they might be cousins. But he's dead now. Aub had a place where old Adaminaby was, the first bridge this side, where Aub used to live, about four miles out from Adaminaby this way. Big tall fellow he was, very tall. He was a big cattle man. He used to take them to a place called Gellingrove? near the old Sydney/Melbourne road down here, what they call the Polley Bridge, half way to Walgett, a big property there. He sent over - a standing order with him, 5 or 600. He used to take them down every autumn, bring them back in the spring, beautiful and shiny. I wouldn't have done well - the cattle out of those mountains when they brought them down here for the winter. Then there was the big graziers used to go up there, like A.W. Austin from Lake Midgin and Fred Lampe from ...? ... down at - 20,000 sheep each they used to take up.

KH: 20,000?

BD: Yes, that's 40,000 between the two of them. Their leases were all together.

KH: But they'd take them up in separate mobs, wouldn't they?

BD: Oh yes, 5000 to 6000 in a mob.

KH: Who were the stockmen that worked for them?

BD: They used to hire drovers, and they'd get the same ones every year. An old fellow from Tumut by the name of Dick Beck and another fellow from Tumut named - his son died the other day - what's his name, that was manager of the golf club - Henkel. There was an old fellow by the name of Fred Henkel here, he used to be a drover. He was a good drover and Dick Beck was a good drover. There was a lot of them at the time. It used to be, you know, the thing. And the big mobs from away out - you see, they used to lease all that land, a farthing an acre a year. This Lampe and Austin they built a house there for the men to get in. They had six or seven men working for them, you know, keeping the fences right and the sheep right.

LD: Was that at Talbingo?

BD: No.

LD: .... Cotterill, she was a Lampe wasn't she?

BD: Yes. But that was Her husband's brother, the one I'm talking about.

KH: You mean Goandra?

BD: Goandra.

KH: The house is still there but the shearing shed, or the crutching shed, that's all gone.

BD: Yeah. Well, they had seven stands in the crutching shed. We took all the gear out of it in 1938. He gave it to us, A.W. Austin. He said, "I won't ever bring any more sheep up. He said, "They're turning me out. He said, "You fellows ha got some sheep and you're going to start off. He said, "You can have the engine and all the gear, go over and get and take it." They used to have seven crutches there for two weeks doing the sheep.

LD: They were very good people, those Austins, they were never away from the caves.

KH: They used to come there for holidays, did they?

LD: Never away from them.

BD: His wife used to stay there all the summer if it was hot, and the family.

KH: And the men would be up on the grazing lease, I suppose.

BD: He'd be fishing there at the caves for three weeks and then he'd go home for a couple of days to Lake Midgin. He had some good men working for him, he didn't care. He'd go home and he'd come back, he said, "Everything's right down there, they told me to get back to the mountains, out of the heat as quick as I could. So I'll stay another few weeks and fish." He'd go home and then be away for two or three weeks. His wife and the kids'd be still there. They usen't to leave.

KH: I suppose you would have had quite a lot of people who were well-to-do at the hotel?

BD: Oh yes, wealthy. We had a man that used to come there by the name of Dave Hynde. He had that great big pipe business, galvanised pipe, the water pipe - Murray Moore, is it? I think it was. He was the manager and director of that, tremendous company. I think they supplied nearly all the pipe for Australia. He used to come there and he'd stay there for six and eight weeks and do nothing but fish, have his wife there, just board there.

KH: Was there a track along the river down to Lobbs Hole?

BD: No, you can't follow the river all the way to Lobbs Hole, no. You have to get away from it, down from it. We had a pretty good track for about four or five miles down it and up. And this Dave Hynde I talked to you about, he'd let us know when he was coming. I suppose He came there every year of my life, I know, he never missed. But he always wanted a horse and he used to ride, you see, probably three miles before he'd - then he'd get off and he'd fish about there all day. He said he'd get away a bit from the crowd, where everybody dobbs in. And old Austin used to do the same thing, they were a bit cunning, they get away from where the usual crowd get, catch the fish at. We had a lot of people.

KH: Do you remember the Shanley's at all, Mick or Tom Shanley?

BD: I knew of 'em but I didn't know 'em very much. They were all Adaminaby. We never went in that direction much, Tumut was sort of our town. I used to go over there a bit for sport, you know, tennis and cricket, and that's all I went to Adaminaby for. You couldn't go there shopping because there was only enough there for Adaminaby, only a little place.

KH: That says a lot about Adaminaby. That's a bit different to the present town which caters for tourists more.

BD: Yeah, well, before like, when trucks come in - mum had a lorry and you'd bring it to Tumut down here to this - where Bob Bailey is at the moment, that was the Tumut Co-op. Oh, Fred Baker owned it at the time, it was Baker's General

Store. You probably couldn't put the order on a five ton truck, you'd have to take out with you. She used to always deal there because it was a big place and plenty of stuff. Remember when we used to go with the truck to Batlow about this time of the year? We'd pack it with as much fruit - we had to take our own boxes - as much fruit as you could get on, apples, Granny Smiths - 5/- a case. You'd have it loaded right up roping them on. We'd take them up there and there'd be apple pies all winter. They'd keep to nearly Christmas.

KH: By then there was a road up Talbingo Mountain, I suppose.

BD: By then, yes, I'm sort of talking in the meantime now. Yes, the road - I think the road must have been - 1883 they cut the road to the top of Talbingo. Well, it would only be another say three years, at the most, before it would be connected through, wouldn't it, all good going, no big cuttings or anything.

KH: What about the road along Long Plain? You know you can go along Long Plain now and you can go right down to Brindabella?

BD: Yes.

KH: Do you know when that road was put in?

BD: That was put in for the power line.

KH: By the SMA?

BD: Yes.

KH: So in the early '50s - - -

BD: So that they could follow that. Yes, that would be the early '50s.

KH: There would have been a road in along there to Cooleman and Peppercorn, wouldn't there?

BD: You couldn't go up there. You could go to Brindabella that way, I think, if you really had to, with a sulky or a spring cart or something, you know, by dodging and cutting a log off here and there. No thoroughfare, no.

KH: No. It was mainly done by the SMA?

BD: That's right. Do you know what they call Broken Cart?

KH: Yes, the Broken Cart track.

BD: Well, then, a lot of people, save coming down Talbingo to take their sheep home that way, they would arrive here at Tumut and they go to the head of the plain and then they Come down through Broken Cart and come out here through Lacmalac and Micalong. That was a - they could bring their

wagonette, you know, the two wheel thing with the horse in the shafts and the cover over it. But no road where you could drive a motor car those times. But, of course, if you had the jeep now you can go where the horse couldn't go.

KH: Do you remember Charlie Bell at all, the fishing inspector?

BD: Yes, I knew him well. Yeah, he used to come and stay with us.

KH: At the caves?

BD: And here sometimes, he come over here. I used to go round with him. He used to pick me up and take me with him for two or three days when you know when was doing his runs. I always had to take my rifle and shoot the cormorants He had a set on them too, the same as he had on illegal fishing.

KH: I'm glad he didn't set you on shooting people. He was pretty hard on people, wasn't he?

BD: Wasn't he. He followed a cousin of ours from the Burrinjuck Dam to Sydney once. He knew the fellow, with his binoculars in the boat, you see, and he knew he had nets in and by the time he got, he couldn't get him because he got out and in his car and went - he had the boat hired and you see, he just left it there. And he knew him by his face. So he waited and he followed him to Sydney - he knew where he lived by the address in the phone book. So he went one early morning early and he watched the house and when this fellow come out and went off to work he waited for a good while and then he went and knocked on the door, you see, and a woman come. He said, "Are you Mrs Ford?" She said, "Yes." "Oh," he said, "I think your husband does a bit of fishing sometimes, does he?" He said, "I'm a bit interested in fishing." He said, "I'd like to find out where I can go to catch some fish." He said, "He'd know some good spots?" "Oh my word" she said, "he knows all the good spots." She said, "He's only just come back from fishing." She said, "Come in and have a look." And she opened the fridge door and there was these great big trout laying there. He pulled them out and put 'em in a bag. He said, "I'll take these with me and," he said, "your name is Mrs ....., your husband's name is ..." so and so. Took him through the courts and summonsed him. So what you'll go to. He had it all worked out nicely, didn't he? He knew how to even get in there and have a look in that fridge without - - -

KH: There's some terrible tales told about Charlie Bell. Why do you think he was so set on doing his job so thoroughly? This fellow Gill netted 'em, see.

BD: Well, he had a terrible set on blokes that netted fish. Oh, he deserved it - - -

Side 2, Tape 2

BD: What I mean, f they make a law that you're not to net trout, well, that's it. They're doing it all the time and you're just unfortunate to get caught, but these fellows he more or less - they'd been dodging him and tricking him for a long time and that'd please him, he'd get the best of them for once.

KH: Yes, that's right. What about Fred Feint, do you remember Fred Feint the dog trapper?

BD: Yes. He was the great dog trapper, yes.

KH: He covered a fair bit of ground, I believe, seemed to.

BD: My word, he was the best dog trapper ever.

KH: Was he?

BD: Oh yes. He could tell you I know my brother and I had our sheep, we lost 60 one night with the dogs, and we tailed him and it was about this time of the year. The sheep had just all gone, there was only ours left. "Oh," he said, "I'll go up and have a look," he said, "where your sheep are." And he came back and he seen us, he said, "There's two dogs in, you know that?" "No." He said, "I went out, I know where they come from, I went out along where the dogs run on the Simpsons Ridge, and there's definitely two dogs come along there." "But," he said, "Are you fellows going to leave your sheep there for the - do you want to keep your sheep there?" "Oh," we said, "we've got to winter them up here somewhere." "Oh," he said, He said, "The day after tomorrow I'll have 'em. I've got to back now and get my traps, and I'll set 'em tomorrow. I'll 'ave 'em the next day." And by gee, he had 'em. But if the fellows hadn't have been gone with their sheep he would've only had one, you see. But he said, "They're all gone now," he said, "I'll have 'em both," he said. "You fellows have got to stay here for the winter," You've nowhere to go But he caught 'em both. He's so good. So what he'd done, if they'd been still there in another month or two, he would have only caught one and he would have let the other fellow keep nibbling at them, or otherwise what they used to do to him - that was his living you see, you see, - "Oh the same dog's killing, we're going to stand you down", and he got no money.

KH: Oh I see, he had to keep up a certain quota.

BD: He said, "You've always got to have one killing somewhere," he said, "to keep - I've got to eat," he said, "And If I go and put me traps out and get them all straight away" - so he would put four or five traps out and only decoy one, see. While he was setting the others, if there was anybody about, he wouldn't take any care, he'd have his scent everywhere. But when he was going to put the one down and decoy it he would have a bag and hands in the gloves and all sorts of things.

KH: Apparently they used to do things like get the urine from a bitch that was on heat?

BD: Yes.

KH: I've heard stories of having special dog kennels with a metal base so they get the urine and they'd take that in a little bowl and they'd spread that around the trap to attract the dingo?

BD: Yes, I've heard of somebody, but he didn't do that. He said he had something better. But I know fellows who did do that.

KH: What was his technique, did he let you in to the secret?

BD: I don't know, it's something. He never - he only ever told anybody his secret. He had a son and he wouldn't even tell him. But there was another old fellow that used to do that, that you just mentioned. And I don't know what happened to him, he couldn't sort of clean the dogs up. I think he used to trap one and the other one 'd be there and see what was happening and got real shy. But I don't know how they kept them secret. But there's only one fellow, he couldn't catch dogs. When Fred Feint died and he got this recipe left to him which had to be delivered into his hands and on no accounts must it be given to his son. It was given to Duncan Prosser - Duncan's still alive, just over here.

KH: Yes, I saw him a few years ago.

BD: We went to his 80th birthday a couple of years ago. Well, he gave it to Duncan. Do you know Duncan started catching dogs the next day, like the next week as you might as well put it. So it was pretty good stuff. I said to him, I said to Duncan, "What's the recipe for that stuff for catching the dogs?" "Well", he said, "I suppose you would be the best mate I got, but you don't want to catch dogs, do you?" I said, "No, I'm not going dog trapping, I was just curious to see what it was." "Well", he said, "it distinctly said on there that I wasn't to tell anybody about what it was." And he said, "It's not that I don't trust you," he said, "But I'm just breaking what he's told me to do." But he said, "If you want some," he said, "I'll mix you up a gallon if you want it." I said, "No, I don't want it." He said, "I didn't think you did." I said, "You stick to it."

KH: So if Duncan dies he might take the secret with him?

BD: I suppose he will now.

LD: Is he alive, Duncan?

BD: Yes. I seen him the other day walking up town with Kippey.

LD: And you know Mrs Cotterell, do you?

KH: No.

LD: She's the one that's in the home.

KH: Yes, someone said I should go and see her.

LD: Yes, I went a couple of weeks ago, I went over and seen her.

BD: She had sugar diabetes, and then they had to take her leg off. That's upset her. She's 81 or 82 now.

KH: Do you remember a poem called the "Yan Yan Stakes?

BD: No.

KH: John Rudd recited some of it the other day to me. Do you know John Rudd from Reynalla?

BD: No, I don't know him.

KH: Well, it was about a girl - it was about one of the Yans at Kiandra and it's the story about all these men who tried to win her heart and it goes through all the different characters who were around the mountains at that time - this would be back in the 1910s probably. I've been trying to find the rest of the poem, it's called the "Yan Yan Stakes." You haven't heard of it?

BD: No. The only one that I heard - I don't know who made this up - but the one I heard about Frying Pan Creek - did you know that creek in Adaminaby, Frying Pan Creek, they put the dam over it, it's covered.

KH: Yes.

BD: And the blacks, they reckon, used to migrate from here up into the mountains in the summer for the bogong moths, you know, when they were on the season. They'd get the odd kangaroo and wallabies. A not so hot climate, I s'pose, up there. Well, I know old people out here often used to tell me when I was kid going to school over here about the blacks going through, like a whole tribe, heading for the mountains. One or two of them would be old fellows, you know, come over and try and yabber to you and the others would be all shy, you know, take a big circle around the house where you couldn't get a look at them. But apparently this Frying Pan Creek, it was named after a black fellow. This kid was supposed to be with him up there for the first time, you see, and he's giving him this "Scene: Dramatic personae. Shock-headed black fellow, boy on a pony" - like short-cutting all the time - "snow flakes are falling in the winter, (you see) so gentle and slow. Youngster says "Frying Pan" - that's the black fellow - "what makes it snow?" And then Frying Pan, with confidence, makes the reply: "Shakin' big flour bag up in the sky." Then the kid said, "Surely that's brag, whose big enough shake such a bag." And the old fellow tells him then, "Them who shakes such a bag" - he said, "What parts I'm telling you, old

minister Dodd.". He said, "He tell you in Sunday school, big fellow God. He drivin' his bullock dray, then thunder go. Shakin' big flour bag, tumble down snow." They reckon that was made up there at Adaminaby.

KH: One of the Aborigines?

BD: He was trying to explain to him where the snow come from, see.

KH: Who taught you that poem, how did you pick it up?

BD: I don't know, I think George.

KH: George Day?

BD: Yes. It's the black fellow and his boy, you see

Scene: Dramatic personae:

Shock-headed black fellow, boy on a pony.

Snow flakes are falling, so gentle and slow,

Youngster says "Frying Pan, what makes it snow?"

And then, Frying Pan cake makes the reply, "Shakin' big flour bag up in the sky."

Then ... smiles at it "Surely that's brag,

Who is it big enough shake such a bag?"

What parts I'm telling you old minister Dodd

He telling you Sunday school, big fellow God.

Riding his bullock dray, then thunder go.

Shakin' big flour bag, tumble down snow."

I suppose that's when he cracked his whip, thunder went. See

KH: Good, I like that. It is probably one you learned as a boy, is it? It's one you learnt a long time ago

BD: I can remember saying that once at school when I was about 11.

KH: Do you remember any other poems?

BD: Oh, I don't think so.

KH: From the mountains?

BD: No. I never knew what it was all about until I went to Adaminaby once and they were talking about fishing, you know. The Frying Pan Creek runs into the Eucumbene up above the wall and one of the fellows there was playing tennis or something. "Oh" he said, "plenty of fish down in Frying Pan Creek at the moment." I said, "Frying Pan Creek?" He said, "Yes." I said, "That'd be where they're talking about those black fellows years ago, Frying Pan Creek, I wondered where it was." He said, "Oh, you've heard that have you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "That's made up, he said, down here on the plain, he said, Adaminaby, that's where it come from." Black fellows camp there, see.

KH: And he was, I suppose, as black as a frying pan, a burnt frying pan.

BD: That first hut up the plain there, that was Campbells, that's the first one on the left. And then the next one is a new one that some fellows from Cooma built a few years back after the parks took over. What do they call that? I don't know, it's just a little two room place built out of weatherboard and things. The next old one you come to is Long Plain.

KH: Yes, It is also known as Coolnbil Plain.

BD: That was Coolnbil's country. That's a big place down here at - I don't know where it is, down about Narrandera somewhere, further on out there somewhere. Then you get up to, that's Coolamon then. That's where Tom Taylor was brought up there, that's where he was born in there. Then, I think, round under there was a little place there what Bill Harris built, when he got married to Tom Taylor's sister. And then over from there towards Currango - is that still there? A place they call the Pockets?

KH: Yes. We have just done a lot of work on Pockets.

BD: Well the first time I ever went to a job was at the Pockets. It come in a year, when I was 18 - I don't know what year that if I started deducting was. I was 18 and the flies were bad and I think they had 80,000 sheep on Currango at the time. They had six stands at the homestead in the shearing shed and they had the men there working. And I went with two men to the Pockets and we shore under a tarpaulin there, I think, for two weeks - like crutched - with the flies. And every, it was lucky in the whole day if you found a sheep that wasn't struck and if you hung your coat on a peg the flies'd blow it, you know; It was terrible, you wouldn't believe it. Never been like it since, I don't think, ever before. By gee we had to work hard. Those days they were wanting to you was behind that way, sheep were dying off them, you know, you'd be up at daylight they'd be in to it. And then we all packed up and went to Wambrook - that's just out of Cooma - stayed ....., that's a big place there. Done 20,000 there. That was when I was 18. Anyhow we finished up one night and they said, "You can go home in the morning." I can remember hopping on me horse and away I went. It's just a ride to these places.

KH: Well, I think we're doing all right. I think I have just about got everything.

BD: Is the Taylors still at the old Currango Homestead?

KH: Yes.

BD: I thought she'd given that up, or she can't?

KH: In the summer. They're at Adaminaby in the winter. She says that may be this will be the last year.

BD: Well, she was at Currango and Tom had a little place and he was there and they had a home in Adaminaby and they had one here in Tumut. They've sold the one here in Tumut. They might have sold the one in Tumut to buy the one in Adaminaby. Well, the little property he had, has he still got it, I wonder?

KH: Heatherbrae, is it?

BD: Somewhere on the Murrumbidgee there, below Yaouk.

KH: I don't know.

Mrs D. What do they do for a living over there?

KH: Renting out all the buildings at Currango to fisherman.

BD: Still have all the clients there?

KH: Oh yes, lot's of people, more than ever probably.

BD: She don't look after 'em like she did years ago, though. I don't think she can do that now. I think they have to do for themselves, don't they?

KH: Yes, they do.

BD: She used to have these meals at 10 or 11 o'clock when the fisherman come home, ready cooked for 'em, you know.

KH: Did she?

BD: Oh yes, years ago. Of course they paid for it - she fed 'em, see. But still, there's a limit to how long you can work, isn't it?

Mrs D: We used to have a lot of that business of coming home - fishermen - late and having to get their meals for them.

KH: Yes, I was there just before Christmas and there were a few people who were very old clients. She didn't cook for them but some other lady did and they didn't come in til half past nine.

Mrs D: Well, it's late, isn't it, when you're working all day. We used to have to work hard there.

BD: You know, when I first - when I can first remember - I knocked off school and had to go to work at the cave, we pulled a ..... horses and cut it with an axe in the bush and then sawed - put a cross-cut saw - they done this after you'd finished. You had your tea at night, you'd go out and saw enough wood for the next day, put a cross-cut on - you had a horse like this.

KH: Yes, I've done it with a bow saw, I haven't done it with a cross-cut saw.

BD: Well, you'd saw away there until you got tired and then you'd go to bed. You get up in the morning and saw all over again. I've seen some changes, you know. Then we got a water-wheel - wasn't that a marvellous - - -

Buster Day

KH: At Yarrangobilly?

BD: At the caves. Tapped into the line coming to the reservoir ... and it used to just drive it enough - you couldn't push wood on quick, but still you didn't mind waiting a little while. You would put a saw that big, you'd bring the wood over and you could go like that with it, cut the blocks. Oh gee, this was as modern as you could get. Then we got a bigger one, later, and they put a big reservoir in to drive the electricity. Well then we had tons of power. It used to whistle when it was going around, you know. 300 tons of wood a year we used to use and that all had to be carted in. When we got lorries and could go up the hill and get three or four loads a day instead of one with a team of horses, it was good. And then it wouldn't ..... when I come out of that and get down here ..... get the chain saw - he beats 'em all. I've got big chain saws now and when I cut a tree down I can't keep up the saw, it's going quicker than me.

KH: Have you got plenty of wood on your property?

BD: I did have, but it's been picked at for probably 100 years and you're getting into the tough ones now. You've got to saw the tree down that the fellow walked around about 20 years ago and said, "Well, that's too tough for me."

End Side 2, Tape 2
Conclusion of Interview