

CECIL PIPERInterview by Klaus Hueneke. Corrected copy.
Listened to an 6/6/84.
True to speech.

This is an interview with Cecil Piper an old stockman and drover, on the 5th November 1980 in his hut in the Goobragandra Valley.

CP: ... on this road, roughly three miles from the boundary^{of the National Park} and as I said this house was built originally - as far as I know, 1880 - it had to be pulled down because it was getting dangerous. Cattle used to get inside and they'd knock it down on top of themselves. I had to pull it all down. You can see it's leaning towards the chimney.

According to the map the boundary line of the two blocks, one's ^{acres} 80 and one's 40, passes through the end room and the rest of this part of the house.

When my father, as I understand it, first came to this Goobragandra Valley he worked for a man named Jack Ilett. That was somewhere around ^{or} about 1900. He came here and worked on a property now owned by Bill O'Brien of O'Brien Motors at Gundagai. The site of that old house where Ilett lived is still there, you ^{can} see the chimney and at Macks Crossing, 5 miles from here, Jim MacNamara lived there. He built a big house with a shingled roof.

KH: This side of Macks Crossing?

CP: Yes, right at the Crossing. He originally built at the Hole a place that he came to from Kiandra - ^{he built} a big shingle house there and he cleared the country, somewhere around 100 or 150 acres. He had two bullocks and a wooden plough with an iron shear on it and that's where he lived for quite a number of years. Some of his children were born ^{at} Kiandra, some were born there at the Hole - it's two miles from the Goobragandra station homestead ^{or} going East ..

KH: Did he come over via what is now known as the road from Yarrangobilly Village, was that his route?

CP: No, he came on the old Yass Road from Kiandra, down the Broken Cart stock route to Argalong. He left the Broken Cart stock route and the Yass Road, as they called it, and ^{he} came to Argalong. He came from Argalong along the top of the mountains to this place he called the Hole, and built his home. Then he stayed there for a certain number of years, I don't know exactly how many, but he came there somewhere about 1870 to Argalong and the Hole. Then from there, he came down onto the Goobragandra River to Macks Crossing and he built there. Some way or other he made a clean swap with the Lands Department for a portion of ground at Macks Crossing on the river

Cecil Piper:

for the piece of land he owned at the Hole. The Hole became ... finally it came to Goobragandra Station, bought by the station and was owned by the Goobragandra Station until the National Park took it over, it is now National Park.

The ruins of Macks house is still visible there and the station people built a hut in the same place and its known as the Hole Hut. The roof of it is still there - its collapsed - the whole thing - but the tin roof is still there. That tin for the roof of that hut was taken from the station with six bullocks and a big sledge ^{right} up the mountain and out to the hut. That's how the iron got there.

KH: A wooden sledge?

CP: A big wooden slide or sledge. Slide they called it. That's how it got there. That hut was built by Billy Briggs and Jimmy Auckland. I don't know where Briggs came from but Auckland was born here on the Goobragandra River.

KH: And when did your father come into the picture?

CP: Father came here in 1910 to manage Goobragandra Station, that's when I first came here to the river, in 1910, I was five years old. The station at that time was about 15,000 acres. It got to an acreage of 20,000 by purchasing freehold land and certain leases from people named Cribb and Patman and also MacNamara - they bought all those places. They bought the country that Bill O'Brien has now owned by the man named Ilet and my father took over. He managed it from 1910 to 1930 - a long time. My mother made all her own bread and butter, cheese and things like that and we grew our own vegetables. That's so much for the station, it's now cut up into a lot of blocks, the homestead portion is owned by a man named Burner from Sydney and Bill O'Brien and a Mr Heffernan, Mr Fennessey(?)

KH: Someone's building on the other side of the river now, right up against the park.

CP: Mr Havukanen is another one I think. That's the full total of the owners. It's Bill O'Brien who is building the big house, above Macks Crossing close to the park, right on the river - within a 100 yards of where Ilet's house was - that's where he's building his big place.

KH: So those people like MacNamara and so on, they would have been the first ones to push up the Goobragandra, too, I suppose?

CP: Atkinsons - they are related to these Cribbs' and the old lady Mrs Cribb was an Atkinson and her husband Tom Cribb came from England, he was a jockey and rode horses for old Queen Victoria. They reared a family - still some of the descendants of Cribbs and MacNamaras' still living on the river, here -

Cecil Piper: . . .

CP: That incidence ... Martins', then Graham. A man named Christy Graham came and took up country on the peak river of a property called Boonoo.

KH: We came through Boonoo yesterday.

CP: Now owned by Jack Lindley - you saw the hut?

KH: Yes, we stopped there and poked around a bit - that's still in-^{a freehold} holding in the park isn't it?

CP: I think 1500 acres within the boundary of the park and I think while ever Jack Lindley's alive it will stay that way.

KH: He's a local president of a shire council or something or he was?

CP: At Gundagai - he was - he's not any more. He was voted out last Shire elections.

Graham was there for many many years, he had a big mob of cattle, he brought every summer to Boonoo and they not only ran in the Boonoo they ran right up ^{to} Pigeon Square and out to Big Plain, both inside the National Park and out to the Blackfellar's rings - the cattle ran all that country. I don't know how many head, probably a thousand head he'd have there for the summer and then take them away for the winter.

KH: Some of that country is pretty rugged isn't it?

CP: Yes.

KH: He'd lose a few I should think.

CP: Yes, it's very rugged. There's fire trails all through it now, but only accessible by landrover or some type of 4-wheel drive vehicle.

KH: Why is it called the Boonoo, do you know?

CP: An Aboriginal word, one of the most prominent mountain peaks, visible from the Boonoo is also visible from the Talbingo Road, as you go up Talbingo Mountain - Nanga - Nanga I understand is 'number two', in Aboriginal language, 'number Nanga' they called it. A very prominent peak further back towards Yarrangobilly from that one, there are two more, but they are not so peaked, ^{not} so pointed and they're very rugged and very rough. They are known as the Michelagos - that's that one range and then you come on from Numbananga

coming back towards Tumut you come onto the Bogongs. You can see them from Tumut - they look out over the Tumut Plains. Then the next big mountain is Fiel's Range, way out between Yarrangobilly and Long Plain.

KH: Did you say what Boonoo meant, you don't know?

CP: No.

KH: So that hut up there at Lindley's, that's known as Boonoo Hut is it?

CP: Yes, Boonoo Hut.

KH: Not Lindley's, because on the new map it's called Lindley's. This makes things very confusing.

Cecil Piper:

CP: Definitely the Boonoo Hut - Graham had a hut there and there is still portion of Graham's hut ...

KH: There's a very old slab hut there.

CP: That's Graham's hut. The new one is Lindley's hut. I suppose Lindley built it, but it's the Boonoo hut to everybody.

KH: Graham would have built that slab hut?

CP: Yes.

KH: Around the turn of the century or?

CP: Well he was taking his cattle up there when I was five years old, so it would be pretty close to the ... maybe before the turn of the century, old Christy Graham built that hut. His son Harry took over of course when the old man couldn't ride any longer or couldn't get up there any longer. They were still taking cattle there up until well after 1930. Lindleys' then acquired it.

KH: In the 1930s?

CP: Yes.

KH: So this Lindley today, it would have been his father who would have started it in there?

CP: Yes, his father and his uncle. That's how it would have started, They had country at Micalong and Argalong and then they got on to Boonoo. They didn't do any good at the Micalong. They declared the Micalong the worst grazing country in Australia ^{the Lindleys.} They got the Boonoo and they got from the Boonoo to Long Plain. Of course, the National Park finally put them out of Long Plain, it would be a lease of course, and they stuck to the Boonoo. They take cattle to the Boonoo, some cattle, either their own or cattle on agistment to the Boonoo every summer, take them home in the winter.

KH: None are there yet? They must be going up there fairly soon?

CP: Very soon, it looks good.

KH: It certainly does.

CP: It's a paradise in the middle of the park ^{ish it.} It's a paradise inasmuch as it's always eaten out and there's no old rank dry grass or coarse undergrowth of any sort at all. There's nice fresh grass and beautiful wild flowers. I suppose the kangaroos, wallabys and wombats take a little bit of it but Lindley gets enough, apparently he's quite satisfied, quite happy.

KH: There's a beautiful river flowing through it as well.

CP: Beautiful Peak river, yes, it runs from the divide between Yarrangobilly and the Boonoo, Brownley's Creek heads somewhere about the divide and it runs back towards Yarrangobilly and the Peak River heads this side of that divide and runs into the Goobragandra Valley, towards Tumut.

Cecil Piper:

KH: That road through there into Yarrangobilly Village would have been put in there as part of the power line through the SMA project, there wouldn't have been one before?

CP: No, no road. The only way you could get to Yarrangobilly before was to go to the Boonoo and then by pack horse from the Boonoo to Pigeon Square and on down a bridle path to Yarrangobilly Village. That was the road to Yarrangobilly from Tumut. Of course the road from Tumut via Talbingo went to Yarrangobilly. This one through the Boonoo and Pigeon Square would have been moved before the Talbingo road was cut. It was only a pack horse trail. The old Yass road went from Yass through the Micalong and Broken Cart, right through Peppercorn, Long Plain and down to Rules Point. Possibly there was a track of some sort back to Yarrangobilly from Rules Point but it didn't continue on, the road had to be cut down Talbingo.

Wilkinsons' possibly, some of the first people who eventually came down from Yarrangobilly to Blowering ^{down Talbingo} by some means or other - bullocks, sledges, pack horse or something.

KH: Going back to the Goobragandra ^{or}, going up into the park now, we went in yesterday as far as Emu Flat Creek - the first hut site I guess, would have been where that enormous stand of elm trees is - about half way to Plonkeys. It's about one of the biggest stands of deciduous trees I've seen in the area.

CP: Well now, that is - those elms is where a man named Irwin built his home on the Goobragandra River and he came there before the turn of the century, probably before I was born I'm sure, and he had an idea in his head to breed blood horses. He came and built his home, it also was a shingle roofed house, there was no iron on any of those houses. And of course, blood mares and stock of that sort coming from away out on the plain country or coming from Sydney or wherever, didn't do too good there in the winter and I think his stock just gradually all died ^{and} were lost. But apparently, he stayed there for a long time, it's known as Irwin's Paddock between the Park and Bill O'Brien's property.

KH: His house would have been somewhere near those trees?

CP: Right in those trees, yes. Had you walked down among them you would have found the fire place. All those old houses had a stone fireplace and when the house went the stone fireplace just collapsed and stayed there, a heap of rubble.

KH: It would be a nice shady place now.

CP: That's who opened that piece up.

KH: He wasn't related to George Irwin who then had one of the pubs at Kiandra?

Cecil Piper:

CP: I doubt it, I don't know of that man ^{at Kiandra}

KH: Back in the 30s I think one of the Irwins had one of the hotels at Kiandra.

CP: I wouldn't think he'd be related. The old man, Irwin, had left his block on the Goobragandra River before I came here ⁱⁿ 1910. He'd been gone a long time. He was there when Ilet was there, when my father worked for Ilet.

KH: He'd gone when you were a boy?

CP: Yes. That's what I was told by a young man living now on the Goobragandra River, a descendant of Cribbs and McNamara, and he told me what he was told by the old people. I think it's very authentic. Whatever he did, he had pigs afterwards and Ilet had pigs ^{they went in} for breeding pigs - I don't know what success or luck they had with them, but the pigs eventually all got away or some of them got away and that was the start of the wild pig population on the Snowy Mountains.

KH: Another origin of the pig population that I heard was from a fellow at Yorkie's diggings, up near Col Ibbotson's place or Campbell's house on Long Plain. I can't remember his name. I think it was Tom Taylor who told me that story, an old Irish man or Yorkie himself.

CP: I met one time - talking about Yorkie - an old man Yorkie, he was the caretaker at Thurlough Down station way out beyond Winnarin. We talked quite a bit about this country and that old Yorkie, and he said that that old fellow was his uncle. The man was an Englishman. The Yorkie at Thurlough Downs was an Englishman and this man up here was supposed to be an Irishman but its quite possible he could have been his uncle. He knew all about him.

KH: Did he. What sort of things did he tell you?

CP: Mainly, he said, he was ... ^{was} The reason why he stayed at Yorkie's diggings because he didn't have enough brains to do any other job. That was the main thing he told me about him. The gold at Yorkie's was very shallow - almost on top of the ground and Yorkie, apparently done all right there in spite of his nephew's words about his pedigree. That old Yorkie at Thurlough Downs died of thirst between the Winarrin Hotel and Thurlough Downs station, after I left there. So he didn't have a hell of a lot of brains either or he wouldn't have been at the pub and got drunk and then died of thirst going home. I dare say his uncle would have said the same thing about him.

KH: Apparently this Yorkie, up at Yorkie's diggings - he died there. I have the story of two or three other stockmen looking after him until he died virtually.

Cecil Piper:

CP: Yes he died there. I think he's buried there. All through those mountains there are graves of those old miners. I know where one or two of them are, not very many and I don't know the names of some of them. I've ridden past their graves and over their graves I suppose at different times. Their names I'm not really familiar with, but Yorkie of course was a very well known fellow. There was another man, Harry Yates, he was ... it is National Park now and he was digging on Sassafras Creek, a little creek or a tributary. He had his hut there, I saw his hut many many times - I understand that he is buried there.

KH: Where is Sassafras Creek, what does it run into?

CP: Into the Micalong - yes.

KH: Do you remember anything about the guy's name?

CP: Harry Yates - he's buried there, I could take you to that spot, it's a well known spot. The creek he worked on ... it didn't run the same way as Sassafras Creek but it ran from ... it just ran one each way. People said that at one time it was all Sassafras Creek, but one ran into the Goobragandra River and the other one ran into the Micalong. Sassafras itself runs into the Micalong - it runs in at a spot called The Ruins, on the Micalong Creek. It was owned by Jim Webb and his family - the Ruins. It would be all sown with pine now. That's the pine plantations that extend on from Bondo.

KH: Micalong State Forest ... yes. (Looking at map).... ^{at} Nimbo...

What about up further towards Plonkeys, are there any other old ruins along there before you get to Plonkeys, apart from that large stand of elms where Irwin was?

CP: That was Irwins'. Now the next one [hut] to the best of my knowledge was Harry Stokes' hut and it was a log hut and stood there long long after I came here, just a little log hut and you saw Plonk Venable's new hut, the one to the right, well, Harry Stokes' log hut was directly between that hut and the river - Goobragandra River. The road went - the existing road now - went within 10 yards of his hut. He was a member of the Stokes' family that built the Stokes' house where Emu Creek runs in to the Goobragandra River, they built a big slab house there.

KH: On the other side of the river - looking at it from here!

CP: Same side as - yeah - same side as Plonk's. Venable's came there to live in that house after the Stokes' left there.

KH: In the original log hut?

CP: Yes.

KH: Was it log cabin or slab?

Cecil Piper:

CP: No, all slab. He came there in the depression years and he stayed there in that house until Stokes' holding was sold to Bob Lindley ^{of Gundagai} and Lindley built him the new hut ...

KH: That fibro one - the one known as Plonkeys?

CP: Yes.

KH: Why was he known as Plonkey? Because it is Jack Venable ^s, isn't it? Did he get on the plonk?

CP: Apart from euc^o cutting that was his sol^l occupation - drinking wine.

KH: What is euc^o cutting?

CP: Euc^o cutting is ... during the war years it was a very lucrative way of life - euc^o was a pound a pound - the euc^o cutters were all through this mountain country right ^{from Argalong} to Yarrangobilly, Yarrangobilly to Tumut, right down the Blowering Valley in the mountains either side between the Peak River and the Tumut River, the Peak River and the Goobrangad^{ra} River, between the Goobrangad^{ra} River and Argalong and anywhere where there was good eucalyptus trees, there were euc^o cutters.

KH: Right, euc^o from eucalyptus - I thought it was some sort of new rubber plantation or something I'd never heard of.

CP: Well, we got to Harry Stokes' hut and then Stokes' house. Directly across the river from Stokes' house there was a man, Billy McLaren, he was an alluvial gold miner and he built a hut there long before I came to this district and I visited him many many times between the age of 5 and 15, maybe up until I was 20. He went in there with his old pack horse, his saddle horse, about every 3 months he'd go to Tumut with his little bit of gold and he'd go back there to his hut and in later years a nephew of his joined him there, one Peter McLaren. Billy McLaren drank only water and strong tea and Peter drank black rum or black tea or any strong stuff he could get his hands on, he was just the opposite to old Billy. Billy's country and his hut was taken over by a man, Jack Elliot. His family are still in the Tumut district.

KH: That's all that country up Emu Flat Creek?. On the eastern side?

CP: Where it joins the Goobrangad^{ra} River. Elliot had a big annual lease there of 12,000 acres joining Billy McLaren's.

KH: 12,000 acres!

CP: Yes, he had an annual lease.

KH: That must have gone right up onto the tops.

CP: Right to the stock route. The Broken Cart stock route was the boundary of Elliot's 13,000 ^{acre} lease. It came down and joined the Goobrangad^{ra} station

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boundary on Myers and Emu Creek and when old McLaren died and Peter drank himself to death, Elliot acquired the country owned or held by Billy McLaren where his hut was. Something like 300 or 400 acres ^{was what} McLaren had. He was a very old identity there - came there a long, long time ago.

KH: It was actually freehold?

CP: It was freehold - it was acquired from Elliot by George Harris, an Argalong man, and it was sold by Harris to Wally Kell ^{of Lacmacle} and Kell built a new hut there - it's still there.

KH: That's the existing hut?

CP: Yes, you saw it?

KH: Yes, only just. We missed it going up.

CP: Well that's Kell's hut, it's still standing, a good little hut. It's practically on the same site as Billy McLaren's hut was built round about 1860.

KH: That hut's gone?

CP: Yes, that hut's gone.

KH: So this ^{is} the second hut there.

CP: Yes, that ^{is} the second one and there will be no more there.

Directly across Emu Creek from McLaren's hut there was another one - another miner's hut, I don't know the name of the miner, I know where his hut was perfectly well. He died there and he had two or three dogs - I assume they ^{be} sheep dogs or cattle dogs. When he was reported missing, no-one saw him around, the police went to investigate and they had to shoot the dogs before they could get into the hut. The old man was dead in the hut. Now he's buried there - I don't know his name. McLaren is not buried there.

KH: This other miner, he was directly across the creek was he, almost on a creek flat ...?

CP: Up on the slope - he worked gold in Emu ^{Flat} Creek the same as McLaren did - they both worked ^{on} Emu Creek for alluvial gold. His name doesn't come to my mind at all.

KH: Have you been to the site of his house?

CP: I've been to the site many times. ^{It} was on Goobrangad^{ra} station and in the course of looking after sheep and cattle and carting salt out to the stock I rode past his hut, many, many, many times, but I never knew the man. I was told that was very authentic by my father that they had to shoot the dogs because they would ^{not} let them in the hut.

KH: Was the crossing across to that side of the Goobrangad^{ra}, the same as where it is now, where the fire trail is now, or was it lower down?

Cecil Piper:

CP: It was lower down, it was directly opposite Stokes' house.

KH: So Stokes' house was further down too. It was ^{not} where the crossing is now - it was further down stream?

CP: Right where the Emu ^{Flat} Creek runs into the Goobragandra ^{or} River, Stokes' built his house and they got a lot of gold out of the ground all around their house. They worked there for many years getting gold and they got rich heavy gold. They maintained that their knowledge of mining and knowledge of gold - they came here from Temora - they said that the gold definitely all came down Emu ^{Flat} Creek, it was a different type of alluvial gold to the gold that was found in the Goobragandra ^{or} River. It was a brighter colour and it was coarser, not so much water-warped.

KH: They must have at some stage gone right up Emu Flat Creek to try and find out where the gold was coming out, whether it was reef gold or an old river bed.

CP: Yes, they all prospected Emu ^{Flat} Creek to its junction with Myers Creek and prospected the whole of that creek right up - also I suppose Myers Creek. They never discovered - no-one did to my knowledge - where that gold came from. There is gold at the head of Myers Creek, right the way out in the National Park between the old Goobragandra ^{or} Station boundary and the Micalong Swamp - there's gold there in Myers Creek and also in the Little Micalong Creek there's gold. That country - there's alluvial gold all over it. It has been prospected and worked all through those mountains, right from Argalong right through to York's - that country was all worked for alluvial gold and they searched - all the old miners - for a reef that would have supplied the gold to those creeks ^{but} no-one has ever found it.

KH: Would they ^{mainly} have worked with a cradle or mostly with a pan?

CP: They all had sluice boxes.

KH: Yes, right - similar to Kiandra.

CP: Similar to Kiandra, yes, and they all had the same idea.

Peter the Chinaman, he lived at what we call the Broken Cart clearing, right on the stock route and he worked extensively there for alluvial gold.

You would have heard about Peter before this?

KH: No I haven't.

CP: He was buried there - I don't ^{know} where his grave was or where his hut was, but I worked there in Peter Chinaman's own cuts, as we call it, for a man named Jim Auckland and Alan Wade. We worked there for about 12 months and we lived in Bell's house. Bell was a miner who built a house there - it was quite a good house - all slab and it hadn't been built a terrible long time when we went there and camped in it in 1930.

Cecil Piper:

KH: This wasn't the father of Charlie Bell, fishing inspector from Khancoban - there's a whole Bell family. This old man Bell ^{also} worked at the Grey Mare, but this wasn't until the 30s.

CP: He worked there in the 30s?

KH: Yes, at the Grey Mare. He reopened the Grey Mare in 1934-35.

CP: It sounds like the same man.

KH: He had three sons.

CP: He was reef mad, he wasn't keen on alluvial, he was looking for reef and he sank a lot of shafts there where he built his house, at Broken Cart. May be the same man, I don't know, have no idea. But we camped there and we worked, as they say, off and on for 12 months and we never got enough gold to buy cigarette papers.

KH: What did you live on then, were you on the dole or something?

CP: No, neither one of us were on the dole, we all had horses and saddles and pack saddles and my father here at Goobragandra ^{or} station helped us out quite a bit with meat and salt to salt our meat with and some how or other we seemed to just find enough money to live on. We worked old Peter's claim, his old claim, but we didn't know where his hut was or where he was buried.

KH: He died out there?

CP: He died there and was dug up and bones sent back to China just prior to the Second World War.

KH: As late as that!

CP: A drover named Roley Ibbotson, he was Col Ibbotson's father, he went out and dug him out, in his horse and cart. I think he was one leg bone short. He was coming back along the stock ^{route} to Argalong and there was an old dead kangaroo hanging in the fence at Elliot's hut, so he confiscated one of the roo's legs and put it in the box and that roo's leg went back to China with Peter. I think that's very authentic.

KH: Yes, well I heard the story - I've heard it from Bill Hughes and other ^s at Kiandra, that the Chinese used to do this but they weren't allowed to do that until the bones had been in the ground for at least 10 years. In other words, the rest of the body had disappeared well and thoroughly, so that it was hygienic - something to do with that I think. Where did they send them in China? This fellow would have had relatives still I guess.

CP: It was at the request of the Chinese population ^{of} Tumut. There ^{were} a lot of chinamen in Tumut. They requested Ibbotson to go and get him - he knew where he was buried - he was an old drover and he'd been through there a thousand times I suppose with travelling stock and he probably would have known Peter and he definitely would have known where he lived and evidently

Cecil Piper:

he knew where he was buried, so he knew the whole thing. Elliot's hut was a very, very well known hut ^{there} built close to the Broken Cart stock route. The ruins of it are still there, but its National Park, ^{or} Forestry, I don't know which, one or the other and it was built by this Jack Elliot, Jack Elliot of Tumut ⁱⁿ those days - Coolamon station he owned where Mr. Griffiths lives now on the bank of the Goobragandra River. He owned Coolamon station and he ran that place, that 30,000 acre lease plus Billy McLaren's country and the man that looked after his stock was Jim Harris ^{from} Argalong and Goobragandra ^{or} of course, and he stayed out there all the summer in Elliot's hut, looking after Elliot's stock and they came back to Coolamon station in the winter. That's pretty well the history of Elliot's hut. I've camped in it myself many a time and many, many, many drovers and stockmen and miners ^{and} brumby runners and pig hunters and everything you can think of has camped in it.

KH: That's on the Broken Cart stock route?

CP: Yes. There was a good horse paddock there. The hut was round about three miles along the stock route from Emu Flat (looking at map) - half way between Emu Flat and Sassafras. At Sassafras Creek there was a break there, travelling stock break.

KH: (Looking at map) There's Deadhorse Creek, Sassafras Creek and Dubbo Creek. That would be State Forest I think. That's where Elliot's was?

CP: Yes, ^{one of the} very well known ones.

KH: To go back down the Emu Flat Creek, the hut that's there now, made of slabs and iron and so on, you would call that Kell's hut because Kell built it, but the first resident there was Billy McLaren, who built the original hut.

CP: Yes. There's fruit trees still there - fruit trees that Billy McLaren grew - they are still standing there where Kell built his hut. Right opposite Stokes' ^{house}.

KH: When would Kell have built that hut that's there now, any idea? Would it be 50 years old, back to the 1930s?

CP: No.

KH: More recent than that?

CP: Yes.

KH: Before the Second World War, during the War?

CP: During the Second World War. Venables lived in Stokes' house and Kell bought the country from George Harris and later left it to the Park. He bought it from George Harris and Harris owned Stokes' house at that time, Kell and Harris were related. Kell's wife ^{was} Mary Harris. So during the Second World War it would have been built, or very close to that period.

Cecil Piper:

Now of course it's been taken over the Park, the Park paid Kell for it I suppose. It's one of the huts that are still standing. Apparently the Park authorities have a bit of a snout on these huts and they demolish them ^{willy-nilly} they don't seem to have a great deal of sentimental feelings towards the old pioneers that went through there on foot with their bullocks, sledges and pack horses, their worldly possessions and lived there for sometimes 3 and 4 and 5 months of the year in those huts and got enough gold to buy food for the next 3 or 4 or 5 months. Most of them are known, most of the sites are still known, but the old people ^{who} have seen those huts and camped in them or really knew the inhabitants are gone.

KH: You would have known this Kell fellow?

CP: Yes, he's still alive, he lives at *Lacmaloc*. Harris and Kell I knew. I knew all the Stokes', the whole lot of them.

KH: Just to go back to the old Stokes' homestead, when would he have gone in there and built that?

CP: Round about 1900. It was there when I came here in 1910, but it was a new house. They had 2,000 acres of ground with that house. Their main occupation was mining and if they didn't own stock of their own, they took stock

End Side 1.

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Tape 1, Side 2.

K.H. *What hut was it?*

CP: ... all slab, originally had a shingle roof the same as McLaren's hut.

KH: Were the shingles made from alpine ash?

CP: Any timber that would split well ^{"messinate" that's} eucalyptus, white gum or ^{most mate} mountain ash for preference. Some of them used apple. Some of the real old people used apple tree for the floor boards, if they had floor boards. They'd get a big old apple tree and they'd split slabs from him or they'd saw, cut floor boards out of the big apple tree. A young apple tree is no good at all, he's just all rubbish, but the old apple tree developed a very solid hard inner core with very little sap wood.

KH: This would be an apple tree sixty or seventy years old?

CP: Yes, ^{possibly a hundred yrs. old} You'd get one that would be nice and straight.

KH: There wouldn't be many of those around.

Cecil Piper:

CP: Usually the apple tree is ^{gnarled,} knotted and twisted - I'll show you an example of several in a few moments.

KH: Would the floor of Stokes' hut - the old homestead have been apple tree?

CP: Some apple, yes, and the rest would be *messmate*. I don't think there would be any ash. Ash was too far away, a long way, much higher altitude to get mountain ash.

KH: When did that finally collapse, that building? I've heard reference to that elsewhere. I've heard about that particular Stokes' hut and I've always been under the impression that there is no Stokes' hut any more, Stokes' hut is gone until we heard from the Park and I checked with them the other day and then we went into that hut that you call Kells yesterday, they had Stokes' hut on the front of the visitor's book, which is really a mistake, isn't it? Stokes' had nothing to do with that hut.

CP: Nothing whatsoever, he was never across that side of Emu Creek except looking for gold.

KH: Is it known by any other name? Most locals know it as Kell's?

CP: Definitely Kells - W. Kell - Wally Kell - he is still living.

KH: Wally Kell built it in the 40s!

CP: He built it with the assistance of Jack Venable.

KH: Oh, did he? Plonk plays a big role up that valley.

CP: ^{Jack was} the main carpenter there. He had nothing to do with building Stoke's house but he was an amazing man. He was an amazing blacksmith, he was an electrician and at one time had a mail run or a run of some sort, not only mail, he carried produce of all sorts around Tumut and out as far as Argalong. His ^{I suppose} cousin cut him out for his girlfriend, his first cousin and no need to hide it now, they're all dead and he took to the bush. He stayed in the bush for 30 odd years, rabbiting, cutting eucalyptus and doing anything he could to get a pound. He was a blacksmith - I saw him take a horse rasp - if I had a million dollars I'd bet that no other blacksmith could have done it - a 12 inch horse rasp and he drew it out into a 3 foot 6 reaping hook - 3'6" long - to cut grass - a reaping hook, entirely different to a *scythe* a *scythe* is a thing you work with both hands and long handle. A reaping hook has a little short wooden handle put onto the iron ^{portion of it.} I asked him for it just before he died and he said yes you can have it. Wally Kell was with him and he said 'I'll get it for you and bring it down'. Venables at that stage was living at Gilmore on Bob Lindleys ... at Bob Lindley's instigation anyway, living at a house in Gilmore where he died - he died at Gilmore. I never

Cecil Piper: 2/15

got the reaping hook. When Kell went back he said it was gone, so of course, where it is no-one knows.

KH: He was very embittered by the fact that his girlfriend was taken by another man - his first cousin.

CP: Yes, that is authentic too, he'd tell you himself.

KH: Is he still alive, Jack Venables?

CP: No, he died at Gilmore. He had a gramophone or some sort of machine that he played records on and that was one of his great pastimes and possibly his only real comfort in the bush, was that record-playing machine.

KH: How would he power that?

CP: It was battery. He had power - put power on for Stokes' house with a water wheel - a water race ^{and} water wheel - had his own electric light.

KH: On Stokes' house? When he was living there?

CP: Yes - he put that on and it was worked by water power by an old miner's race that comes past Stokes' house. He put his own power on.

KH: That race line would be still there wouldn't it or bits of it would be?

CP: It's still there, it comes right round from - a long way beyond that crossing, over the river now - it comes from a long way beyond that, out of the river and it comes right round to Stokes' house, Venables, as well as using it for power, used it to water his vegetable garden, which he always had a good one ^{and to} water the fruit trees, water for his house, save him going to the river with a bucket. In later years he let the water wheel and the water go, he had a battery system to work his power from.

KH: He would mainly go in and out, just with packs?

CP: He had horses and pack horses but he cut with pick and shovel the last mile of the track that went from Tumut to Stokes' house. Originally Stokes' had cut it to what they call the "Sulky Shed," a mile and a half from their house and they walked from there and left their sulky and carried all their belongings. But Venables, while he lived, he got to work with pick and shovel and he widened the track that mile and a half to take a motor vehicle and he had friends in Tumut with four-wheel drive vehicles and they looked after him up until he left Goobragandra, but ^{or} he cut the road himself the last mile and a half. Stokes' ^{or} cut the road from the junction of the branches - the two branches of the Goobragandra river - right and left hand branch - from there to the mine they cut a track that you could lead a pack horse around ...

KH: Some of that is still there I believe!

CP: Yes, it's all there - that track is all there, but you can't get along it for fallen trees and logs ^{blackberries and} rubbish. So the road into King's mine

Cecil Piper:

now or Stokes' Mine I always call it comes from Broken Cart ^{clearing} where old Peter the Chinaman worked. The road comes from there to King's Mine on the ^{or} Goobragandra River - put in by the National Park people.

KH: It's called the Flint's Fire Trail or something, by the looks of it. It comes off the Broken Cart creek

CP: ... it comes down to the river ...

KH: ... opposite Pheasant Creek!

CP: Broken Cart Creek runs into

KH: ... into the ^{or} Goobragandra near where Pheasants Creek and Simon's Creek run into the river.

CP: Yes, they run into the river at Bradley's Hut. Bradley was a man who worked at the mine. He built a hut on the flat. It was a well-known one also but it's been burnt - just adjacent to the mine.

KH: When ^{did} the Stokes put that track in from Stokes house through to the mine? That would have been ⁱⁿ order to start the mine, wouldn't it? There was no mine before that?

CP: No, they found the mine. Bill Stokes found it. They cut that track for their own benefit and for the benefit of workmen going from Tumut to the mine.

KH: He found a reef there? *Bill*

CP: Yes, he found a reef. Stokes managed the mine - he was the first manager.

KH: What time was this? What time would he have discovered that?

CP: During the First World War - 1914. He managed it - I think Stokes got 2,000 pounds or similar amount anyway for their right to the mine - they owned it. Bill Stokes got the job of managing the mine for the company who bought it.

KH: Who owned the company, do you know, what sort of people were involved with that?

CP: I don't know, they came from Sydney anyway.

KH: But the Stokes ^{were already} living at Stokes' house?

CP: Yes, they were living there. Bill Stokes was looking for stray sheep, he was a long way from home, up there, and he stumbled onto the reef - quartz with gold in it - laying on ^{top} of the ground and that's Stokes' mine, now known as King's mine to everybody.

KH: But initially the Stokes went in there for grazing, they took sheep in there?

CP: Yes, he had sheep running there and I suppose on agistment - they weren't their own and he stumbled onto that reef, but of course they

Cecil Piper:

had been searching from the very day they landed there until they left there - looking for gold. They got a lot of gold.

KH: Apparently there are two tunnels there. I think Duncan Prosser was telling me - there's a low tunnel and a high tunnel - is that right?

CP: I don't know - I've been there many, many times, I was there when the mine was working, I was there during the big depression, I rode past it a hundred times going to Broken Cart where I was working the gold but I don't know whether there was one shaft or two shafts or two tunnels or one tunnel. I saw the battery working.

KH: Duncan Prosser told me that he worked in one of the tunnels. He was 18 then. He was born in 1904, that was in 1922 when he was working there. He said they put a small tunnel in when he was there in the 1920s, the other big tunnel was put in by Stokes. There's two tunnels, horizontal, straight into the hill - one was straight above the other and he put the bottom one in with Bradley in 1922 - that's Bradley hut. That ties in rather nicely. He said that the tunnels went in about 200 feet but he wasn't quite sure and he said that the two tunnels were about 100 yards apart, up and down the hill.

CP: I don't know, I wasn't a mining man but I was forced to go and look for alluvial gold, I had no money. He could be right, if he worked there he'd know. I knew a lot of different fellows that worked there at different times.

KH: And he also thought - just reading the transcript of the tape - that the other tunnel could - the Stokes tunnel - could have been put in before the turn of the century, but you don't think so?

CP: No, definitely not, Bill Stokes found it.

KH: It was put in when you were here?

CP: Yes, Bill Stokes found it, they were living there while I was living here at the old station.

KH: That's when they cut the track?

CP: Yes, they cut a track to it. Now the machinery was all brought in by bullock wagon from the Broken Cart stock route to that mine, brought down from the stock route, four miles. There's a road - one road turned off at Sassafras and the other one turned off at Broken Cart and those two roads were used by bullock wagons, with big wagons and bullocks and they were all taken in there to the mine.

KH: Some of the machinery is still there I believe, I haven't been in there!

Cecil Piper:

KH: That would be the best way to go in I suppose, down the Broken Cart fire trail?

CP: That's the only way now. I went in there three years ago, I took my son and his wife and a New Zealand couple and the blackberry, the same as it is all over the National Park and all over the Goobragandra Valley is so extensive that you ^{can} find very little of anything relating to the mine. I knew where Bradley's hut was - it's been burnt completely but the site is covered over with blackberries and there's blackberry growing all ^{around} where the old stamper were ^{is} very steep in places - the road from the Broken Cart clearing down to the mine, the bridle track we used to follow from the mine to Broken Cart was four miles, but the road is longer because it had to take different gradients. Very steep, only a four-wheel drive vehicle would be of any use.

KH: But the other track that came up the Goobragandra, that was just cut in order to bring men and some supplies up from Tumut. Was that cut in a special way, did they use gelignite and things like that?

CP: They ^{would have} had to.

KH: Apparently it's through rock in places?

CP: Yes a lot of rock. ^{Its cut of} the sheer face of the hill. As you're going up you look straight into the Goobragandra river - in some cases 200 or 300 feet direct drop straight into the water.

KH: ^{Tom Stacey} was telling me last night that they lost some horses there at some stage!

CP: A surveyor with his pack horse and his tripod on top of the pack. He must have been a very stupid surveyor. The tripod poked into the bank and pushed the horse over the side ^{and} he fell into the river ^{with} all the equipment and everything - that's the horse. The surveyor said himself that the tripod pushed the horse off the road into the river.

KH: Is the cutting very wide or just wide enough for a horse?

CP: Four feet, cut into the sheer face of the cliff. I've ridden round it a thousand times and you hold your breath in a lot of places where you look down this sheer drop.

KH: It looks ^{like it} from the contours on the map, it's very very steep there.

CP: Feint's Range comes down between the two branches of the river to the right of the mine, if you're going up towards the mine on the right hand side, there's a long straight range and it's Feint's Range named after Fred Feint, the dogtrapper. An old identity.

Cecil Piper:

KH: When was he around?

CP: He was here in the depression years. He was married to a MacNamara of Mack's Crossing and they lived there at one stage in one of Mack's houses - one of the houses that Jim Mack built. The two houses are about 400 or 500 yards apart and there's a big clump of elm trees now at the site of each house. Fred Feint, he worked as a drover and stockman and he also had the Yarragobilly Hotel at one time. He reared a big family and there are three graves of three daughters of Fred Feint and his wife buried in the mountains. Three little baby girls - buried at different periods. Two of them ^{are} buried on the banks of the Goobragandra River and the other one's buried ^{or} at the top of the Cumberland ^{on the} Talbingo Road. Also buried at Dodd's Point opposite where Bill O'Brien's building his house, there's an old MacNamara man buried there, the brother of Jim MacNamara and the little Feint girl buried along side him. Opposite the old Goobragandra station homestead, directly across the river, there's another ^{or} grave of a little Feint girl - I said the other one is buried at the top of the Cumberland. I've seen her grave too, but now I can't recall exactly where it was.

KH: Why did they die - why three girls? All young girls? *In different places.*

CP: Probably their first three children - they had a big family.

KH: They must have moved about a fair bit - I mean they would have been buried near where they ^{were} living.

CP: They were living in McNamara's house when the first one was buried up there at Dodd's Point and the other one was buried opposite Goobragandra station on Fred Cribb's property, Mrs Cribb was a MacNamara and Mrs Feint was a MacNamara.

KH: To go back to Kell's hut - they used local timber I guess for the slabs of that?

CP: Yes, the only thing that would have been taken would have been the iron - it's got an iron roof whereas Mc Larens hut had a shingle roof. Iron was pretty hard to get in there on a pack horse. You had to have some sort of a vehicle.

KH: But they did train pack horses, didn't they? I've heard of other huts where the iron was taken in with a couple of sheets on either side of the horse.

CP: They carted four foot iron on pack horses. Anything longer than that I think it would have been impossible - if you put it upright, four feet wasn't too bad, if you put it sideways four feet wasn't too bad. If you had six or eight feet iron and you put it upright, it would be too long, if you put it sideways it would cut the horses ears off. I've done

Cecil Piper:

a lot of pack horse work, miles and miles of it. I rode from ^{Nara ilko} Station in Queensland to Tumut in 1933 and that's a long way. ^{I had} two pack horses and two saddle horses - I know all about them.

KH: At Kells there's a race line, just above the hut. Was that just to feed water?

CP: That was his mining race - that was Billy McLaren's mining race. It came out of Emu Creek way up. That's the race Billy McLaren worked all his ground with.

KH: His ground was below where the hut is?

CP: Right on Emu ^{Flat} Creek.

KH: Near the junction.

CP: Yes, ^{oh, well,} is half a mile or so from the junction.

KH: And the ~~track~~ used to go straight up there, did it? Across from Stokes house and up along Emu Flat creek to Kells hut, that was the old ^{route in?}

CP: Yes, you crossed two crossings. Venables had one when he came in, but the original crossing was 200 yards down stream from Stokes' house, that was the track that Billy McLaren used and any other people going onto Emu Creek. That's the track the station people used carting salt to stock ^{that} in area or taking stock across the river, 200 yards downstream. But Venables made a new one, he also put a suspension bridge across the river for Wally Kell's benefit. It was not only a foot bridge, Kell took his sheep over it.

KH: Did he? It must have been fairly sturdy?

CP: Entirely invented and constructed by Venables and Kell.

All wire ropes with a wooden floor. The river was very narrow ...

KH: So it wouldn't have to be very long?

CP: No, it wasn't terribly long, it was well above the flood level and it was very very strong.

KH: It's all gone now?

CP: I was there two years ago or 18 months ago, I couldn't find it for blackberries. I don't know whether the bridge has gone or not. I crawled under the blackberry and under the fence on my hands and knees and got down to where the crossing started across the river and I couldn't tell if the bridge was gone or not. I couldn't get to it. It was just above that crossing a little bit.

KH: Was the crossing a ^{ford?}

CP: Yes, they called it a ^{ford}.

KH: So it was part of the river where its not gorgey, fairly shallow.

Cecil Piper:

CP: Emu Creek ran in ... to where you rode out on the other side, on Emu Creek side, you rode out through the creek onto the bank, it was right at the junction.

KH: When I said ford, you don't know them as fords?

CP: No I don't.

KH: It's a strange word ^{for} you?

CP: I know them as fords from reading American books. We always called them crossings ... Macks ~~Crossing~~ ... crossing of the river. There's a bridge now at Macks ~~Crossing~~, there was a sign there but ^{the} tourists pulled it down.

KH: That was the race line, at Kells, for his workings?

CP: That was the race line for Billy McLaren's workings and his nephew. On the opposite side of the creek where I said the other man was buried, he had a water race too, a different water race altogether. ^{It} came out at Myers Creek, he cut it for a long, long, long way round the side of the mountain and it came out ^{of} Myers Creek, way above the junction of Myers and Emu Creek.

KH: There's a lot of deciduous trees up and down Emu Flat Creek. We walked 2 or 3 kilometres past Kell's hut, accidentally, where there ^{more} huts up there?

CP: Not to my knowledge.

KH: There are a lot of old fence lines and bits and pieces. You ^{feel} there was quite a settlement up there at one stage.

CP: ^{There} might have been a stock yard, or it might have been another miner's hut, but not to my knowledge. I've never seen one and I've ^d ridden up Emu Creek and Myers Creek right up as far as where the road goes from Murphy's Reef to the Micalong and I've never seen any other huts. But there are trees, but I think they were grown by McLaren or the other fellow, the old chap that died and is buried there. McLaren was a great man for fruit trees and poplar trees. All the old settlers, whether they were miners or whether they were rural workers or stockmen, they always brought ^{gooseberry} bushes, ^{Kentish} chernies, elm trees, quince trees, and ^{gooseberry} bushes, ^{Kentish} chernies. You'll find them at every old homesite, all through the mountains.

KH: When was the new fire trail put in, fairly recent is it?

CP: Twenty years ago. I've never travelled it. I think it would be twenty years ago. I knew it was there. It would be put in by the forestry or the National Park ... the National Park, that's National Park.

KH: This Kell fellow, did he live there all the year round?

CP: No, he had stock there in the summer.

KH: They could have lived up there in the winter time couldn't they?

Cecil Piper:

CP: They could have lived there, the Stokes lived there all the year round.

KH: It's not very cold, there's no snow.

CP: It ^{might} snow there once every ten to twenty years, the same as it would here. It's a beautiful spot. Stokes is very warm country. In this Valley it's regarded as very warm country, at McLaren's especially and the country where O'Briens building his house, that's also classed as very warm country, early growth.

KH: So he took his sheep up there from down here somewhere...?

CP: Yes, he has a property at ^{Lacmalac}.

KH: How many head of sheep would he take up? Several thousand?

CP: No, he never went in for big lots of sheep - 500 - that's all he'd have.

KH: He'd be by himself?

CP: Yes, more or less, yes.

KH: This Venables fellow might ...

CP: He might meet him and help him - they were great mates anyway.

KH: Did Jack Venables get on the plonk later on in life or was he always strong on drinking?

CP: He didn't drink until he went to the bush, then he took to the grog.

KH: I see, after he was jilted.

CP: He was very steady, very popular bright young fellow. He was born at Argalong, all the Venables, as far as I know were born at Argalong, or in Tumut even. ^{There} were two old original Argalong families. Argalong has been dug from end to end for gold, all the creeks, tributaries of Sandy Creek and so forth up there.

KH: And Jack also had chooks and things like that apparently.

CP: Yes, he had fowls, he had milking cows, pet horses. They used to come to the hut and eat the bread out of his hand.

KH: He was there until 1970, is that right? I think I heard that from somewhere - at Plonk's hut!

CP: Yes, about that, in his new hut.

KH: In the new fibro one?

CP: Yes. Venables dug a water race out of Dinner Time Creek to his new hut, he put a water race in there, then he built in the hut and put the water race in to make water for his hut and the vegetable garden. That was his last big effort in the bush, that water race.

KH: That would still be there?

CP: Yes, it's there.

Cecil Piper:

KH: There's a bit of a ^{dotted line} on this map that could suggest it.

CP: That would either be the track down the Zig Zag or the water race. ^{There's a road} down the Zig Zag, a fire trail - right up to Dinner Time Flat - then it joins the Andy Andy Trail that comes up from Wheelbarrow Flat on the Goobragandra River to Dinner Time Flat - the Andy Andy trail.

KH: The other thing I spoke to Tom ^{Stacey} about particularly was ^{that} just ^{this} side of where Stokes' hut was, about a mile I suppose it is, Tom thought that there had been a mine on the river there. There's another place there where there's still a lot of fruit trees, there's bits and pieces of iron and so on, on the left hand side of the track, as you're going up....

CP: That's the battery, that was Stokes' battery. They had that there not in conjunction with the Goobragandra Stokes' mine at all, they had that battery there and they had a mine - working the mine on top of McLaren's mountain - right at the top. McLaren's mountain is opposite ^{Ugly} mountain and they cut a road from the top of that mountain to Emu Creek, across the river and down to the battery and that was Stokes' battery on the bank of the Goobragandra River. A mile and a half this side of his house ...

KH: That's right - what was the name of the mine then up the hill?

CP: Well, it didn't have a name, it was a reef they found ...

KH: What was the name of the mountain?

CP: McLaren's, named after old Billy McLaren.

KH: Not the Horseshoe Mine - no - on the Andy Andy Range ...?

CP: No, on the opposite side of the river - McLaren's side.

KH: Murphy's Ridge?

CP: Yeah, well - Murphy's Hill is part of McLaren's mountain. It's a spur that runs towards - runs north from McLaren's mountain - it runs north till it peters out where the land levels out before you come to Micalong swamp.

KH: They had a mine up there?

CP: They had a mine on top of McLaren's mountain and they cut the road to it, to the top of the mountain and they carted the ore from that mine to the Goobragandra River and crushed it at that battery.

KH: They had a road ^{up} the opposite side of the river?

CP: They had a road up there that would take their bullocks and their sledge.

KH: That's incredibly steep country.

CP: Well, it's a terrific mountain. The mine is still there to be seen and the road is still there.

KH: What is that mine called?

CP: It hasn't a name. It didn't last long enough to get a name.

Cecil Piper:

It was found and the whole of the work was done by the Stokes' father and sons. They brought the ore down, across the river, at the crossing 200 yards below their house and down that little track - it was then - Venables cut the road afterwards, right to that battery and they crushed the ore there at that battery.

KH: There was no mining at that battery.

CP: No, no mining at that battery, there was mining on the opposite side of the river - they did gold mining on the opposite side of the river - great big deep cuts 30 or 40 feet deep. I think Stokes' opened that up too.

KH: Can you get across the river there?

CP: Yes, the last people who worked that mine was Bill and Dick Cribb, two of the sons - both had mines - two of the sons of Tom Cribb that lived here. They were the last men to work it - Dick and Bill - they're both dead *of course*

KH: And the battery is still there?

CP: No, it's completely demolished and almost disappeared - everything.

KH: There would have been a hut there as well wouldn't there?

CP: They had a hut there, a ⁿ giant water wheel would work the batteries. The giant water wheel worked somehow from the river water, it was an enormous thing, it stood 30 feet high and goodness knows how many sections and how many pieces of wood and how many dozens and dozens of bolts, 2'6" long in that water wheel. It's all gone - Stokes' battery.

KH: That was *also* after they opened the mine up at the ^{ar} Goobragandra?

CP: No prior. They had the battery there before they found the ^{ar} Goobragandra mines. Murphy's reef, ^{that} on Murphy's Hill, it's no distance from the ^{ar} Micalong ^{to} Murphy's reef. Stokes' worked it, but whether they found it or not I don't know, but they worked it. Bill Stokes' worked that one - somewhere round about 1915, Bill Stokes was working that Murphy's Ridge - another shaft, straight down. I was there as a boy with my father talking to them when they were working it - had dinner with them as a matter of fact. Then when you leave there you get into the Micalong country and all the alluvial gold, on Chinaman Creek. A very famous spot on Chinaman Creek known as the Mud Lead - the mud is just oozing, shifting, drifting mud - there's gold in it. Lots of miners have tried their luck there. You had to timber every inch of it, they told me that they have it timbered and they'd have been working and they'd go back next morning and the whole thing had shifted 2 or 3 feet and their workings were covered up. There's a man in Tumut now who has a lease, a mining lease, he's taking it up again, hoping to I suppose

Cecil Piper:

find some way of developing it, induce some syndicate to take it up - it was rich gold. That's not terribly far from the head of Myers Creek where there's alluvial gold in Myers Creek ... Chinaman Creek, Little Micalong

KH: From this mine up on Murphys Ridge, they brought it down, so there would have been another river crossing there?

CP: They brought it down to the same crossing.

KH: The Emu Flat Creek crossing?

CP: Yes, 200 yards down stream, down the ^{ar} Goobragandra River from Stokes' house - that particular crossing. The one now on the fire trail is at Wheelbarrow Flat - it crosses the ^{ar} Goobragandra River - goes on out to Emu Flat.

KH: That's the one we took yesterday.

CP: What are you travelling in?

KH: Walking, we walked up from Macks Crossing, *after 12 o'clock.*

CP: It's seven miles from Macks Crossing to Stokes' house, then approximately a mile around to that crossing - Wheelbarrow and then you also walked up Emu Creek. I would have ordered a horse for that walk.

KH: Well we thought we might ^{to} on the way back.

CP: Did you walk through the river?

KH: Yes.

CP: *They're's a* story attached to that crossing - a Canberra man came over with a brand new Landrover about eight or so years ago, the rover stalled in the crossing, he couldn't shift it, he couldn't get it out, it was on top of big stones - so he walked from there down to ^{ar} Goobragandra Station and the Manager there said yes, he'd help them. Somehow or other next morning, there came a big thunder storm, then they went back next morning, there was no Landrover, no nothing, the whole lot came down the ^{ar} Goobragandra River and was smashed to pulp, never got a fraction of it.

KH: It must have been a very strong wave of water that came down.

CP: It's very swift there, and it just brought it down through all those great ^{blocky} passes and canyons and passages and smashed it to pulp. Some of it was found down here, between here and *Laemalae*. Poor fellow had a very valuable shotgun worth \$100 or \$200 or something. I know the man who got it, the man who found it. He put in some weeks tramping this river up and down looking for spare parts ^{and he got the shot gun.} Finally the police got onto him and told him to stop - he even got the engine - he was doing his best to get the engine out and the Constable came and told him to leave ^{it} where it was. I don't know if anyone ever got it out or what happened about it, but it was a total loss.

Cecil Piper:

KH: We were fairly safe. ^{I went past Kells hut} because I didn't know where it was - I had a map reference to it and we didn't see it until we were coming back down the track again, we had sort of given it away. But then again, it's good to go there because it gives me a lot more reference points when you tell me things now

CP: There's an old miner between Stokes' house and the junction of the rivers - Otto - he was an old miner there, he died there. His hut was on the ...

KH: Otto's hill!

CP: Yes, named after Otto - I've been trying to think of his name ever since we started. He's buried there, his hut was up above Stokes' house on the opposite side of the river on the flat there. He was an old alluvial miner. I suppose there has been lots of miners along there that have had camps and huts and places that I don't know anything about. Too far back for my information, my memory. I think he would have been the last - might have been a hut at the junction of the branches - there has been very extensive alluvial work done, right at the junction of the rivers , ...

KH: The two branches of the Goobragandra River?

CP: The left and right hand branch they call them.

KH: Below Otto's Hill, in that very steep country?

CP: Yes, up the river from Stokes' house about two miles. There's alluvial gold at Stokes' mine in the river, very deep, but it's coarse, heavy alluvial gold there. Harry Stokes, the man that had that log cabin, he married of course and had a family, he went back to Stokes' mine in the depression years - he and his wife and family - camped there in Bradley's hut and he showed me some of the gold he got - it would make your mouth water - there were lumps the size of that spoon and if you could make the spoon double it would be that size of gold he had. It was ^{so} deep in the alluvial flats and he had to lift it with a

End Tape 1.

Cecil Piper:

Tape 2, Side 3

KH: Sounds like Otto was a German guy with a name like Otto - Otto van Bismarck and all that.

CP: Yes, he was German. McLaren would be the Scotchman. I talked to old Billy McLaren hundreds of times - he was very broad in his talk. I think a Scotchman - by his name he would be.

KH: I'm just trying to sort out in my mind where Stokes' house was. Now maybe Stokes' house was - you say - what did you say about a mile this side of where the fire trail goes ^{now} across the river.

CP: Yes, roughly, there's a lot of fruit trees there.

KH: Yes, a lot of fruit trees, but ^{opposite} where Emu Flat Creek comes in, or just down stream from there.

CP: Right where the creek come in.

KH: That's where all those blackberries are and the fruit trees on the flat and that's where Tom ^{Stacey} said they get peaches and walnuts and things later in the year.

CP: Tom knows all about that part of it - Tom Stacey. Sometimes when you mention Tom I think you're talking about Tom Taylor. That's where his house was. Venables grew some of those fruit trees - Stokes grew 90% of them I suppose and there's also a thing growing there ^{I think} a tree of heaven - I fancy there is a clump of it there somewhere. I don't know who would have grown that there.

KH: There's the stamper battery - it's a mile down stream again? ^{Near} where Ugly Creek comes in - in that gully in there.

CP: Yes. They had a sulky shed there. The sulky shed was there on the road and their battery was there on the river.

KH: That's a large area of clearing there isn't it - Ugly Creek - the slope - right up the hill a fair way.

CP: Yes, it has all been cleared.

KH: I think I remember walking that bit, trying to place that.

CP: ^{Ugly Mt Creek is} quite a nice little creek and there was a fence, a gate right there, adjacent to the creek, pretty close there - a gateway. The fence would be gone, the gate would be gone of course.

KH: I think I saw bits of fence there. So going up the river we sort of - you've identified the big stand of deciduous trees - ^{Irwin}, then Plonkeys - the new hut - well Venables, you call that Plonkeys, then we come to the stamper battery site on Ugly Creek.

CP: Yes. Harry Stokes' log hut was in between there, but it's gone. You could see the fire place.

Cecil Piper:

KH: Is it? Between Plonkeys and Ugly Creek?
 CP: Yes, right opposite Plonkey's hut on the bank of the river. It was there twenty odd years anyway - it's gone of course.
 KH: Then we come to Stoke's old homestead and opposite that is Emu Flat Creek and up the creek is Kell's hut and where the fire trail crosses the Goobragandra now, what was the name of that flat again?
 CP: Wheelbarrow Flat.
 KH: Was there ever a hut there?
 CP: Well, not to my knowledge.
 KH: It's a nice little area there.
 CP: Yes, a lovely spot.
 KH: Did you ever work on the Goobragandra mine?
 CP: No.
 KH: There's Otto's Gully too!
 CP: Wait a minute now, I might be wrong about that Wheelbarrow Flat. Where the crossing is is Rungetree, it's not Wheelbarrow Flat, it's Rungetree and Wheelbarrow Flat is close to where Harry Stokes had his log cabin - that was Wheelbarrow Flat.
 KH: Opposite Plonkeys.
 CP: Yes, that was Wheelbarrow Flat there. There's a flat there on the river. After you cross Dinner Time Creek you come to Wheelbarrow Flat and then up where the crossing is is always known as Rungetree. For some reason someone had run a big tree there. That's where that crossing is - a mile above Stokes' house, roughly - maybe not a mile because you have to go around that steep hill out onto the flat. And from Rungetree to the junction of the two branches there's only about a mile and then about a 1½ miles or 2 miles from there to Stokes' mine and Dubbo Creek falls into the river on your left as you go to the mine. It's clearly visible from the track - it falls straight into the Goobragandra River.
 KH: Good falls?
 CP: Beautiful falls, beautiful things. That's not a long walk from there.
 KH: So you could walk around there you reckon.
 CP: You'd get up there. The branches just cross at the junction of the two rivers, the track crosses there and you follow along around for about half a mile and you can see Dubbo Falls falling directly into the River - a sheer drop.
 KH: There's the bit from Feint's Range onto the mine where the track is no longer ...

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CP: ... it's no longer trafficable, there's no way you could get there. Just after the war I was out there at Broken Cart brumby running and I came back to the mine and tried to get around to Stokes' house in the night and I missed the track, I couldn't find it at all and I got right up on Feint's Range and finally did get through but that's 30 years ago. So goodness knows now how much vegetation and stuff is there.
 KH: And when did the mine fold up?
 CP: 1924 I think or 1925.
 KH: Soon after Duncan Prosser was working there ^{by the sound of it}.
 CP: Yes. King, when he managed the mine, he brought ore from that mine by packhorse from ^{there} to Mack's crossing on a packhorse.
 KH: Was King after Bradley?
 CP: Yes, King was the boss.
 KH: King was the boss, Bradley worked for King.
 CP: Yes, as far as I know anyway.
 KH: King was ^{the} boss after Stokes?
 CP: Yes, he took over from Stokes, he must have been there when Duncan Prosser was there. He packed this ore - a man named Jack Auckland, he led the packhorse and brought the ore out, I think to Mack's Crossing or somewhere about there and then it was taken away by horse transport of some sort. It was a long way to pack it ^{with one horse}, they must have just been picking out ^{real} good samples to send away for analysis.
 KH: Did they ever get any gold out of it?
 CP: I don't think it ever paid. I don't think the thing ever paid. Like the Horseshoe mine, different people went on and on with it, but it's alluvial, a different thing altogether and I don't think they got enough to do any good. The one at Horseshoe is a tunnel and it's timbered, but it's pure sand and between the cracks in the timber the sand pours down through. It's alluvial gold but what sort of terrain or what sort of country it is I don't know, but sand runs out ^{through} the cracks of the timber into the mine.
 KH: Doesn't sound like reef gold.
 CP: No not reef, alluvial gold. The last man to work it was a man, a one-armed man, a railway worker ...
 KH: So this is the Horseshoe Mine?
 CP: Yes ...
 KH: I think Duncan Prosser told me there was a big race line 20 miles long that fed water to the Horseshoe mine, would that be right or is he perhaps confusing it with someone else? Because the Horseshoe mine is right

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on top of a ridge isn't it, it's very high up.

CP: It's just away from Dinner^Time Flat, there's no water there. Well he could be right because there's no water there but there's no creek big enough on that range to run a water race. If you run a water race you have got to have a big supply of water. If there's a water race there it would come out of the right hand branch of the Goob^{av}ragandra River.

KH: Well he talks about this very long race line when he was up there dingo trapping and so on.

CP: He know^s every inch of it - a lot of it on foot which is the correct way to learn every inch of it, not on a good fast moving horse, if you're on foot yourself, you see everything. I don't know about that race, if it's there it's come out of the river.

KH: He said, gets water from right up on top of the Peppercorn, comes right down to Horseshoe Mine.

CP: No, that's impossible.

KH: It's an isolated range is it?

CP: Fiery Range is between Peppercorn and *Horseshoe*.

KH: Maybe he meant another mine! He talks about McEvoy's ... that's right, King was the manager of the top one and of ... Bradley had the Yarrangobilly Hotel for a while.

CP: Bradley, his wife was a McNamara, Barbara McNamara.

KH: He also referred me to go and see Herb Buckley.

CP: You haven't had a talk to Herb?

KH: No, not yet. I'll have to see him soon, I don't think I'll get there today.

CP: He's an old man now. The first time I met Herb Buckley, I'd be about six years of age, jogging along^{up} the river and Herb Buckley was standing on top of a big gate post, his horse was tied up and his ^{school} bag hanging on the fence. He was jumping up and down on the post. Just imagine, a six year old boy, I couldn't ride real well and I was absolutely dumb-founded by this fellow - big kid - jumping up and down on this post. When I found ^{me} tongue and finally got round to asking him what he was doing, he said 'Well Mr Elliott owns this fence, it's a green post and he gives me a shilling a week to jump up and down on it so it won't shoot'!! ^{I went home + told my father that} I remember what my father said, as well as what Buckley said, he said "you've had two rides today mate". (*Ha Ha Ha*)

KH: He's been doing it ever since, from what Tom Stacey has been telling me.

CP: Yes, all his life. I've been told - I've had a lot of stories

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crammed down my neck but that was the most blatant bit of trouble I'd ever run into. I told him that, not so many years ago in front of his son and he said "yes, that's where you come from Yarrangobilly wasn't it". My father and mother and I and the whole family of us, we lived in two bark huts at Yarrangobilly village - two little tiny bark huts, we ate in one and we slept in the other. Right down near the village my father was looking after sheep, there at Yarrangobilly, for Mr Armitage of Bongalong Station and Armitage bought Goob^{av}ragandra and owned it and that's why we came to live there. I couldn't find those huts now and no-one else in the world could because it's all pine trees. We went there from Tumut to Yarrangobilly every summer. It was after he worked for Jack Ilett up here.

KH: Apparently this Herb Buckley took the machinery in to Stokes' Mine!

CP: Herb was one of the men that took the machinery to Stokes' Mine. Herb Buckley and Dan French I think.

KH: Dan French, I've heard of him at Kiandra way.

CP: ^{Herb} Buckley and Dan French, if memory serves me wrong ...

KH: Dan French, I think worked on the Elaine Mine up near Kiandra.

CP: He had a bullock team. They were both very famous bullockies, Buckley and Dan French. Dan was a lot older of course, many many years older. Well the same two men took the machinery to the Goob^{av}ragandra Copper Mine, same two people took the machinery there. Dan French was an uncle of mine, he got stuck in the crossing of the Goob^{av}ragandra River, Cribb's Crossing, taking the machinery to the mine and staying with us at that time at Goob^{av}ragandra Station, was an old Presbyterian Minister, I just forget his name ^{but} Anyway he went down to see if he could assist Dan French across the river, but the sparks off Dan's language nearly set his old uniform on fire and he came home and he told my mother about the awful man that was bogged in the river with his bullock team, the terrible language. Dan French is my mother's brother, so she knew who Dan French was. The machinery that went to that copper mine is possibly ... some of it is still there. The machinery that went to Stokes' Mine on the river, a man named Schultz and another fellow named Ray Teggett, with two ex-army blitz wagons went to King's Mine after the war, well after the second world war and shifted some of the machinery from there and brought it right round through Argalong and up here to Dodd's Point where Charlie Stokes was working another reef. So the machinery was shifted about a lot. Harry Dodd is an old Englishman, he had a hut there at Dodd's Point opposite Bill O'Brien's new house, he had a tunnel going straight into the hill, working alluvial gold. He was there

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before the turn of the century and he was still there during the First World War and he died on part of ^{Wilbertong?} Wilbertong Station - Tom Stacey would know where he died. But he had a hut there.

KH: I'm pretty sure Bill Hughes told me about Dan French.

CP: Yes well he was a very famous ...

KH: In fact I might have old photographs of Dan French.

CP: ... very famous old bullocky.

KH: Do you have any photographs of some of these ... like the big waterwheel.

CP: No, unfortunately no-one in the world would have ever have taken a photo of that waterwheel - a most enormous thing - they built every inch of it themselves. The bolts were all homemade, they had rods of iron and they put a thread on each end - a nut on each end ... to hold the whole thing together. Goodness knows how many of them there were in that waterwheel.

KH: What about Stokes' old homestead? Any photographs - McLaren's old hut ...

CP: There wouldn't be any of McLaren's, there would be photos of Stokes' house. If I had any, they would have been taken by my wife up there, she went there with me several times. I had an old army blitz wagon long after the war and I ^{have} taken it up there on several occasions and we did camp there. There certainly would have been photos taken of that house but I don't know.

KH: Plonkeys is a fairly recent hut isn't it - 1950s?

CP: Yes, something like that. Bob Lindley when he owned Stokes' built that hut for him. The park people let him stay there and have one cow and one horse but they went back on that and they got him shifted. He went to Gilmore where Bob Lindley had a property and he died there. I never referred to him as Plonk, I always called him Jack and when talking about Venables hut I always said Venables hut, but everyone that comes along, they're looking for Plonkey Venables' hut. I don't suppose it affects his people or his relations, I don't suppose they care what they call him. There's another thing that always irks me and gets a rap from me - if I get a chance to give anybody a rap - is Mack's Crossing. Jim Mack lived there and he ran a family of thirteen children, four of them were in the First World War in the AIF, one of them died over there, but after they left, Jim Mack had a brother - Jack Mack - his way of life was rabbiting, catching rabbits. In some way or other someone christened him 'Greasy Mack' and 99 people out of every 100 that talks about Mack's Crossing calls it 'Greasy Macks'. There is no necessity to refer to the place as 'Greasy Macks'. Jack made himself a cottage out of the remnants of Jim Mack's homestead and he did live there

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and he died there, but he was taken away to Tumut to be buried. When he died in 1928-29 ... but this 'Greasy Macks', it sticks to that crossing and it sticks in my gizzard, and no-one takes much notice of that either. But he did live there. At one stage he lived in a tunnel in the side of the hill at Dodd's Point, another time he lived between two big rocks with a bathroom above the two big rocks up at the National Park boundary, now. The two big rocks are there to be seen and a few old tins and bottles that old Jack had in his camper, still there, between the two rocks. There wouldn't be very many people know that he lived in a tunnel or that he lived between two rocks.

KH: Where are these two rocks?

CP: Where you ... when you went up after you left Irwin's Paddock where the big elm trees are, you came to the Park boundary, you walk through it. You went around about half a mile or so from the Park boundary and there's another old fence, another old fence there with a few posts, that's before you get to Venable's hut and that's the ... there's a great enormous boulder about as big as this room and it's split in two - the two pieces are there. So he put a back to it and a roof over the top of it of sticks and bark and he lived there.

KH: This is between the road and the river.

CP: Yes, right on the road, right at the gate - a little level spot. It's a very rough bit of terrain there, there was an enormous landslide there way back somewhere around about 1930-35 and the landslide, when it moved, it moved Jack's two big rocks and it also moved the fence - the whole thing. It didn't make any difference to Jack, he still lived there.

KH: Where was the tunnel that he lived in?

CP: The tunnel that he lived in ... in the side of the hill at Dobb's Point.

KH: Right, opposite Mack's Crossing.

CP: Opposite Bill O'Brien's new house above Mack's Crossing - he lived in a tunnel there.

KH: A mining tunnel?

CP: Yes, an old mining tunnel, lived there for a good number of years. He was not as progressive a fellow as his old brother Jim and as I said before the old man is buried on the flat at Dodd's Point. The machinery that Schultz and Tagert (?) brought back from Stokes' mine is still there, it's all there, covered over with blackberry, can't be seen.

KH: Back towards Kiandra way, do you know anything about some of the mines, like there was mine, a milk shanty, wasn't there? Apparently this

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Simm's fellow is pretty good on it - Jack Simms. Your terrain was really the catchment of the Goobragandra, between here and Long Plain ...

CP: Between here and Long Plain, Yorkies, Rules Point. I've been down to Yaok a lot of times, I'm related to some of the Yaok people, way down on the Murrumbidgee out from Adaminby, but although I knew a lot of people in that area like the Oldfields, the Maxwells, the ...

KH: Do you know anything about Oldfield's hut, up towards Murray's Gap? This could confuse you a bit because I think there were a few Oldfields. A long iron hut above Currango.

CP: No, I knew Oldfield's hut on the Cotter River.

KH: Yes, the upper Cotter somewhere, the Oldfields came across from there.

CP: Yes, I'd been brumby running in there with Tommy Pearson, Arthur Cochran and a fellow, name's MacMurtry, probably the first Federal Territory ranger who was ever appointed. I knew Coolamon Plain homestead well and I knew Long Plain homestead well, I knew Campbell's house and Bill's house there at Broken Cart, another hut at the back of Brindabella was Wombat hut. It's gone completely but it was one of the very old ones and it's practically on the power line road that goes from Tinpot on the stock road down to Brindabella, it's on that road, but who had it I don't know. If you got onto that fellow Lindsay Franklin of Brindabella, he could tell you all about that bit from Peppercorn to Brindabella - Lindsay's the fellow, he could tell you the lot. It wouldn't be worth my while trying to tell you anything about it at all, I'd muck it up.

KH: What about Pether's hut?

CP: Yes, it's at the Blackfella 's Rings.

KH: Is it still there?

CP: Well, Jack Bridle ...

KH: Yes, I've been to see Jack.

CP: He knows where Pether's hut is. I've been there plenty of times and I've ridden up from Talbingo to Pether's hut. I've gone from the ... there to Pether's hut and I think it would be completely gone but it was a well-known one. Harry Pether, the old publican - his hut.

KH: Where did he have a pub?

CP: He had a pub at Talbingo. Talbingo Hotel is under water of course. Lazy Harry - he was an amazingly well-known old ... Harry Pether.

KH: That's where the bora rings are, is it?

CP: Yes.

KH: Jack told me about those, he took me down to Vickery's.

Cecil Piper:

CP: Well Jack's the man to talk to and Duncan also.

KH: Duncan Prosser.

CP: Yes, the Blackfellow's Rings and Pether's hut.

KH: I didn't ask Duncan about Pethers.

CP: Well Jack's the man to tell you. A few years ago there was a couple of scouts or trooper scouts, apparently they had been to the Blackfella's Rings and apparently they got off the track and they got lost. I think Jack Bridle finally went and found them. I'd volunteered to go and at the time I'd volunteered they were out. I think Jack Bridle had to go and find them. There was a Tumut paper that came out about a month ago - I saved it and put it away and when I heard, my wife told me you were coming, I said to her 'I'll get that paper and show it to him'. Jack had a walk - Talbingo - trailer walkers they call themselves - Jack's their guide I think. They were there the other day, they went to Quin's old house.

KH: Yes, I read that, I've got that one.

CP: Two of Quin's houses and the old ^{Tounama} Station. Jack of course, he knows all them and so does Duncan.

KH: Yes, Duncan told me about that too, but all that's new to me so I didn't - I couldn't ask as many questions, they didn't have as much meaning to me.

CP: Well, the paper gave a pretty good outline of it, the names of the people.

KH: I went to talk to Ted Quin you see while he was still alive, three years ago, so I know Ted and Ivy.

CP: Yes, that's a bit of good history. I've been there to about all those homesteads in those places, because I knew all about Yarrangobilly. Yarrangobilly had a very sentimental feeling in my heart because we lived there as tiny kids and knew all the people around there. Jack and Duncan are the men, definitely Jack for Pether's hut. He'd tell you whether there's still anything of it left or what has become of it. The trouble with these things, bush fires burn them, they get burnt.

KH: Apparently in that area there used to be another log cabin hut that Duncan told me about too and I think Jack Bridle showed me some old photos of it. It was burnt down in the 60s. Quite a big log cabin.

CP: The Lick Hole.

KH: Could be.

CP: They mention the Lick Hole - Lobb's Hole - there's a hotel at Lobb's Hole and there was a big house at the Lick Hole.

Cecil Piper:

KH: I was particularly interested in log cabins, because they are fairly rare in the mountains, there is only three or four.

CP: Harry Stokes is one of those, only a small one, two-roomed hut.

KH: Duncan also told me that the race lines were made with a bullock team often, with a very big plough, they weren't made necessarily by pick and shovel. Where they could they made them with a giant plough.

CP: Well, there wasn't too many ploughs about either. For instance old McNamara had a wooden plough - got the shear off an old wooden plough. I know he had brains enough to put his wooden plough in the hut.

KH: Left it out in the weather.

CP: It lay there ... I went past it ... a thousand times or more I rode past it. All the Cribbs and all the Macks, they all rode past it none of us had brains enough to pick it up and put it in the hut. I told the curator of the museum in Tumut about the wooden plough and he nearly cried. I was out there three years ago with the endurance ride people pegging a trail for the riders and one of the Cribbs, he was a great grandson of the old man who owned this house, he was pegging the trail and he walked on this plough shoe laying in the grass and he picked it up and stuck it in the ground, didn't know what it was. It's a big long thing that long, stuck it in the ground and tied a bit of ribbon on it for the endurance riders so they could see where they were going. So I went round a couple of days after for some reason or other and I see this plough ^{share} and I remembered it. I rode straight away and put it in a big hollow log - I couldn't carry it on my horse. But I told him about it and he said get it and bring it in and talk a little bit about it on a tape for me. It's still out there, I can't carry it on my horse.

KH: Yes, Duncan did talk about Pether's hut - it's gone.

CP: He and Cotterill, Bruce Cotterill, they put the fire trail in to the Blackfella's Rings from Yarrangobilly with some sort of machine.

KH: Someone else has suggested that I should go and see Mrs Cotterill.

CP: Yes, she was a Lampe from Talbingo Station. She's an old lady now.

KH: So they put in the Warongong Fire Trail.

CP: Yes, that's right. They put it in to the Rings and perhaps a little bit further. The National Park people have gone on now and they connected it up with the Warongong road, connected that trail with the Warongong road, it runs right through. It's possible to go through from Buckley's down here at Walls Creek right through to Yarrangobilly on that trail. It runs through all the rings - three rings, might be four.

Cecil Piper:

KH: You've been there?

CP: Yes, it's three or four.

KH: Near the piles of rocks in a certain shape.

CP: No, no rocks, it's in the ground, the shape of a saucer, it's a depression, a remarkable thing - three or four of them. To look at them they are only the same depth as a saucer, they might be down a foot, perfectly round, they might be a foot deep on the flats. I remember there was a nice little flat, they made them.

KH: What diameter, how far across are they?

CP: They would have been the Cooma tribe of Aboriginals. They used to come there. You'd leave Cooma in the winter and you'd come ... live in the Burrangong Mountains all the winter. I assume it would be the Cooma tribe, it wasn't the Bungal tribe or the Tumut tribe, I don't think. I think it was the Cooma tribe - ceremonial features of some sort where they danced.

KH: Pether's hut is near there?

CP: Pether's hut is about a mile from the rings in a dead line for Talbingo, down hill. It was all cleared country, all cleared country, but Pether built the hut alright but why the hell he built the hut I don't know. Wilkinson's were in charge of the country, Blowering people, they were in charge of the country, to my knowledge anyway, but Pether might have been prospecting or something - anyway he built the hut. It was a good little hut, in a lovely spot, just nestling in amongst the hills. There was not much flat and not terribly steep and not terribly flat - a beautiful spot.

KH: I think Jack actually ... I think you can walk across there. He walks into that country from his place at Talbingo.

CP: Oh yes, there's a trail there, there's a trail to ride up there. Up ^{Tounama} Creek and you turn sharp left off the creek straight up. It's a long clear ridge and you follow it up a long long way up and then you bear to the right, off the ridge and cross onto another one. You come out into clear country before you get to Pether's hut. I rode up there with Harry Pether - directed me - helped find the track.

KH: Can you just tell me that again about the mine near Broken Cart Flat?

CP: As you go down the road towards the mine and down on Broken Cart Creek, not quite visible from that road, was Ted and Tom's hut and they worked very deep ground, it was good gold and very deep ground, too deep for those days for their tools and the equipment and the water power that they had to work, they had to knock off. I didn't know their - other than their christian name, Ted and Tom, and I understand they are both

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buried there. They travelled from Yass, more than from Tumut with their pack horses to that workings and the last two men to work it was while I was working at old Peter's claim on the Broken Cart clearing, the last two men were Walter Cribb and Walter Ottman - both dead now. They both told me that there was good gold there but it was too deep, too much hard work to try and get down to it to get it into a tail race.

KH: And at the clearing up the top, is this newer hut?

CP: Yes, I don't know the name of it, I don't know the man who built it or why it was built. It's on the clearing, across Broken Cart creek from the clearing, about a quarter of a mile from where you cross the creek, on the right hand side, almost on the track, almost on the road.

KH: There's a bit of a fence line and so on around there too.

CP: Yes, there's a little paddock that the drover's camp there, with sheep and cattle in - Broken Cart paddock they call it. Originally it was a brush break built by the old drovers out of timber and the PP board some 30 years ago decided they'd build fire fence breaks at all those old break sites for the drovers and they did. They built one at the foot of the Micalong and one at the top of the Micalong, one at Emu Flat, one at Sassafras, one at Dubbo, one at Tinpot and then on right through all the way to Rules Point, the last one was at Rules Point.

KH: There's a Happy-go-lucky Flat on the map too.

CP: Yes, Happy-go-lucky, that's between Tinpot and Dubbo.

KH: Between Broken Cart and Dubbo.

CP: Yes, half a mile from Broken Cart towards Dubbo, that's right. A long narrow little flat, broke into two or three different series as it goes

End Side 3.

CONCLUSION