

INTERVIEW OF WALLY KELL, WITH DAVID BUTLER, BY KLAUS HUENEKE, 7th
JUNE, 1984.

[NOTE: THE FIRST QUARTER OF SIDE ONE IS BLANK AND RECORDING BEGINS
MID-SENTENCE]

WK: ... four or five sets at the one time, wouldn't they, David? ... McDonalds. There's two there, one between there and the dam there.

DB: Yes and Jack's and --

WK: That's, that's right on the river. That's four and who else --

DB: Lance --

WK: There were at least three or four more on the Warogong side.

DB: Yes, what about - who did Goobarra? Both sides there.

WK: Oh, they only come down to Rock Flat.

DB: Yeah, but who had the tank over on Stinking Creek? .. . There was a lot set up there on Stinking Creek and did that hill there.

WK: That's right, they did too.

DB: And then there was another lot, another tank set up the gully opposite Stinking Creek, up in there somewhere. Who was, was that Lance's, or Nolte's ?

WK: I think Lance was up high.

DB: Yeah, wasn't the Noltes up there somewhere?

WK: Yeah, but they were on the river for a start, the Noltes, and then they moved down there, I think.

DB: On to Goobarra. What, Dick McDonald stopped at the top end of Goobarra?

WK: Yes, well he only stayed there for a few years and then after he built that house, he must've went to Blowering.

DB: Yeah. And then Jack ... There was no-one in between Dick and Jack was there?

WK: Not after they cut up through Irwins[?] They cut all that country right up on this side of the river, right along this side of the river, right up to Irwin's. They run into Park there, and then they put them out.

DB: Yeah, well, who was up in the Manoo? Who was the old fellow that was up in Gordon's there? Real old - Sinclair? Was it Sinclair or some name like that? Up in Gordon's there, living in the hut.

WK: Yeah, I know the bloke in there.

DB: I can't think of his name.

WK: I can't remember if he was cutting euco or not.

DB: Yeah, he was cutting euco.

KH: Well, would most of the clearing, you know, on the slopes going up the river, would that be due to the euco cutting?

WK: No. All the clearing would be done originally on the forty acres and in the lease behind. The euco lot only cut the second growth more or less. When they went off the freehold ground and onto the Park, the Park just come along and pushed them off.

KH: Right. And it was to make eucalyptus oil? The euco cutting, mainly?

DB: Yeah.

KH: Or did they use it for anything else as well?

DB: No.

KH: It was sort of like a distilling plant, was it? Like a way of concentrating the liquid out of the
....

WK: Out of the leaves.

DB: It was all full of eucalyptus, every one of 'em.

KH: Right. But they must've gone through quite a lot of, I mean there must've been a lot of lopped trees around for a while, when they were into the thick of it.

WK: Yes, well, I s'pose that really would've been done probably forty or fifty years before the eucos went in there.

KH: Oh, right, the clearing, yes.
 WK: Then you've got your big trees coming up. And then, if you were cutting there, say for four years, you go back and cut the suckers. Go and get them on the stumps.
 KH: Because you want to encourage the leaf growth, don't you? You don't want it right up high, you want it low down, I suppose.
 DB: Well, if you encourage the leaf suckers you get nearly twice the quantity. Because you're only doing half the work, you're not falling big trees.
 KH: What sort of money were people earning? I mean, this is back, what, in the forties? When they were doing this? What sort of money were people making a week?
 WK: Oh, round about average wages. They wouldn't make any more than wages. It's something like all contracts work. If you'd got a stand of timber that'd run well, you'd get more oil for less labour. And if you got a bad fall of timber, you got less oil for the same work. And average out, I think, about wages'd be ...
 DB: The only difference was they were working for themselves and not working for a boss. That's the majority why they went out.
 KH: So they'd then take their bottles of eucalyptus oil into town.
 DB: Forty-four gallon drums mainly.
 KH: Forty-four gallon drums. Right. And sell it in town.
 WK: They had agents in here for the companies. And they'd take it in and sell it here and he'd send it away for the company.
 DB: Out of a four-by-four tank you'd get oh, between three to five gallons of euco. Out of a tank. One cut and that's a full day's work, if you worked from daylight to dark. A four-by-four tank.
 KH: Oh, one of those big square old ones. Yeah.
 DB: And when you steamed that in, you'd get - if it ran well, you'd get five gallons. If it didn't run well, you'd get three gallons. But you could say on an average, you'd average nearly four gallons. Raw eucalyptus.
 KH: And they'd pay you so much per gallon.
 DB: So much per pound.
 KH: So much per pound. Oh, right, yeah. Did you ever do it?
 WK: Not much.
 KH: Did you?
 DB: Yeah, I did a little bit of it. It's hard work.
 KH: When did it end?
 DB: It's still going, in phases. There's still some euco and there's er, up around the Tumbarumba area, there's still, Clothiers[?] still buying up there.
 WK: The company's still working, the
 DB: Yeah, that's still buying, it's about eleven hundred dollars a drum now, they tell me. A forty-four. But you can't get your tanks now and things like that, and the old ones are nearly finished and the young ones don't know how to distil. And there's still a tank up at Gilmore and they're going to start up there again. Stevenses[?]
 KH: Do you remember Billy McLaren?
 WK: Yeah, I've heard of him.
 KH: Heard of him?
 WK: But I didn't know him.
 KH: Didn't know him. No, he would've been up there before, I suppose. He was a miner apparently. He worked - did he work up Emu Creek?
 WK: Yeah.
 KH: This is back, what this'd be before the Stokes' time, would it?
 WK: Possibly about the same time. I think it might've been just before, but I'll, round about that time, I'd say.
 DB: What's that hill of yours, your block called?
 WK: That's the McLaren block.
 KH: Your block?

WK: Forty acres. He selected that. Hewent in there mining and then he selected. ... And when he was finished or wanted to get out, either one or the other, it was before my time, he sold it to Elliott. And then Elliott sold it to George Harris. I bought it off him. That was 1943.
 KH: So Billy McLaren goes back a long way then, doesn't he?
 WK: Well, I was up there I suppose in 1922 or '3 and the house was falling down then.
 KH: Was it in the same site as your present hut?
 WK: Yes. Oh, within a few feet from here to your van.
 KH: Oh, really? On that bit of a flat above the --
 WK: Little bit of a knob, sort of knob that sits out there before you get on to the little flat. It'd only be a few feet. It was east of my present position.
 DB: That's where all those gooseberries were on those, is it? Odd block was there, ...with the gooseberries growing over them?
 WK: Oh, in the creek?
 DB: No, just over, we used to pick gooseberries, you'd pick gooseberries there.
 WK: No, my time of day they were down further. Wasn't any just round the hut.
 KH: There's a bit of an apple tree, a pretty young one just below the hut now.
 WK: Yeah, I put that in...There's an old pear tree above it on the eastern side of the hut, it might be dead by now. Between the hut and the water race. It was there when McLaren was there.
 KH: How long was it since you've been up there?
 WK: Well, I haven't been back since 1975.
 KH: Not even for a look?
 WK: No. When I come out, I come out. They hunted me out so I stayed out.
 KH: So, now Jack, I've got Jack Elliott down here.
 WK: He owned that block, he bought that block off McLaren.
 KH: Right. So it was McLaren, Jack Elliott, then George Harris and then yourself.
 WK: That's right.
 KH: Did they, what was the size of the lease in there?
 WK: At that time, when Elliott had it, oh, McLaren rather, when McLaren had it, he had forty acres of freehold and three hundred and twenty acres, was the standard thing behind it.
 KH: Was that up the valley?
 WK: Straight up the ridge.
 KH: Up the ridge?
 WK: Up the ridge and up the creek as well. See, the forty acres only got back so far and then the other block went back further and across this, nearly on top of the hill, and back down to the creek. Gave you about a half a mile frontage for the creek, or a little better.
 KH: But, what about Jack Elliott? Did he have more land?
 WK: Oh, he had I don't know how many blocks out the other way towards Micalong. And he had a homestead out there, well, we might call it a hut but it was a pretty big one. Way back, before and I first went up there. But he came out of there about 1922. He was in there before then, see, he owned nearly all this country down here, about a mile down, right, for four mile down, straight down, all along the river, back under the side of the hill. And they split it up into nine soldier blocks, I think it is, after the war.
 KH: After the first war?
 WK: Yeah. In about '22 they took over and he came out of up there and went away. He used to live down here but he had stock all up in that Micalong ...
 KH: So he was quite a wealthy man?
 WK: Well, in those days he was one of the biggest graziers out here. I'd say he'd be one of the wealthiest men down here. At that time.
 KH: Did he do any more clearing up there?
 WK: No, not so much. Possibly out on top where the hut was, it'd be probably be freehold in those days and he had a horse let out but apart from that it was all bush country. It stayed bush country until the Park took over and of course they didn't have any axes in there then. Still bush country until the Forestry come in. But where his hut was, now would be Forestry.
 KH: Oh, up high? Right.

WK: Up high. They've exchanged some of the Park for some of the forest somewhere else. To get their area where they wanted it.

KH: Yeah. What about - Cecil talked about a miner's hut opposite, across the creek from where your hut is. Up into the hill there.

WK: Yes. There was two there.

KH: Oh, was there?

WK: In the thirties, 1930s. One got burnt in the bushfire in '46 and the other one, I think, fell down.

KH: 'Cos he told me a story about a guy who was in, or who owned, or was working there, whether it was a miner, I'm not sure, but apparently he died there and he had dogs. And the dogs were barking and they wouldn't let anyone near the hut. And the story goes that the police or whoever was there shot the dogs first to find out what had happened to the old guy who was living there. Do you know anything about that story?

WK: I'm not real clear on that one.

KH: Or the name of the guy? I mean, this'd be folklore now.

WK: Yeah.

DB: Nope, I've never heard of that one before either. You'd have to be on that one, Wal.

WK: No, I'm not too sure who that'd be. That - er, there was quite a few like that in that bush, you see, in those early days. In that mining era, there was people all through that bush. And they all had little humpies or huts or bush- whatever you call it.

KH: And this'd be back in the 1870s and '80s, I suppose, would it? Or would it go right back to the Kiandra goldrush days? Like, that was the 1860s.

WK: No. I think it'd be later than that. I think it'd be in the later eighties because a lot of this country down here wasn't opened up till 1840 and, no, I think it'd be late in the eighties, probably from '88 on, at least.

KH: It sounded as though it was a miner because apparently there are some old workings up Emu Creek, is that right? Old race lines and things.

WK: You would find workings on Harry Stokes's selection, here and there along the river all the way to the branches where the two rivers meet. And Emu Creek up about a mile, a mile and a half at the bottom. And then you'd miss a piece from there up over the falls, and from there out toward Micalong and right through that old stock route, stock used to go right through there. There's mining done all through it.

KH: But not when you were around? Before your time.

WK: No. Well, I've seen them mining along the river up here in Stokes's country. But only just the one or two. Charlie Stokes was one, and Bill Stokes and Dick Cribb were another one. They cut a piece on this side of the river. Harry Mann(?) was up there. But those fellows that were there in the - Cecil talked about those huts - they were on relief, which wasn't much from the government in those times. And they were almost starving. And they elected to go in there and find a bit of gold and live off the country more or less. To eke out a living.

KH: So they were kind of subsidised, like a dole...?

WK: They were getting about seven or eight shillings a week, as the dole then.

KH: What it's just enough for a bit of flour and bully beef or something, is it?

WK: Just about enough to keep you going. Then you see you get fish, you get a rabbit, one thing or another. And they tried to eke out a bit with the gold. Well, there was one fellow there, he was down about fifteen or sixteen feet of a cut, he had the water coming over to cut it out, well one six-by-four(?) you get good colours here and you might go three more steps before you got another colour and there's a lot of work in taking all that out. And that's how they were living, they were practically starving.

KH: I think Cecil talked about a long raceline, a long raceline that went, that comes up around the hillside on the other side of your hut. It must intercept the creek way up further.

WK: Not so terribly far.

DB: Only a stone's throw ...

WK: It doesn't go up, I s'pose it wouldn't be half a mile from my hut. [interruption] But it comes right down to the junction of the river. From my hut to the river. It comes right down that hill.

KH: The raceline?

WK: Yeah, it didn't cut off at my hut. It'd be just as far from my hut to the junction, on that raceline, as what it would be from there to the head of it.

KH: Oh, I see. When I walked up Emu Creek there seems to be, there were suggestions that there must've been some more huts up there at some stage. There's bits of fences and there's fruit trees and bits of racelines. It looks like, you know, you could almost think there were three or four cottages up there at some stage. ... Do you know? Further up, I don't know, about half a mile up beyond your place, there's some old fences and fruit trees down on your left.

WK: I think those fruit trees came down with the water. From up high. But there's no dwellings that I ever heard of between McLaren's and that place of Elliott's that I told you [about], up on the stock route.

KH: What about Peter the Chinaman? Can you help me with Peter the Chinaman?

WK: He was in that area between Broken Cart and Dubbo Creek. As near as I could tell you. He was mining up there. As I tell you there was a lot of people all through that area, in the early days.

KH: But do you remember anything about him or anything unusual?

WK: No. Not in my time.

KH: No stories? Nothing about Peter the Chinaman? I mean, it seemed as though, from what Cecil was saying, that quite a lot of people would have known Peter the Chinaman, at that time.

WK: No. I think the people that were out further would've known him. But not in this area, down low. He wouldn't have come down much. But he'd be definitely before my time. I think he'd be dead before I was up there.

KH: What township would they head towards? What'd be their nearest sort of ...?

WK: Their town? Tumut.

KH: Yes. It'd still be Tumut, wouldn't it.

WK: They'd have to come through Micalong and then Argalong, down that way.

KH: Over from the tops, down, yeah.

WK: That'd be their route to travel. Or they could go to Kiandra.

KH: Oh yeah. Oh, via Long Plain and, yeah, right.

WK: They could go right through.

KH: So that Broken Cart track's a very old route, isn't it?

WK: Oh, yes, yes.

KH: Do you think it was the old road from Yass to Yarrangobilly Village or something?

WK: No... Oh, yes, it could've been. They used to take stock through there. In 1928 they took stock through off this end of Broken Cart to Yass. Overland. There could've been a road there, too.

KH: I think someone was telling me that was more popular for taking stock through before they cut the track up Talbingo hill.

WK: Possibly.

KH: Because that was a real stumbling block for a long time.

WK: Talbingo was a stumbling block. Yes. Yes, a lot of the stock would've come that Micalong, what they call the Broken Cart-Micalong route before Talbingo. For sure.

KH: But drays and bullock wagons and people, too.

WK: Yeah, it'd be a better route to go that way, too.

DB: It was only a pack-horse through Talbingo, earlier, wasn't it?

WK: Well, you had to go up the back of it, see. That's off where it goes now.

DB: Up through the reserve, and then up, and then come out just this side of the top of the hill. That was very steep there. I've walked down there once. And it was only a pack-horse track.

KH: Where's that?

DB: Just before you get up on the landing, the first landing at Talbingo Mountain, or hill, there's a road that goes straight, oh, the track goes straight down the hill there. You'd never get a dray up there, never.

KH: Up, down at Jounama Creek, is it? On that other side of the hill?

DB: Yeah.

KH: Yeah, I've heard of that.
 DB: It was only a pack-horse track, that.
 KH: At the top of that is a bit of a saddle and you can stop there, I think.
 DB: Yeah, and you come out just down, you see where trucks use low gear, you go down the first little piece and then they put a stockpile of gravel there, crushed gravel, well, the road, the track comes up along side of that.
 KH: Well, I've looked down there and it's a hell of a steep slope.
 DB: You'd never get a dray or sulky up there. It was always pack-saddle. In fact, I can remember someone saying they left their gear at the foot of the hill and all went on pack-saddles. And then come back and picked it up at the foot of the hill. It's terrible steep that. You haven't, you never went that way, did you? No, I walked down there once and it was too steep.
 KH: What about, you were talking outside about Kell's Hut, you told me when it was built.
 WK: 1946.
 KH: 1946.
 WK: That's when it was finished. So it was near enough, wasn't it?
 KH: Did you cut slabs in the valley there?
 WK: Yeah. The only thing I took in there was a few floorboards, the battens under the iron, and the iron. The rest was produced on the place.
 KH: Did you take the iron in on horseback?
 WK: No, actually I got a truck to go up as far as Harry Stokes's. And he couldn't get any further in the wet weather. And I carted it from there with a little jinker, one draught horse and a jinker.
 KH: How long was the iron on that hut?
 WK: Eight feet.
 KH: Eight feet. Because there's some sort of cut-off, isn't there? For a horse, I think, you've got to carry four foot iron, you can carry four foot iron on a horse but you could carry six foot --
 WK: Oh, I daresay you would, too. Yeah.
 KH: Six foot's too long, I think, or something like that.
 WK: I had a little trailer-type of jinker thing, with shafts in it, I put the draught horse in it, and put the iron on the bottom and boards on top and tied 'em round.
 KH: Oh right. Like a sledge.
 WK: And I couldn't get the wheel vehicle over the river, I took it up to Stokes's house and I slide it from there up on a sledge. If you were up there recently you would've found a road that cuts in just above my hut. That road there, when you were there? A fire trail?
 KH: It was two ... four years ago now, I think, when I was up there.
 DB: Yeah, it was there then.
 KH: The fire trail goes up onto the ridge and then - well above the hut, in fact you can hardly see the hut from it.
 WK: No, well, it wasn't put in for access to the hut, it was put in for a fire trail. To get out onto the top country.
 KH: In fact we missed the hut, we walked past it. Because I didn't know exactly where it was.
 DB: That's all euco country there. That has been "eucoed" years ago. Jack did that, didn't he?
 WK: Yes.
 DB: I think you might've helped him there then.
 WK: I did.
 DB: That's all shot up thicker now and you wouldn't see the, well, when I was last up there, you can't see it unless you're up - on one ridge you can look back and see the hut.
 KH: Yeah, one of us happened to see it.
 DB: Yeah, and that's the only way you can see it ... But see, you're along half a mile above the hut at least.
 KH: That's right.
 DB: And then halfway between there and the hut is where this drain goes around. Water ...
 KH: Water race. That's right, yes. It looked like there'd been pigs up there or something when I was there.
 WK: There would've been.

KH: A lot of the ground's been turned over.
 DB: Yeah, well, they'd be after all those apples. They follow those apple trees round every morning.
 KH: Do they?
 DB: Yeah.
 KH: Yeah, that's right, pigs like apples. They like anything.
 DB: You want a wild pig, you wait there in the morning, just after daylight, and you find they'll come to you under the apple tree.
 KH: Really?
 DB: There's quite a mob there sometimes, isn't there, Wal?
 WK: Yeah. I suppose there's more there now, too, Dave?
 DB: Yeah. But if you're ever there and the apples are on you've got a beaten track from tree to tree.
 KH: I see. Well, those trees'd be getting on now, wouldn't they?
 WK: Oh yes.
 KH: They wouldn't be bearing so well anymore, I would think.
 WK: Oh well, I haven't seen them for ten years, see, but those apples that were up on the flat, further up from the hut, they were there when I went there.
 KH: Right.
 WK: The fruit trees were there when I went there, before I went there, long before. But they bore right up into the 70s, but whether they're doing any good now or not, I don't know. I haven't been back.
 DB: If you get apples to keep like them, it'd be good. Never have a cool store and you'd have 'em all the winter to spring, nearly Christmas. They were pretty good apples.
 KH: How long would you stay up there, when you took stock up there?
 WK: Oh, usually go in in the first week or so in December, till about April. Sometimes it'd be a bit later coming out.
 KH: But would you be in there all that time?
 WK: Oh no. No. I was backwards and forwards. Oh, yes, I had 'em fenced in, see --
 KH: Oh, you had a fence all around your bit as well as the leasehold.
 WK: They were fenced in, see, and I'd take 'em up and go up periodically to watch 'em.
 KH: So you didn't have to do a big muster or anything like that?
 WK: No. I'll have to get 'em one day. ... Sometimes you'd stay overnight or perhaps two or three days, or something like that, but you were more or less up and down.
 KH: Did you use salt at all, to attract them, to bring them ...?
 WK: Oh yes.
 KH: Because that was a big thing apparently, in the, in the higher country they used --
 WK: Like lollies, they like it but they don't need it.
 KH: So, what did you say earlier? How many sheep did you take in there? Or was it cattle or...?
 WK: Oh. They restricted us to a certain amount. But I used to take about three hundred sheep in there each year.
 KH: Mainly sheep?
 WK: Yeah. Oh, just odd time I took cattle but I never had enough cattle to bother with. More than a few sheep there. But I was only a small man compared to a lot of them up there, you know. But some of those others on this side had the bigger leases, like they used to run thousands there through, over the years.
 KH: Would they go through your land, to go up higher?
 WK: No. They were all on this side of the creek.
 KH: Right. Because you were kind of a dead end at that time, I suppose.
 WK: It was. Yes, it was a good, quiet place. But the only other way they come in was through Micalong and down. They had leases in behind that way. But never ever worried coming down much. But the others were all on the opposite side of the river. Mainly the sheep country was run from, say, Harry Stokes's right up the river on that side, and that to Yarrangobilly and out onto That's where they got more sheep than anything, they had cattle, too, but the leases

were stocked over the years with sheep.
 KH: Was that because it's warmer?
 WK: Oh, no, I think it's just the country that they wanted to take up.
 KH: No, why did they take sheep rather than cattle?
 WK: Oh, I suppose because they had 'em.
 KH: Oh, right. That's intrigued me for a long time.
 WK: Some graziers have cattle, some graziers have sheep, some have nix. Well, now, take Freddy Hughes, he's that Australian Estates mob that're up here, they've had a big swathe through here for years, they have thousands and thousands out on that big, on the Riverina. And they used to have thirty, forty thousand sheep in here. And they'd run from the Goodradigbee through to the Yarrangobilly.
 KH: Thirteen or fourteen thousand?
 DB & WK: Thirty and forty thousand.
 KH: Thirty or forty thousand! Crikeys! You wouldn't think there'd be enough country for them.
 WK: Oh, there's a big area there.
 DB: You get up, start going through that back country there, it's a long, long way through there.
 KH: But there must be a lot of open country.
 WK: All open.
 KH: But I mean up high, like Long Plain's open, and Coolamon Plain.
 WK: Oh well, a lot of that upper area is, too.
 DB: You get great big open flats all through where that road is. And just off it. There's Emu Flat up on top. There's Broken Cart Flat - you'd know more...
 WK: You get a lot of that flat country where the creeks come through. And when you get on that higher country, it's not all straight up and down, it's sort of flat on top.
 DB: Dubbo Flat, that's a pretty fair flat.
 WK: Yeah. You have such a big stretch of country. See, you take from the Goodradigbee River right through here to Yarrangobilly, it's a long, long run.
 KH: Yeah, that's true. But a lot of it must've been more open. I mean, with burning and the clearing --
 WK: That was the big advantage. You burnt when you could and then you had fresh feed for the stock right through the year.
 KH: Did you do that, too, in your, up Emu Creek?
 WK: Yeah, until they decided to restrict us.
 KH: Did you burn every year?
 WK: No, you didn't have to burn the same ground every year. Probably every third year.
 KH: Would those fires ever get away?
 WK: No. You always lit 'em when things weren't too dry. They'd mostly go out at night. You'd get a burn say, from eleven o'clock in the daytime until five in the evening. And the sun went, it'd die down, overnight the dew'd come, put it out. Might start up the next day on a log or something like that but apart from that it'd never get away on you.
 KH: That'd be sort of April, May, you'd do that?
 WK: Oh, yes, or November. Before it dried off.
 KH: Oh, I see.
 WK: You could get it two different burning seasons, before it got too hot and when it got cool.
 KH: What, and the sheep would eat the pickings in the summer then? The shoots that come up.
 WK: Well, when you burn country, you get the, you don't burn the roots, you only burn the top. And when you get a shower of rain, the young shoots come up. And you've got green feed right through. Fresh feed. Whereas if you have the old stuff, it's probably three, four years old. See, they don't like it.
 KH: Right. But that'd hold back the shrubs, too, wouldn't it? And the scrub and the trees, too.
 WK: Yeah, it did, too. And the act of stocking keeps the scrub down a lot. See, travelling over it and nipping bits off here and there and one thing and another. But, this country up here's scrubbed up a lot since they took the stock off.
 KH: So you were in there from 1946 -

WK: '43.
 KH: '43. To '75. Every year?
 WK: Yeah. Oh, I mighta missed one year with stocking but I was up and down there most of the time. Until -- but that's a lie, in a way, because I never went back after '74 but they hunted me out in '75. But I, I didn't really go back in '75.
 KH: That's when Coolamine ended, too, and some of those other places.
 WK: What did you say?
 KH: Coolamine, I think, ended then, too. I think all these northern --
 WK: I think everything that had a permissive occupancy ended in '75. And I think anyone that had a snow lease was put out two or three years before.
 DB: '73, I think. One was '73 and one was '75. They gave you an extra two years on your private-owned.
 KH: And would you get up at, was there more rain up at Emu Creek than here?
 DB & WK: Yeah.
 KH: So you'd get --
 WK: You could say we get a thirty-to-thirty-two inch rainfall here, you'd probably get a forty as an average there.
 KH: So there was always more grass up there?
 WK: Oh, I wouldn't say that but it's, er, greener in the summer. When this is dried off here, you've still got green feed there. And of course when you get round about March up there, it starts to dry off.
 KH: Do you remember anything more about the Stokes' family and the mine up there?
 WK: Ohhh. I don't suppose it'd be any benefit to know that they took enough gold out of just near the homestead there to give them an incentive to take up the country and a lease behind it. That's the only thing I could suggest. That's how they came to take up country. See, they were miners and when they got enough money out of the one cut across there, just near the house, that gave them the incentive to take the country up and stock it. And then they went into it, more or less, both.
 KH: Have you been up to the King's Mine? Up to the mine right up?
 WK: I've been there, yeah.
 KH: Wouldn't have still been working when you went up there?
 WK: No. It was closed.
 KH: Because I talked to Duncan Prosser, too, about that, because he worked there.
 WK: Yes, he'd know a fair bit about it.
 DB: There's still trolleys and wheels and stuff still at that mine.
 WK: Yes, but didn't it get burnt though? And what they didn't take away since they got that road in there.
 KH: Apparently after the last war someone went in there and got a lot of it out.
 WK: They, they took a lot of the machinery out years ago. But the stampers were there, that part of it, and there was, when I first went up there, there was at least three huts that you could've lived in.
 KH: Was there?
 WK: Oh yeah. But they got burnt in that bushfire that went through about '45, '46, I'm not sure which year. Cleaned the lot up.
 KH: Gee. And Jack Venables was very good at blacksmithing?
 WK: Very good. Yes.
 KH: Dave just showed me a couple of knives that he made.
 WK: He was very clever that way. He could make spurs, too, as neat as you'd ever buy. A flat sort of a spur that come round on your heel. They were beauties. I know a lot of people that've got 'em.
 DB: And the cattle brands, sheep brands. He'd make 'em good as --
 WK: Letters and everything.
 DB: Yeah, the letters, numbers, whatever you wanted, he could make 'em as good as anyone with all the electrical stuff.

KH: He was also a good carpenter? I mean, he did a lot of building?
 WK: Well, he built all his own sheds and everything. I mean, he was what you would call a bush carpenter. He didn't have all these fancy tools they've got now. But he could put a good building up.
 KH: He certainly wouldn't have had power saws and things.
 WK: No. He didn't build that fibro house of Lindleys'.
 KH: He didn't?
 WK: No.
 KH: Doesn't look the bushman's style.
 WK: But he built all the sheds and things behind it.
 KH: Oh, did he? Yeah. It's rather out of place, that fibro hut up, actually, in some ways.
 WK: Two of the chaps in town built it. Lindley paid them and they used to go up and down building it and so forth. And they carted the chimney up on the back of Bob Lindley's truck. To put in it.
 KH: Because it starts to look more like a bit of a home rather than a bush hut, doesn't it?
 WK: Yes, it, is. Oh, it's a comfortable little place.
 KH: He was also an electrician? Like he had his own, didn't he generate his own power or something?
 WK: I don't know was he ever trained or anything like that, but he was very handy with electrical gadgets. He had all his own power plant and everything up there, worked there himself.
 KH: Well, how did he, did he have water?
 WK: Yeah, he had a water-driven one to start off, that race, off a power-wheel, a water-wheel he built himself. And then, when he got a bit more financial, he bought a little engine and several batteries and worked it that way.
 KH: Oh, I see, right. So he'd have petrol or something.
 WK: Yes. Oh, Dave used to take his petrol up.
 DB: I'd take all the petrol up.

[END SIDE ONE.]

[SIDE TWO]

DB: ... what wasn't right is, er, eleven hundred are rock and says it's rock, and Wal'd tell you about that --
 WK: He realised that but he explained to me that he might've got the two names twisted, Dave. Might've been Jack Mack that - Cecil told him that was living under rock.
 DB: 'Cos we looked up the book this morning just to go through odd things and that was one thing we picked out and that's one thing that I wanted to point out to you.
 KH: Yes, sure.
 DB: And no way did he ever live under a rock.
 KH: Right. No, I think it was Jack MacNamara that lived between the rocks and lived in the tunnel, in an old miner's tunnel.
 WK: Now, it is possible that could have happened because it was a long way before my time. I remember him when I was only about so high, Jack Mac. And he selected, as I told you, down near the bridge. But Jack Venables came down from that top country that Elliott had, he was out there in Elliott's hut, and he came down to Stokes's old house, and worked for George - well, he never shifted from there, only down to that little fibro house of Lindleys'. That's where he headed to.
 KH: Right. When did he die?
 WK: Couldn't tell you exact. Can you, Dave?
 DB: No, not exactly.
 WK: I know it was in, before '72. But I couldn't tell you the exact date.
 DB: Yeah, round about the '70, I'd say, but I wouldn't be positive on it.
 KH: Oh, would he have been in his seventies?

DB: Sixty-eight. Sixty-eight.
 WK: No, he wouldn't be quite --
 DB: No, he was sixty-eight.
 WK: I've really forgotten when the --
 DB: No, he had, I got him the pension, just 66, and he had it two years, roughly, when he died.
 KH: And was he really jilted? I mean, was he really jilted, was there some truth in that?
 WK: Oh, that's something that I couldn't guarantee either. Because it'd be a bit early for me to know about.
 DB: He'd never talk about it, but it was the talk of the town. But, see, he used to run the picture theatre in here before anything like that happened. And cart stuff from the railway or something, wasn't it?
 WK: He had his own truck, used to work on the shire council there at one time. Contract type of thing.
 KH: But did he move into the bush gradually? Or just sort of overnight?
 WK: No, I think overnight.
 DB: Just over ... But he never ever talked about it and no-one ever brought the subject up to him. But, one thing, if he knew anyone was going up there, like, I was going up, or someone was going up, he'd have a feed of fish, he could always catch fish, didn't matter when it was.
 KH: So fishing was much better then, too, was it? Than it is now?
 DB: A hundred percent better than it is now. And didn't matter who went there, they were all made welcome. Right throughout. And I can safely say I've never ever seen him full, not even up there. He'd have a few in but never full.
 WK: [unintelligible]
 DB: -- and if he didn't camp here he camped at home.
 WK: He always knew what he was doing.
 KH: So you think that the label of "Plonkey" is quite unjust.
 DB: Yeah. Absolutely.
 WK: Oh definitely.
 DB: And if he wasn't at home, Wal'd pick him up and bring him out here or I'd bring him out or the opposite way around and we'd work in between home and Wal's house here. The whole time, wasn't it, Wal? I don't think he did stop anywhere else. Did he? I don't think he ever stopped anywhere else.
 WK: He might've stopped at Gordon's for a night or two. Time he bought that horse.
 DB: Yeah, yeah. I think he might've. But he'd never stop anywhere else.
 WK: Not if we were about.
 KH: Apparently he, you and him built a suspension bridge across the river?
 WK: Yeah.
 KH: That right?
 WK: Right.
 KH: And you took the sheep across it or something?
 DB: I supplied the rope and they did the rest. Oh, did I cart the cement up for you?
 WK: Yeah.
 DB: I think I carted the cement up.
 KH: Would it still be there, that suspension bridge?
 WK: No. They originally agreed to pay me any improvements I put on the block, with their permission. And I got permission to put that bridge there. And when I came out they wouldn't give me anything for it or any of the improvements but they told me to take what I wanted. They had no use for it. Now I thought that would have been an asset to the Park for anyone, walking or anyway, they always had a sure crossing of the river. See, it was up high, you'd get over any time at all. And they wouldn't give me anything for it. So I took all the top off it and I was going to take the two - I had two big steel, six inch hollow pipes, right across, side by side. I was gonna take them and I had to cut 'em up and cart 'em home and anyway I decided to leave 'em. But some nasty-lookin' thing's gone back and took 'em. And they could've - I left the rope - and they could've walked across the two pipes there and hung onto the rope, but no, someone went up and

took 'em.

KH: And you'd take your sheep across there if the river was flooded or something?

WK: Yeah.

KH: Did that happen very often?

WK: The problem up there was, going up, say in December, you had to have some way of getting them over because the river'd normally be fairly high and then if you happened to be a bit late coming out in the autumn, you couldn't get 'em over again. So I decided to build a high bridge so I could get 'em over - it was only that wide, just enough for sheep. You could walk across, couldn't take a vehicle over.

KH: There was no sides?

DB: Oh yeah, there were sides.

KH: Oh, sides as well. Wooden sides.

WK: No. Actually there were wooden battens with a 3/8 running through every five or six inches so a sheep couldn't fall off.

KH: That's right.

WK: A board floor with crossbars so they wouldn't slip. It was about, oh, I suppose, forty, forty-five feet long, I suppose.

KH: Really? Quite a job.

DB: Yeah, they had... that heavy rope, they had to strain it up and you bury it, you put cement in the ground or something at that other end, a big block..

WK: Cement it on to a rock on one end and you put in on this end and cement them in and then swung it on to the rope across the, over the centre, tied it to the centre of the bridge to keep the weight off the centre --

KH: Rope not steel.

DB & WK: Steel rope.

KH: Steel rope, steel hawser sort of, yeah.

DB: Steel rope and sort of, the pipes were there but the rope was taking the weight as well. They had both.

KH: Right.

WK: They possibly could've carried them, the pipes, they could've carried 'em but then they might bend and the other would've taken the weight.

KH: Right. That was quite innovative.

DB: Yeah, well. Did you have brakes up a grade to take them down on? You know the brakes on a wagon? They used to tighten the rope down or bring the bridge up onto the rope to take the weight.

KH: Oh, right.

DB: Well, whether you invented it or Jack invented it or both of you invented it, you both had a crack at it. But, yeah, oh, it was a terrific thing to have there because it was good to go across for your fishing, you wouldn't get wet.

WK: Everyone that was up there fishing, if they wanted the other side the first thing they'd do is go straight for the bridge.

KH: Yeah, I would too. If there weren't blackberries in the way or something.

WK: I, I thought well, when I come out at least they would give me what it was worth. And it would have been an asset to the Park. They couldn't go in there and build it for what they would've had to pay me. But they didn't.

KH: No. And it was above flood level?

DB: Oh yes, well and truly. Well and truly.

KH: Must've been hard to get the sheep to get across. I suppose once you got --

WK: No, it wasn't any effort after you put 'em over once. They had a little bit of a yard, like, one on both ends, and forced into a corner, and a ramp up onto it, and they used to run across. You only had to fetch 'em to a yard and start one or two across and then you sit back and let 'em go.

DB: When we were ever going up the Little River there was a rock up there, the other side of Cecil Piper's, if that rock's showin' you know the river's low up that end. And that's how far away

you could tell.

KH: Right. I see.

DB: I suppose that rock's still there, Wal, wouldn't it?

WK: It wouldn't be shifted, Dave.

DB: It was a big one. That - Wal pointed that out to me in the first place. And it was true. True to height. Right throughout.

KH: Do you remember any stories that Herb Buckley told? I mean, are there any outstanding snippets that you remember about stories that Herb Buckley told? I mean, I can't ask him any more because he's dead, isn't he?

WK: Yes, he's dead now. I think you'd better have a yarn with Lindsay Buckley, his son.

KH: Oh, Lindsay Buckley's pretty good, is he?

WK: He'll tell you all that you want to know about his dad.

DB: Did he tell you about the one, coming down Talbingo on a pushbike?

KH: No.

DB: He's up the top of the mountains, coming down there on the pushbike. Anyway, his brake gave out and he kept getting up a bit of pace, get up more pace, and anyway he was going that fast he couldn't take one of the bends. So out over the side of the road he goes and next thing he knows he's in hospital. So he's in hospital a fortnight so he goes back up looking for his bike and here it is, over the bank, hooked up in a tree, and the wheels are still spinning. And that's a regular one he used to tell. And the other one that he always used to tell anyone was he seen this big fish down in the big hole, don't know what the name of that hole below the house -

WK: Sand Hole.

DB: The Sand Hole. And, er, he thought, I'll set a line and I'll get him. So he threw the line in and there's an old plough up on the bank. "Oh, I'll tie it onto that." Anyway, that evening, he come back down and he looks down the stream and here's a great furrow of water going down the river. The fish pulled the plough down the river. That was a regular one he told. Did he ever tell you that one?

WK: No. But I wouldn't put it past him. He was a humorous fellow.

DB: Then the other one, the other one he used to tell about the fish was he was down in the mining hole, down this end, near the boundaries, in the big hole there. He caught this fish there, one evening, and anyway he couldn't wheel it, he had to bring it down here to the junction of the big river to turn it round, take it back up to get it out. And they were the three I always remember him telling me. But Lindsay'd be one of the best, whether he'd tell you enough'd be a different thing but if you got him going I think he might he might tell you.

KH: Mmm, because sometimes the children of people like that, kind of turn a deaf ear to the, to their father carrying on all the time.

DB: He'd always have something different to tell you but they were the three main ones that always stuck out after he told me.

WK: He was a humorous fellow. And there was never any harm, he never tried to belittle anyone. You know, everything he told you was, it was a fantastic yarn but it was on himself or something like that. Something that would never do anyone any harm.

KH: At his expense?

WK: Yeah. He had a liar's licence, he said. Someone sent him one, you know, in the post. He framed it. He reckoned it was the best thing he ever had. That's what they tell you but I don't know if it was right or not. But he was a man that never belittled anyone else. He was always straightforward but he'd always tell you some tall tales. No question about that.

KH: Can you remember any others?

WK: No. Not now.

DB: He told that many, you sort of forget 'em but they were three that stuck out and different ones he's told that to and you'd still get that around the town, those yarns. But, there is, oh Cecil Piper might be able to tell you more.

KH: Yeah, he told me one about a watch. Herb lost a watch.

DB: Yeah. I heard that one, too.

KH: And, someone found it years later. And it had landed on an ant track. And when they

picked it up, it was still going. And the ants had stepped over the winding mechanism.
 WK: Winding it as they walked over.
 DB: Yeah, that's another one I heard from him.
 KH: I mean, I don't know whether they're actually old Australian yarns that Herb picked up somewhere else and repeated.
 WK: No. I think he really invented them.
 KH: Did he? He created those.
 DB: Yep. And there'd be a lot of others but, oh, I just can't remember them. Everytime you met him, he'd have a yarn for you, or two or three. And he'd be that serious about it. And he wouldn't crack a smile.
 KH: Oh, really?
 DB: That's right.
 KH: Oh, that'd be a real trap for me.
 DB: No, you'd get caught real quick then.
 KH: Well, I'll let you go soon. So you can have some lunch and so on.
 DB: Well, I've got to go and do some work. You've got a cow or something to bring back?
 WK: I've got a cow I'm keeping a watch on.
 KH: But just one more thing. I'm doing a book now on, a history book on long rides and long trips that people have done through the mountains. On foot, on ski, on horseback, and pushbike. Now, I was wondering whether you can remember any sort of outstanding droving trips, or, that went right through to Kiandra or even right through to Victoria?
 WK: Oh, actually there'd be a lot of droves to go. But they only did, say, six mile a day. Is that the sort of thing you wanted?
 KH: Yeah, yeah.
 WK: Well, round about, oh, let's say about '30, 1930, '31 or 2. There was a chap up there between Rules Point and Kiandra. In on the, in on the Tantangara Creek side. You know, when you go from Rules Point to Kiandra, you go up over Bullocks Hill?
 KH: Yeah.
 WK: Well, in on your left. In on that cut(?) there.
 KH: Is that Gooandra?
 WK: Yes.
 KH: Yeah, yeah, into Witses and ... yeah.
 WK: He used to buy sheep in Coonamble or possibly somewhere up there north, round about Coonamble. He'd buy five thousand wethers. Now, a Tumut drover would go up and he'd drove those sheep from there to Gooandra.
 KH: He'd get them from Coonamble?
 WK: Yes.
 KH: And bring them overland?
 WK: That's a fair trip. And then he'd sell them in April to someone and I can't say where they'd go back but they'd go back through Tumut. And they'd be driven, they wouldn't be trained from in here. Each year. I know for a fact for four years running they did that. But he done it probably for twenty or thirty years,but I was with them for four years.
 KH: This drover?
 WK: No. On the place at Gooandra.
 KH: Oh, was that Austin or --?
 WK: I spent the summer up there for four years straight.
 KH: Did you?
 WK: Yeah.
 KH: Was that Lampe or --?
 WK: Yes. H.F. Lampe. H.F.
 KH: Yes, I've heard of the Lampes.
 WK: Yes, he had a big family of boys and they all settled on the north. And the youngest fellow was up at Coonamble and the others were down in Narrandera and all over the place. He was the only one

KH: And you worked at Gooandra for four years?
 WK: Yeah.
 KH: So you stayed in the old homestead there? That was shifted, I believe, from near Kiandra somewhere or something? Is that right?
 DB: No.
 KH: Was it a guest house or some sort of cottage elsewhere?
 DB: Buster Day got the iron off part of it and the shearing-shed.
 KH: No, no. Where it came from originally. The homestead there at Gooandra.
 WK: Oh, I wouldn't know about that but it didn't have the appearance of being shifted.
 DB: I reckon it was built there by the look of it.
 KH: Oh do you?
 WK: I think it was built there. Lampe actually didn't own Gooandra. Austin from Lake Midgin, he used to own it. Now Lampe used to look after Austin's, see.
 KH: So Lampe worked for Austin, did he?
 WK: He worked there and they used to buy these wethers and out them on a different block, see. They each had their own block. And there was four of us. There was Lampe and his son, Arthur Shelley and myself. We put in four summers or I put in four summers up there with him, gawd knows how many more were put in there, but he'd been there for years and years. When I went there, there was the old two-roomed place for a kitchen.
 KH: Oh, the old --
 WK: The old original slab hut.
 KH: Yes. Bit of a chimney still there, now.
 WK: Yes. Well, that was all slab. And then, the other house was the four rooms with a hall through it. And two little skillion rooms on the back verandah. A little porch between the two rooms. That's where we used to camp. Then there was a saddle shed between there and the shearing-shed with two, one big room, like a weatherboard construction, iron roof, and that's where the shearers' quarters were, sort of thing. And then there was a shearing-shed up behind and the yards around it. And that was a beautiful shed, shed. And the timber that was, you know, the some of it must've been thirty, forty foot long. Beautiful timber.
 DB: They were still in there, the last time I was in there with Buster, got the iron off that and there was still a part of the homestead or the shed, they done up --
 WK: I saw a picture of the homestead the other day and you wouldn't recognise it. See, that's fifty years ago.
 DB: They remodelled it, and cut some off, took some off it and built some more, or built the broken-down parts up again.
 KH: But that old chimney, that old hut, I'm under the impression it goes back to the Kiandra goldrush.
 WK: I reckon it would. ... Oh, yeah, for sure, I bet. It's the old original style of building, wasn't it? Old slab walls and the chimney, big open chimney.
 KH: It's a very big chimney by the looks of it.
 WK: Oh, yes, you could put a log in there six, seven foot long. Many's a log we put in.
 KH: And that's all that was there when you were there? Or was the homestead there then, too?
 WK: No, the homestead was there. Yes.
 KH: Oh, was it? And was that in the twenties?
 WK: The thirties.
 KH: In the thirties.
 WK: Early thirties.
 KH: It would've been one of your first jobs?
 WK: Yeah. I went to '28, and I went up there a year or so after.
 KH: Then you had four years there? See, you never know, you come here to talk to someone about the Goobarragandra and you hear all about Gooandra.
 DB: Well, you see, I don't want to go and repeat it but you didn't go into this ending up from the word go. If you'd put an ad in the paper for people to give information --
 WK: Oh, well, this ended only small compared to all the rest, didn't it? I mean, you stretch right

back to Victoria. And this area in here you've only got say three or four huts, you might say.

KH: That's right.

WK: It's a wild end. I was only looking at the map there, that Park runs up that way, used to, it runs right out to Gwynnes' up on top.but the Forestry took a lot off that, you see. And that's cut that back on that end. But there was no dwellings out there anyhow. It was all bush once.

DB: So, did I recommend the right person for you?

KH: Oh, no, that's good. I think I've got the message and it's certainly cleared up a few things. I think it was partly my mistake and partly I suppose relying on, sort of, the townspeople --

WK: Well, I don't see as how you had, I don't blame you in any way because I think anyone telling you about him and didn't explain that he wasn't, just what you depicted him, you would have to do what you did. I don't blame you one bit. I reckon of what was said to you.

KH: Well, that's true.

WK: I don't think that, I didn't know Jack, didn't know him at all, until he come to Stokes's old house. From then on I'd say, I reckon I'd be one of the main, or I suppose, see him as often as anyone around. I had just as much to do with him as anyone around. Then when Dave started to go up there, see, he used to go up there pretty often, too. And we sort of, the three of us were more or less good mates right round then. Lance came into the threesome and he made a foursome.

KH: Lance ...?

WK: Lance Stokes. He was a good mate.

KH: Lance Stokes?

WK: Yes, he was the, I told you --

KH: Who's the guy that lives in Adelaide now?

DB: Lance died here --

KH: Who's the Stokes that lives in Adelaide?

DB: I dunno but Lance died here about two or three years back of cancer.

KH: 'Cos I was in the pub, a few months ago, one of the pubs in town, I just went to go to the toilet there, and I got talking to the proprietor and he introduced me to a Stokes who'd come up from Adelaide to visit. And he started to tell me, also started to tell me what was wrong with my book and started to tell me --

WK: He was - I can't just think, I probably will directly, who he is. But he went up past the old homestead, the Stokes's, he wanted to have a look at it, and he camped on the river there for a night, fishin,' and come back down. He told a brother-in-law of mine about it. But he's Harry Stokes's boy, I think.

KH: Oh, yes.

WK: I think, I can't think what his name is.

KH: He says he comes up practically every year and goes and camps up there or comes into the area.

WK: Well, we never run into anyone that saw him until the brother-in-law come out and he was tellin' me about this youngster Stokes. He said, "He's a fair age." And I said, "He'd have to be if he was up there, when they were living at King's Mine." If he was walking up to King's Mine then, those times, that'd be about in the thirties.

KH: Yeah, or the twenties, even, like --

WK: No. This fellow, I think, when they were working - not when they were working the mines, but the time when they were up there --

KH: Oh, right. Afterwards.

WK: Yeah, it would be in the thirties.

KH: Cos I was under the impression that it folded up in the twenties.

WK: Oh, that'd be right.

KH: In 1924 or something like that.

WK: Yes, yes. Oh, definitely, that'd be right.

KH: I think that's when Duncan Prosser was there --

WK: That family of Stokes went back in there and they were fossicking and sitting about. That Harry Stokes and his wife and daughter and son. And they were living on that I was telling

you about. And, er, they used to -- They wouldn't go right round Micalong, they'd go up here as far as they could, then they'd walk in.

KH: They'd walk up that old cutting, up that really, apparently there's a really -- Is it still walkable now?

DB: No. It's grown over. Blackberries.

KH: Is it?

DB: Yeah.

WK: I know, a bloke told me you can't get over the river but I as I say, that the Park were talking about clearing that track. Never did.

DB: Tony Davy, or some name, the mechanic, he told me that the blackberries had grown all over it. Even from Jack's hut up to the river and then further up.

WK: You'd have a job to get up the cutting there. I wouldn't doubt it.

DB: But Harry Shooks'd be the last miner in there, wouldn't he? Nineteen - he'd be there thirty four, thirty-three years ago. And he finished at Greasy Mack's he took all the stampers from Bradley's Mine. He went in with two four-wheel drive army trucks and took all the stampers out of Bradley's. Thirty-four years ago. Thirty-three years ago.

KH: That was Harry Shooks?

DB: Yeah. He was the last person to mine in the Goobra. He done it up here at Greasy Mack's opposite Bill O'Brien's house.

KH: Is he related to -? There's another Shooks. Harry, oh, Arthur Shooks?

DB: I've heard of him but I dunno what relation. I tell ya how I come to --

KH: But this is way, oh, the Shooks name comes to mind.

DB: He went to Nowra from here. I can tell you how I found out and know all that. That jeep, I bought it off Harry Shooks. That was me first vehicle and I've had the NRMA for thirty-four years and that was the vehicle I bought to get it. He cut that track, well, Jack and I, you've been up there with the wild, shootin' wild cattle. Didn't we go out on that track or come in on that track that Harry Shooks cut in once?

WK: What, to get in to the King's Mine?

DB: Yeah. Harry's Flat (?) King's Mine.

WK: Yeah. Yeah. Down Gates's Road.

DB: Well that's thirty-four years ago.

WK: Is that when you got the first jeep?

DB: Yeah.

WK: Well, that's when you first went to Stokes's.

DB: Yeah. Thirty-four years ago.

WK: It'd have to be because that's when you, you were up there before you got the jeep.

DB: Yeah, because I started to think when I first went up there and I went and looked at the NRMA and I've been in it thirty-four years.

WK: That's when you went up there because that's where you went up with the jeep first.

DB: Yeah. That tells you how long I've been going there. But Wal'd been going there a lot longer than I was.

WK: You remember the night you got caught in the jeep? Drove it to Dinner Time Creek. Reckoned you was right to come down in and the river's out and you couldn't get across. Had to come back in.

DB: Yeah. See that's how good a neighbour or friends we are. And if I was going up and Wal wanted something, I'd take it up, or he'd come up or -- there was always somethin', always someone wanted to go fishin'.

KH: How often would Jack Venables come into town? Would it be just once very three months or something?

DB: Once or twice a year on an average or less then, towards, the longer we knew him, the more often we could get him to come in. Every Christmas we'd try and talk him into comin' in. Wal'd go and get him or I'd go and get him. Or vice versa we'd take him back. And he might come in once before but between Wal and George Harris and I, we'd do his shoppin'.

KH: And did he ride into town when you came in? Or he'd come in with someone else, did he?

DB: No. He'd ride down to Lance Stokes', up here where Cecil Piper is, odd times. But, mostly we'd bring him in. When I started goin' up there, some of us, if Wal was up there he'd bring him down and I'd take him back. Or odd, earlier he used to ride, would he ride to here, Wal?

WK: Yeah. He rode here quite a few times.

DB: Yeah, earlier in the piece.

KH: But up there, he'd always be on horseback. Or he'd walk.

WK: Yeah. Until the last few years he was there. When he moved down to that fibro place, he got a jeep and he moved about in it, then. But while he was up the top place, he was always on a horse.

DB: But he'd be flat out coming once a year. In the, early in the piece. But as we got to know him and got, he'd move and we'd get him in more often. But wouldn't be many more than three or four times a year at the most.

KH: And about when, what age would he have been when he went there?

WK: Oh, sixty-eight when he died.

DB: That was 1970.

WK: He'd be thirty, it'd be pretty hard to work out, wouldn't it?

KH: Was he already there when you built your hut?

WK: Yeah. Came down 1940, I think. But I'm not really sure exactly whether it was '39 or '41. Just around the 1940.

KH: So he was there about thirty years?

WK: Twenty-nine years I think he was up there and he was out at Gilmore for a year or so before he died.

KH: Would he have had any photographs or --?

DB: Yeah. This is what we're talking about. He had a lot.

WK: We had some small snaps, you know, we've taken over the years up there, but, oh, they get away and I probably gave some to the daughter or something. I really haven't got anything now that's ...well, I'm not one that takes many photos.

KH: No, a lot of people don't. But you haven't got any of the hut in its earlier days?

WK: No.

KH: Or any of the other huts like Stokes' homestead, or...?

WK: That I can recall. There's been some taken of it over the last, like, since I come out of there, some of these bushwalkin' mobs have taken pictures of it, that sort of thing, but it was more or less dilapidated then. So someone took the, you know I put the chimney straight up the back and it was angled that way, well someone took the three sheets off the back. Three sheets of short iron. Well, see, that let the weather in. That was done before I left, no, after I left up there in '74. They tell me that there's a mob from Canberra and they're going to fix it up again. And make it habitable. I don't know if it's true or not.

DB: Well, we better let Wal get this cow.

WK: Very good.

KH: Thank you very much.

[END SIDE TWO]