

This is an Interview by Klaus Heuneke of
40 Miller St, O'Connor, Canberra
with Dick Power of Berridale on 22nd October 1981

Dick is a stockman and a general mountain rouseabout who has spent a lot of time in the Snowy Mountains, and I think has got a lot of stories to tell.

(Interview commences while looking at photographs)

DPI reckon that I'm the oldest and the last one of the drovers on the Monaro.

KH The active ones, I guess you are!

DP I think I'd be the only man that would carry six horse bells, sheep bells, stock hobbles and pack gear.

KH You'd be the oldest still active.

DP Still doing the droving.

KH That's right, that's right.

DP I think they're nearly all gone. I've had a lot of mates from the Murray side in the mountains, they're all gone. Simon Freebody, when they drove all their lives, when he went in and did that.

KH Simon Freebody, I still get very confused with all those Freebody's, the Pendergasts and all these names because there's so many relatives and so on. When we met you that was at the Chalet wasn't it?

DP Yes.

KH You also called it Dick's Hut?

DP They used to call it Dick's Hut.

KH Yes, after you?

DP Because I took it over, it used to always be Noel's Hut. The Chalet Hut over at the back is Mrs Casey's, she married old Jim Litchfield and he died.

KH Oh! Jim Litchfield died did he?

DP Old Jim died, and he married her, so she's got the money, got the place.

KH Which property is Mrs Casey from?

DP Coolringdon, over at the airport.

KH Opposite the airport. Yes, I just drove past it.

DP Pine trees, on the right as you come out there.

KH How long have you been working for Mrs Casey?

DP Well I worked at Coolringdon almost permanently going on six years, but I was doing casual work for the best part of seventeen years with Noel Weston, see we'd go over there to get the stock to take back to the mountains.

KH Is he related to the West's of Adaminaby?

DP He's West-o-n.

KH What was the first time you went up the Gungarlin?

DP That's a good while ago. Well, my first trip through it, to Corryong through that area, I'm not gonna give the old people's names I was with because they are dead. I was with an uncle and a cousin. I took uncle's cattle to Corryong. I was fourteen year old, that was my first trip over the Bogong Mountains.

KH You went up the Big Bogong?

DP With our party through the right hand side, through Pretty Plain to Khancoban. We came up from Jindabyne through Kalkite.

KG To Kalkite Gap?

DP Yes.

KH Up where it's now flooded, that route's flooded. The Kalkite Gap was the old, common way in?

DP No, it was the main stock route right through there.

KH But not Nimmo Hill? Did you use Nimmo Hill too?

DP We came from Jindabyne, Rocky Plain. Jindabyne, all trails to the mountains went up through the Gap.

KH Up through Kalkite Gap?

DP Kalkite Gap, yes.

KH Even up to Tin Hut, up that way. They went in that way?

DP Anyone from this side went up Nimmo Hill. Any of the Jindabyne people went out to that area.

KH Did you ever go to Constances Hut in those days or there's another....

DP Later years, in later years in the last ten years since I first went in Constances Hut.

KH But that trip across to Corryong, that was your first trip?

DP That were my first trip, 'cause I had other trips that way and then through Groggin.

KH Tom Groggin and Dead Horse Gap?

DP Yes, Leather Barrel Creek and Geehi, behind the Geehi Wall. That was in the Corryong area. Then I had some sickness, never got out at that time. I was eighteen months practically in hospital. You see I was with my old uncle and 'cause when I was away for so long, they said they thought I'd be dead before I was twenty.

KH And you're still going?

DP I had a few trips down there with another chap, McGregor, he used to go in that area years ago. That was the end of that, the Park, not much more droving across.

KH That was taking cattle across?

DP Cattle to the markets, Corryong markets.

KH Where they go down to Melbourne or something?

DP In those days there was a stock inspector, he met you at the border at Bringenbrong. A pound for inspection I think it was ten bob for each way. Hughie Bloomfield was a stock inspector at Cooma. He was a health man and he give a health certificate to the border.

KH Did you work on a grazing lease in that time?

DP No I worked on my own for a long time.

KH When did you first start taking stock up to the High Country for grazing for the summer months?

- DP Now, I started about seventeen or eighteen years ago onto that snow country. I used to do help take stock up to the Kosciusko area. I used to go with Allens in the beginning when the war was on. Allens had a big syndicate, 22,000 sheep and I used to gather them up, and helped the men muster them. I was working on the station here then. Amos Williams, he was in on it.
- KH There were a lot of Amos's, weren't there? A very popular name?
- DP Amos Williams and I used to go back and Jack Brody was the man who used to look after them. He'd be there all the summer. That's all he's ever done. He worked for the McGufficke's, he'd worked for everybody in the hills. He lived his life in the bush.
- KH Did you ever go up to Foreman's Hut when it was still standing?
- DP I have been there yes.
- KH It's just a chimney now, near the Chalet, near Charlotte Pass.
- DP I have been there but not for a good many years.
- KH What about places like White's River?
- DP No, not a great lot, only just when I was up in this area, would be looking for stranded cattle for a leaseholder. But on the other side Blue Cow, Twynam, Cootapatamba Lake, Big Boggy.
- KH You rode around there?
- DP Mustered cattle right through to Omeo.
- KH So your country in the early times was more the southern areas out toward the Victorian border?
- DP Down by Snowy River.
- KH Do you remember the old Dead Horse Gap Hut?
- DP Yes.
- KH What was that made of?
- DP Galvanised iron. Leo Byatt, Laurie McGufficke and Ernie Bale packed the iron from the summit to build the hut. The Nankervis's, Laurie McGufficke and Ernie Bale, from

- the foot of the summit to Dead Horse Gap.
- KH Where's Ernie Bale, where does he live?
- DP Here, nine mile out from Jindabyne. He's retired, a drover and dingo trapper. He shepherded with me on the Big Boggy, 4,400 sheep. Harry McGufficke from the Cooma area, he had the lease but those days there was no restriction. If you could get 10,000 on you took them.
- KH That was back in the 30's - 40's before the war?
- DP No, I think the war may have been over, I forget but around that time.
- KH Are there any Nankervis's still around?
- DP In Corryong, yes Jimmy Nankervis. He was married to Norm McGufficke's daughter.
- KH The Nankervis's are in Corryong are they, if I want to contact them, because they had a property on Tom Groggin didn't they?
- DP Yes they did, now if you can get in touch with them, Norm is not long dead. Jimmy married Norman's McGufficke's daughter Joyce.
- KH Are the old Nankervis's still alive?
- DP No, they're be gone.
- KH Because they had, they had something to do with Cascade Hut didn't they?
- DP Yes, they used to come up to the lease.
- KH Do you remember who built that, Cascades?
- DP Before my time.
- KH Before your time? Because it used to have a bark roof.
- DP No, I couldn't tell you what was on it. I know it had a bark roof but I couldn't tell you because it's in the earlier days. Oh, I suppose Pierce's had Groggin, old Johnny Pierce, Kerry Pierce. When I can first remember anything, they used to have Groggin and they used to have all that country running cattle, and they used to have men with them there.
- KH What about the hut up in the top there? What we now call

Teddy's Hut near some brumby yards?

DP Teddy McGufficke built that.

KH Teddy McGufficke?

DP He had Dainer's Gap Hut.

KH Were there any other people involved in the building of that?

DP Noel Pendergast would be, I suppose.

KH That was during the war, was it?

DP Yes, I was over at Allen's, I've never been to where it is, but I know where it was.

KH Yes, I've been there, but all the slabs have fallen off.

DP I haven't been in that country since 1939.

KH So, there weren't very many fences in that country, was there? There's one up near Teddy's hut on the top of Big Boggy.

DP Well, that was sort of a break to stop them coming back when they mustered them in, because they didn't have anything stopping them then. The divide between the Big Boggy and Cascades there was three barbed wire strands through the trees, and round sticks stuck in there. I don't know who put it there. The Nankervis's, it stopped their cattle. They had a mustering paddock there at Dead Horse.

KH There's a paddock around Cascades too. A big paddock down there?

DP Yes. There was no paddock at the Tin Mine in my time.

KH At the Tin Mine. There's some old posts but I think they're very old.

DP They were put in there to build a horse paddock.

KH Yes there was a horse yard. That would have been Charlie Carter's horse yard wouldn't it?

DP Probably it was there. I haven't been there since '41.

KH You haven't been? Well Charlie would have been there then.

DP Yes, he was there a long time after.

KH Yes, he was there till 1953 or something.

DP I was at Ingeegoodbee with Freebody's, '39 after the big fire and '40 and '41. I got up one morning and had a look around and I said, "Well, what is the good of having a family?" There's nothing here only dingos, bloody brumbies and lice.

KH Was Charlie living there by himself then?

DP He was up at the Tin Mine.

KH Charlie used to have a hut on the Ingeegoodbee when he first came up to the mountains.

DP Yes, well, he got that from old Billy Wellsmore. Old Billy Wellsmore had 50 acres at Ingeegoodbee and when you selected in the early days you got three times lease and if you stuck to it and paid for it in a 100 years that three times lease come freehold owned. Therefore, you'd have 200 acres of freehold ground. Billy Wellsmore built the first hut built there.

KH Was it anywhere near the Barry Way?

DP Oh no, it was way up, right up on the Ingeegoodbee River.

KH On the track to the Tin Mine.

DP Yes, right on that and you need a four wheel drive.

KH Is there anything of Charlie's old hut?

DP No, it got burnt.

KH There was ^anew one built five years ago just near the old one.

DP I think it would be pretty close to it.

KH I've never been there.

DP Never been there? I haven't been there since, I couldn't tell you. The war was on, the early stages of the war. I was in there at Ingeegoodbee going through with Allen's cattle with Les French and Tom Golby.

KH Is Tom Golby related to Snowy Golby?

DP His father.

KH Ah! Are there more Golby's, has Snowy got any brothers, I'm a bit confused about the Golby's?

DP You couldn't count them on the fingers of your hands. Greg Golby is the oldest. I'm not sure if Snowy is second or third. There's a Carl Golby but he's dead and then there's Hubert from Ingebyra.

KH Snowy Golby lived just outside of Jindabyne somewhere.

DP At Grosses Plain.

KH Oh, he's at Grosses Plain.

DP There's Bob.

KH There's a number of people who have mentioned Snowy Golby as a person to go and see. He'd know about the history?

DP He'd know about the Ingebyra end. Black Mountain and perhaps to Bairnsdale.

KH The Freebody s and Charlie were sort of at loggerheads for a long time. Do you know how it all started at all, why didn't they like each other?

DP No, but there was a big court case.

KH I know, they planted skins on each other or something.

DP The story I know is that Charlie Carter lost his horse and found it was shot, and he had Freebody's charged. He was brought into Jindabyne and came up before the court. It wasn't Carter's horse at all, it was their own horse. He told the judge they took the skin off, they told him it was their business, not his. Charlie Carter went to prison for three years I think, I don't know, but I can't tell you that for certain.

KH I thought the Freebody s planted one of their own hides in his hut, that's one story I've heard.

DP Well, I....

KH And the police went out there and found this horse skin with Freebody s brand on it in Charlie Carter's hut. That's not the story you know?

DP No, I'm afraid I don't. Charlie had a horse that was shot and skinned right to the hoof, nose and everything. They had a witness that they brought this horse off. There were no questions asked of how the horse might have

broke its leg or how it got shot, or anything else. The hide was never opened up in courthouse, it was still in the bag. I can't remember, I used to get it for supper, breakfast and dinner when I was with the Freebody s for three years.

KH What, that story or the feud?

DP Very touchy people, the Freebodys.
(speaking loudly, mimicking the conversation of the Freebodys)
"Is that permissible? Now where did you get your information that you could come here?" and "Is that legal? I don't think that would be permissible!"
(laughing)

KH I'm not sure that I will go and interview the Freebody s.

DP I'd ask them first, but there's only young Pat is left. He wouldn't give you any information. Oh no!

KH There's lots of other people like Tom Taylor and Mollie told me about it too, that story.

DP I talked to Snowy Golby about it and I couldn't remember. He said he thought he was imprisoned but he wasn't too sure. At one stage when he got out from prison they took his place over for the money that he owed to the court.

KH But then he went back after, didn't he? He went back to the Tin Mine.

DP He went back to Sydney and got a doctor's practice and set up as a cancer cure specialist. He wrote a book on that!

KH Yes I've got his book.

DP Anyhow, he was there for three days and never got a customer, he sold his practice and went Kangaroo shooting. He was away for years and eventually turned back up at Grosses Plain, dog trapping and eventually worked his way back to the Tin Mine prospecting. He gave the dog trapping up after a few years you know.

KH He must have had a good education somewhere because the book he wrote is full of plenty of big words and things and all about cures for the world, communism, cancer and a whole series of other things.

DP I never knew much about the book but I knew he'd wrote one. I used to give him a good hearing, never argued

- about it. He'd mix up this ointment.
- KH Bluestone or something. Apparently he rubbed himself with it, with various concoctions.
- DP He'd rub it on the sore or something and he'd reckon that'd bring the bad stuff out, must bring it out.
- KH What did he eat, do you know? What did he live on? Did he grow anything himself?
- DP Yes, my word, he used to have sweet turnips and potatoes at Ingeegoodbee.
- KH What about the Tin Mines, he wouldn't have grown much there would he?
- DP Yes, he used to buy his food, then go in and get his food.
- KH Was he at the Tin Mines when you were there in the '40s?
- DP Yes, he was there.
- KH He left Ingeegoodbee then?
- DP I'd been out of that for years, I couldn't tell you when.
- KH This was much earlier then. How old was he when you met him? He would have been in his '70s when he died.
- DP My oath! Might have been in his '80s. Hubert Golby would know, he left his brumbies to Hubert Golby.
- KH Charlie left some things to Hubert?
- DP Hubert Golby had authority to bury him, Hubert Golby drew up a bit of a will for him and it was to be seen that he was buried. Hubert Golby was a J.P.
- KH Is he quite approachable? Would he talk to me?
- DP I think he would, he's down at Ingebyra.
- KH He's a brother of Snowy?
- DP Yes.
- KH He'd know the country well too?
- DP Well he wouldn't know it like Snowy because he was well settled down and didn't go into the bush as much as Snowy.

- KH What was the story with his death? Did Hubert or Snowy, were they involved in getting the body out?
- DP No, Jimmy McGufficke, (others mentioned, unable to decipher) they went to Bairnsdale and the Murray and down the Ingeegoodbee River looking for horses, and they said they'd get his horses and took them up there. They came back and got the horses and when they came back he was dead. They come in and reported it to the police at Jindabyne and a fellow called Pinky Harris. He went looking down with the police and packed him in. You've heard the song "Lasseter's Last Ride"?
- KH No.
- DP Pinky made up a song "Carter's Last Ride" and packed him in.
- KH Oh, I see, Carter instead of Lasseter, how's it go on? There was something about Charlie still had his bridle over his arm or something. They found him collapsed in his doorway or something like that.
- DP I never heard that.
- KH He probably starved to death or something.
- DP He had dysentery, his insides ruined. He was that bloody weak he got out of bed and couldn't get back in.
- KH Then they had problems getting his body back in apparently. One of the rivers was up high or something.
- DP The Ingeegoodbee could have been up to Tin Mines. Carter wasn't a very good horseman, he reckoned his arse was on fire! (laughter)
- KH I know that one! I'm not a very good horseman either. Did Charlie build that hut do you know?
- DP Them huts were built by the Tin Miners. There were a lot of huts there, they got burnt you know.
- KH There were some burnt? There was a big workshed which is still there. There's Charlie Carter's Hut which is still there with the weatherboards or slabs. Little hut with one window.
- DP That's where the boss slept. That's when the Tin Mines were working, they used to come in from the other side. There was a lot of mining down there. The Freebody's supplied the meat, got a licence, slaughter's licence.

They had draught horses. They had a stable, they had a yard. The fire came over the hill and Carter saved a couple of buildings, he lost some of his pack saddles and things in the shed before he could save the hut.

KH Which fire was that? '39?

DP No, no since '39. They had a meathouse there, they had a cook, the kitchen was as long as from here to.....

KH There's a big sort of mess building that's still there with alpine ash and shingles on the roof, or part of the roof's covered with shingles.

DP They were all shingles in my time, made out of Ash. There was about 40 men working there. I don't know if they got any tin or not.

KH Were they still working when you went there first?

(Background noise overrides conversation, impossible to transcribe)

DP No. The Tin Mine fellas used to bring salt up from Ingebyra. Bagged salt, Liverpool, coarse stuff, and we'd pack it into Ingeegoodbee....cattle very fond of salt in the bush. Sour country.

KH They used to use the salt to keep stock in a certain area. Do they keep coming back? It was a good way of mustering if you wanted them all to come together, you'd put some salt out.

DP Yes, they'd keep coming back.

KH If you wanted them all to come back you put salt out?

DP Used to use it to round up wild horses.

KH Wild horses as well?

DP Oh, yes, loved rock salt as well. They'd chew the wall, ate pieces off the wall you know.

KH There was something about Smiggin Holes, apparently it's named after..... Its a Scottish name, something to do with the place where stock would gather and make this hole. That may have something to do with salt?

DP Something was in the ground. Something in the ground, sheep and cattle licking the dirt, there was something in it.

KH Salt or a particular mineral?

DP There could be salt in the ground, I don't know.

KH I know in some of the huts that had been used to store salt, the floorboards get eaten away by the wombats and other things that come in, possums too I think.

DP You never have salt close to you, the cattle get around to it and Lord! they can make a mess!

KH Where did you store it, hang it in a toilet? At Broken Dam Hut near Tabletop there is a bit of stone lined hole in the side of a little hill, maybe that was used for storing salt? It seemed very strange, I don't think they had wine in those days.

DP Maybe for hiding things.

KH With this Charlie Carter story, why would they skin horses? What would they use the hides from the horse for?

DP That's what they build the shed out of at Ingeegoodbee, the chaff shed.

KH They built it out of horse hide?

DP Yes, Bob Golby used them.

KH Could you sell a hide from a horse?

DP Wasn't worth anything.

KH Not worth anything now?

DP Only thing you could sell was the tail. That was used for stuffing bags and mattresses.

KH That's why it seems strange that they would want to shoot a horse and skin it.

DP We used to use horses for dog meat, you had to because the stallions would come in and ruin your stud horses. Great dog meat. They're very thick now, the horses in the bush.

KH There's a lot of horses in the Big Boggy country.

DP Right down through. Them blokes at Suggan Buggan, Eric Watts, he told me they shot over 300 horses there when they started fencing, they were eating the grass. They

started fencing in blocks you know. I packed Hunter, the surveyor into there and you could go up to Ingeegoodbee River, it was called Suggan Buggan then, they had the road down the ^{Block?} Back Mountain to the river. Hunter and two of his men were there. That was in '39. Hunter was his name, he used to survey right up to the border through to McFarlanes. Surveyed them blocks for the poor soldiers to make a fortune when they came back. I think the Richardsons from Buchan got some of that country now, and right at Suggan Buggan where the reserve was to be put for the township. There used to be a school there in the early days you know.

- KH I've never been to Suggan Buggan.
- DP I've been there, there was a cemetery there too, about three or four buried on it.
- KH What about in Byadbo country, did you go in there across the lower Snowy? Byadbo, back towards.....
- DP I've been over there mustering. The road comes up from Delegate, they call Turn Back, off the Snowy at Buchan Ridges down below Suggan Buggan.
- KH That no-man's land there. That's New Mexico!
- DP I've got cattle out of there.
- KH What, semi wild cattle? When you did your mustering, say in the Big Boggy country, did you usually have two musters? One to bring out the bulk of the cattle and one to round up the strays?
- DP Yes, in the back muster. When they had a big mob well they had to go at them. Some would stay back. All the cattlemen from the Murray would be up there.
- KH You'd get together for mustering, all the stockmen?
- DP Yes like all the cattle draft you've got seventeen or eighteen hundred head on the Boggy and you took yours one way, I took another. You had to get all the horses in the yard and run him for a while through some fences, call it "camp draft". Can't agree with a lot of these, too old fashioned.
- KH What was that, in about March or April?
- DP On the high snow country it's supposed to be gone before winter, but the general mustering start on Kosciusko, it was the law of the lease, they had to be out by the end

- of March, 22 March was the day of mustering.
- KH Quite early.
- DP Now you stay there all year round.
- KH Skiing or bushwalking you certainly go all year round, but if you got a dog with you, you might have problems.
- DP Bit heavy on him. I've drove down the coast, down to Bemboka, took cattle down there for Flanagan's and brought them back.
- KH This is Flanagan's father, Ron Flanagan?
- DP He was dead anyhow, but his father.....
- KH When I met you at the Chalet there's a few notes I made. One of the stories you told me was about Napthali's Hut. That's the one that's just a ruin, where there is just a stove left there now.
- DP That's right.
- KH That was old Bill Napthali?
- DP Bill Napthali was the youngest, Charlie Napthali
- KH They had a sawmill there at one stage.
- DP Pit saw, big cross cut saw. Down the hole, one pulled it down, other fellow pulled it up.
- KH Was that actually at Napthali's Hut or further up at Teddy's?
- DP Yes, then they improved on it, they had a bloody wheel or something.
- KH Yes there's a bit of a wheel still lying there.
- DP They had a bloody trench.
- KH A water race?
- DP Yes.
- KH Must have been a water wheel.
- DP Could have been, a bit of an old wheel that was at Napthali's.

KH Do you remember that working, or just a ruin, you just heard about it?

DP No, it was an old place when I first got there. The first time I got there was with that first lot of cattle. I had been up at the Gungarlin that the Willis's had. They are first cousins to me.

KH Apparently this Napthali's used to have a billiard table?

DP Correct, I slept on it.

KH You slept on it?

DP It was the only place I could get in, there were that many there.

KH That must have been a long time ago.

DP Oh yes, I was only 14 year old.

KH That was at the time, you called in at Napthali's when you went over to Kalkite Gap?

DP Yes.

KH You stayed there?

DP We went from Kalkite out along the river. That's where we camped the cattle. The sheep men came in from everywhere. Jardine was another.

KH It was quite a big hut, Napthali's?

DP It was a house.

KH A big house, they called it Snowy Plains House.

DP Maurice Fletcher's mother was reared there, Mrs Jimmy Kidman was reared there.

KH It had a chimney at each end, by the looks of it.

DP There was a fireplace at the end of it, that's where the billiard room was. There were men pegged out there like frog skins, everywhere.

KH And you slept on the billiard table, wasn't it a bit cold?

DP You gotta put up with it, better than laying in water, plenty of nights I struck that. Wet clothes, wet pack,

wet ground, done a lot of that too.

KH Were there women at Napthali's when you went there?

DP No, they were married and gone.

KH Who was living there then?

DP Old Billy Napthali.

KH What by himself?

DP He had someone there working for him, see Kidman's Hut. Jimmy Kidman was married to Billy Napthali's sister, well that was their main residence to go up there and stay.

KH They stayed at Napthali's?

DP Then they built that little hut.

KH When was that built, any idea?

DP No idea.

KH Because I haven't found out when Kidman's was built.

DP Neen should be able to tell you.

KH Neen Pendergast?

DP Yes, Dave's wife, she's Simon's daughter. She'd know I think?

KH I asked her on the phone the other day, she was going to find out for me. I was there last winter. A tiny little hut. So the Kidman's lived at Napthali's for a while?

DP They used to stay there, that was the first stage in, when they's coming in with their stock. They might bring them in there, have them in a small paddock. They would then go in and look for strays. I think they used to have a tent there before the had the hut.

KH At Kidman's?

DP Yes.

KH Was there much of that. Did people have tents very much?

DP Oh god yes! That's all they had for many years.

KH What canvas tents?

DP Calico.

KH Calico tents? Did you ever use a tent?

DP Not much, we camped a bit in tents on jobs.

KH You'd carry it in with you in a pack saddle or something?

DP No we never bothered, when we were droving, no.

KH Just lie under a tree?

DP Yeah. If it was too wet you walked around the fire and told yarns and smoked cigarettes and built your fire.

KH Til midnight?

DP All night!

KH You don't sleep. How long would you do that for?

DP I'd do it for three or four nights running.

KH Asleep in the saddle I suppose next day, fall off!

DP I've seen some times in my time you know!

KH Do you remember any poetry from that time? The Naphthali's or any of these old people, did they write any poetry or make up any poetry?

DP They could have been, but I can't remember them at all.

KH What about songs?

DP Old songs gone right out of my head, there's too much of this bloody disco now. I used to know a few old songs and that, but couldn't put one, start one now.

KH Because I've asked a number of people this and because there might have been some songs that have come out of the mountains, that have been written by local people. There doesn't seem to be much.

DP No, nothing much, no.

End of Side 1 - Tape 1

Tape 1 - Side 2

KH Jack Bridle told me a few, he's over at Talbingo, he remembered a few lines from some poems but he couldn't remember very much. There was one written about the Coolamon Ball, this was further north, Coolamon Plain, they used to have an annual ball there at Christmas time. A fellow called Bunty Morris wrote it. A long ballad about it. But otherwise, well, there's this one here that you just had out and there is another one by that lady. Lindsay Willis gave it to me, I can't remember now, she was a bushwalker from Sydney and she wrote a long poem back in the 30s.

DP I think it came out in some of the papers.

KH Beryl, Beryl something. You mentioned 1923 was a bad drought year and you told me some stories about it. Something about cows pissing in the dams.

DP That's the only water we had and everything had to use it. Laurie Williams, he was engaged to my sister or just about to be engaged and he went up one morning to get the water and talk about stink! It was vile to drink and there was a bloody fox, got hooked in the Briar Berry rotting in the top-end of it with a rabbit trap on his foot, he fell in. He went away and dug under a bank, it wasn't very deep, about from here down to the floor and he got good clean water. We had that for drinking water.

KH Sounds better than.....

DP God, it was nice water. We used to have a go up to (sounds like Worts??) before we got that you know. He had a well in the creek, a good well.

KH That was at Gully's near Ingebyra?

DP Yes that was the 22nd June 1922. The Snowy River crossed over the Snowy Bridge in Jindabyne.

KH Went over it!

DP Clean over it! Washed the approach out on this side and put a limb of a tree in a house that was on the bottom side. That house belonged to Joe Barry, Asher owned the store that was there. It was full of water and sunk and all the bottles turned upside down and come to the top!. It filled the cellar under the bar in Jindabyne. I tell you what, there were blokes on the other side of the Snowy River, had a bloody long face on them, a face as

long as a wet week to see that pub go under water.

KH That was in early 1922?

DP 22nd June 1922 and it never rained any more for 18 months.

KH And then you had the big drought?

DP You know by November there were cracks like that in the ground, stock was poor, nothing grew, windy, hot and dry.

KH That store that was flooded in Jindabyne, that was still there before the dam was in? It was right next to the road between the road and river?

DP Asher, he was a Jew who had it at that time.

KH I remember some of those, there was a garage along there I think.

DP I couldn't tell you who had the Pub at that time, it may have been Frickie or Jack Gibbers. Couldn't tell you.

KH You told me that they were drinking, they were still drinking in the pub with the water around their knees?

DP Yes, it doesn't get that bloody high anywhere.

KH And then you told me about mustering using fire.

DP Yes, that was what we done.

KH For signalling?

DP Yes, it didn't matter what country you were in it only burnt a lot. It kept the country, it kept the scrub down, that's what I explained.

KH But you did actually use the fire to make signals?

DP It was for signalling.

KH Did you have a code or anything?

DP I was ^{I saw that smoke} mustering on this hill and you're out on that one and if I knew what area you were going into. That was all the go, all that country up above was as clear and you could see for miles! There wasn't a thing on it.

KH There certainly wouldn't have been the shrubs that are there now. There could have been a lot less shrubs,

mainly grasses I suppose.

DP Yes clover, mountain grass and it would come out in seed and it would be real brown. Fat cattle for miles, there wasn't many sheep on that side 'till later years, 'till they brought in the leases, the close leases. There was a few sheep come in you know on the southern leases, not the northern leases.

KH Yes that's something you said when you used fires as a signal when you were out at Cesjacks Hut.

DP Yes.

KH Were you involved in the building of Cesjacks?

DP No. No.

KH Yes, because that's a very recent hut I think, 1941 or something.

DP Cecil O'Brien, he had the store in Berridale and he owned a little farm here and another up on the Rocky Plain Road. Jack Bolton, Jack and Cecil got a lease, Ken Hain and his brother-in-law got a lease and they all went into one big block. They brought the timber and Jack Bolton and Cecil O'Brien built the hut! It was named Cesjack, see Cecil and Jack, and I think one of the McPhies brought that up. See McPhie's never worried about the hut, they were big cattle owners and they owned Grey Mare right through.

KH The McPhie's?

DP Yes, they'd go out and muster and get out to Pretty Plain with the Penders, Grey Mare and O'Keefes.

KH There were a number of brothers, four brothers or something. There was another Amos, Amos McPhie wasn't there, a Jack McPhie?

DP Jack McPhie and Jerry McPhie, there were heaps of them.

KH Are there any McPhies around now?

DP The younger generation, Bob McPhie's boys still own Nimmo here on the river. They've got a bit of ground up there on the Gungarlin.

KH You also mentioned a skull in a tree.

DP That's Bull Head, a bull, he got snowed in way up on top

in the snow. Jacky Webber came back in the spring to do the fences and found him in the fork of a tree, now the tree's grown right around it, there's one horn sticking out of the tree like that today.

KH Where is it near?

DP Well it's near Perisher Creek on the left hand side. You've got to go to Grey Mare. There's a main track from Cesjack's to the Grey Mare.

KH Goes past Mackay's?

DP No, no, no, on the main top. Goes down to the foot of Strumbo.

KH Oh! On the left hand side of Jagungal or the Big Bogong?

DP Yes at the head of the Rocky Plain River, its's pretty hard to find.

KH It's still there you reckon?

DP I saw it there this summer. (rest of conversation indistinct, background noise etc)

KH What I was mainly interested in, cause I've been working on the huts, right, and putting a book together and, well, see the Heritage people, the people from the Heritage Commission, they're very interested in that I find out as much as I can about the huts in particular. So I thought I'd start with the huts and then we might get onto some of the other things later on. We're sort of ranging all over the place, because I'm also interested in stories, some of the yarns you told me at the Chalet. I was just about to come onto Wheeler's Hut, because there was a few things you know about Wheeler, wasn't there? Did you ever go to Wheeler's Hut?

DP I camped there from Corryong many a time.

KH You said that.

DP Two huts at Wheelers. Wheeler had one up on the right on the side of the main road now. Another one over at Snaky Plain.

KH The one at Snaky Plain is a slab hut.

DP Wheeler's had that many years ago. Lindsay Willis was trying to find out who built it. He was looking for Jimmy Nankervis. He reckons Davey Williamson drew the

timber there, he built that hut with his bullocks, he'd learn that from living with Davey Williamson.

KH That's right.

DP See Lindsay used to be at the Valentine with Davey and I don't know how many trips, maybe one or two. Davey Williamson brought a big lot of sheep in to where Mawson's Hut is. I think the man's name was Traney that loaded the truck in at Tumberumba and drove them over onto the top, shepherding I think for the summer and then went back. I don't know if they was up there twice, I couldn't tell you.

KH Lindsay couldn't remember when Wheelers was built. It's quite an old hut I think, because it could be one of the best huts I think.

DP It's one of the old ones. You've been up to Pretty Plain, what's it like now?

KH It's good in fact....

DP The old one?

KH Oh, the very old one, its pretty well, the roof's gone.

DP The logs are starting to rot? Anywhere you went around there, there were snakes!

KH Yes it's good snake country down there. You told me about cracking whips and somebody taking a five pound note.

DP That was in the early days, that happened in the bar at Jindabyne. Straighty Pender could chop into the bone on your thigh. He could hit a cigarette in your mouth.

KH Wouldn't touch you, wouldn't touch your nose?

DP There was a big picture in the Corryong Hotel, one out this side of the township. One day he went over there with some cattle in the early days and anyhow he got the whip in there and he stripped pieces off half inch thick right from one end to the other. Give him a fiver then, for the damage he'd done. (laughing)

KH Did anybody ever ride a horse into a pub around here?

DP My word, it happens, there was Woodhouse and Freebody. There was a bull got out the yard here at a rodeo three years ago, they got him back out about the Four Mile and

they rode him into the bar there at the Royal. It used to be all the go at Jindabyne many years ago, ride into the bar.

KH Oh, that's right! You told me the story of a bushwalker lady at O'Keefes and you had to take her out from the mountains.

DP I packed her over to Tin Hut and met up with Ray Adams and Tommy Mitchell, he had a jeep and they took her to the Chalet.

KH What was wrong with her?

DP Broke leg, there was 32 or 33 in the walking party. I was at O'Keefes Hut, they came from around the river near a big creek, there was a knock on the door, it was night, late, anyhow it was this lady and a man. There's a lady in a mixed group, walking. Anyhow they wanted to borrow this horse, so Jacky Webber, he always hesitated, and he said, "No, I can't lend you a horse. I got," well this was true what he said, "I got to go down to Tooma to bring up the bulls". This was very early in January and they had the cattle there a few days before Christmas. They used to send the bulls, they used to get knocked about too much. I can't think of her name either....anyhow she said "What about your mate" and he said "He'll be coming with me". "Don't worry" he said "lady, we'll get you out of this". I took the mattress off my bed and put two straps around it to hold it tight, it was a horse hair mattress. Then we strapped it down very tight, pack saddle on this side so she could put her feet in, put her on sideways. We had a strap off there to hold onto and one for her, so if we go downhill she wouldn't fall. She only had shorts on and Holy Ghost! all I could see was skin and bone, so I took a blanket with me and I put it over her legs, and I put the surcingle lightly over that. It was the awkwardest thing I ever tried to put on a horse. She'd give a squeal every now and then, so we'd have to go back and start afresh. I took my pack horse too. I doubled up on the pack bags and threw a couple of their knapsacks and what they was carrying, as many as I could put on. This bloke was keeping up pretty well, he was walking. So we set off and came to Strumbo and we came up through the Mailbox, then we went straight to Mawson's. We were nearly to the hut when she wanted to pass urine. She was very stiff in the muscles, he took her horse to the biggest rock we could find (Laughter). We got to Mawson's Hut, we had a meal there, of baked beef, a loaf of bread, tin of jam and butter. They was catching up gradually so, we reckoned we'd push onto the Tin Hut. We

couldn't make it to the Chalet. We'd push on to the Tin Hut. Anyway we got to the Tin Hut where they said they'd be for us, we started back down and we met one bloke.....(unclear, unable to transcribe, conversation muted)

KH You left her at Mawsons?

DP No, Tin Hut!

KH You took them right up to Tin Hut?

DP We got to O'Keefes Hut at midnight. Tom Mitchell and Ray Adams said they'd stay the night and take her on over. They might have took her over, anyhow the walking party was staying in the hut.

KH They had a lot of problems the Mitchell's, Tom and Elyne, getting up from White's River up on the Rolling Grounds. They had to do some winching and things like that.

DP That was the story, that night she came back she had her gold wristlet watch on and she lost it, anyhow she wrote her name and address and then went back. We got out next morning and she said "You wouldn't know what?" and I said "No?". "I've found me watch" she said, "Where I got through the wire fence". There was a wire gate which she had no trouble getting through and she must have gone to the same wire, because when she went through again, there it was.

KH I've heard a story about a watch that was lost in the bush and found 15 years later and still going, and the fella who told me this story reckoned it was still going because it was on an ant track and the ants kept on winding it up as they stepped over it. There's quite a few stories about watches because 2 years ago I was out at Round Mountain Hut, no, Bradleys Hut and we had a watch stolen by a rat during the night. Pieter went to sleep and put it next to him on a bit of a box or something and it was gone next morning. So it must have been attracted to the sweat in the band and dragged it. Amazing. Its probably still keeping time. A digital watch, you know, one that keeps going.

DP You know when the Grey Mare Mines collapsed?

KH In 1951?

DP No, first time!

KH In the 30's?

- DP Anyhow there was a big muster of cattle at O'Keefes Hut and the bloke out at the mine he was working out there. Little Billy Thompson, he was from the Murray, he'd been to Adaminaby and it was quite a mob at O'Keefes Hut, quite a big mob, and they were there for a week. There was a blizzard on, rough, they played 500 all night, Dave McPhie stoked the fireplace and it went all night. Come daylight they'd feed the horses and have a feed themselves and go to bed. Anyhow the weather cleared there was Bill Pender, Tom Skowles, (various other names unable to understand) Bruce and Jock Williams, Dave and Bob McPhie, Jackie Webber, Jackie Mullins and young Bill Pender. (long story about Billy Pender and horses, very difficult to understand)
- KH With the brumbies though they must.....the toe nails that must wear off all the time.
- DP Well those brumbies, this horse had been shod and was coming from steep country.....
[Naughton?]
- KH The Norton brothers were involved with Coolamine too, later on.
- DP Yes, later years.
- KH The Norton brothers bought it off the Litchfields I think, I can't remember exactly. So when you went to Grey Mare Hut that time you would have stayed in the old hut, in the old big place?
- DP I was at O'Keefes when Albert Peterson and Ben Luton built that new hut that is there now, that's when they were opening the gold diggings together.
- KH They brought machinery and everything in, 1949.
- DP Anyhow they went down with the Blitz wagon down through and that was the end of it.
- KH Albert Peterson and who was the other guy?
- DP Ben Luton from Adaminaby, Albert Peterson came from the Murray. Albert Peters mother was a sister to old George Finch, and George Finch he done 37 years at the Round Mountain with stock.
- KH 37 years, every summer. Which side did he come up from?
- DP He came up from down on the Greg Greg, what do they call it?

- KH Tooma?
- DP Not Tooma....
- KH Not Khancoban?
- DP No.
- KH What about this Round Mountain, that was Dan French. What was the fellow at Round Mountain?
- DP George Finch. Old Peterson was married to George's sister, see Albert was his nephew.
- KH DO you know when the Round Mountain Hut was built?
- DP The first hut got burnt. George Finch got that one built that's there now and it was built by Joe Bailey from Tooma. George came home one night on a big spree, put on a big fire, lights, when George woke up all he could do was get out. She burnt, that's what happened to old Tooma Hut too, big spree and sparks.
- KH So there was another hut at Round Mountain?
- DP Yes, it was a bit this way.
- KH What further down the hill a bit?
- DP Only just a bit away. It had a big water race brought around the hill where they used to have the water running.
- KH Did they?
- DP Grab the billy and put it underneath it. Had a cattle and horse yard. George sowed some sort of grass there and he was very proud. "A lot better than this stuff that grows up here in the mountain!"
- KH There's a nice little saddle where the hut is, a nice view out towards Jagungal.
- DP Way out over Boobees.
- KH Not far down and you are into the valley of the Tumut and out of the trees, very cold down there I imagine. Was that the grazing lease that they had down in the Tumut there?
- DP Yes, they come to the river and back up over the Round Mountain, Bradley's. When they first started that,

trying to get the road through there and a bit of a township down there from Kings Cross.

KH Then on to Tumut.

DP They started a big store, a co-op store from Tumut. That is where Jackie Webber and them fellas ended up buying their supplies for the musterers.

KH Down 15 Mile Spur?

DP Yeah, go down there on an old pack horse, loaded with jars of tucker.

KH How did they get across to Tumut?

DP Walked through in them days. Old George used to take his dog, a few bottles, "Have a drop for the muster."

KH Its a big hut, Round Mountain Hut.

DP I was over there a couple of summers ago.

KH Were you?

DP Yes, Bob McMillan and I rode over there. Touristing.

KH Did you stay there?

DP No, we did a round trip.

KH What in a day?

DP Yes, we went from the Chalet.. Jardine's Hut up from the Tumut River, Farm Ridge to O'Keefes Hut. They went back and went to Round Mountain Hut. We went back to Snowy Hut up over the Strumbo and back home.

KH That's a big day!

DP Oh, well.

KH Seems like a big day to me. Were you ever there when Farm Ridge was still a reasonable hut, or was it always a ruin?

DP It wasn't bad.

KH When you first went across the mountains when you were 14, did you go past, no, you went around the other side?

DP We went straight out to Ryrie's Parlour down to Pretty

Plain.

KH Do you know anything about Farm Ridge?

DP Rial's got the telephone on there from Adaminaby. They used to shear the sheep there.

KH Did they?

DP Yes.

KH There was a shearing shed. They wouldn't have....

DP They's bring the sheep up earlier in the year and then they'd shear them about January. All go out in a bullock dray.

KH They wouldn't keep their stock up there in winter?

DP No, they'd take them up, but they'd bring these sheep back with the wool on and shear them then.

KH Usually they did the shearing back at the home station before they took them up.

DP Rial's used to bring a lot of woolly sheep and shear them there. When I first went to the Farm Ridge there was, I don't know whose sheep they was, but Jackie Webber, he was at O'Keefes, they went down through with a woman who was badly scalded. Jackie wasn't a bad cook and he used to help them with the sheep. I think he went for about three days, that's a long time ago!

KH Mostly I'm under the impression that there weren't that many shearing sheds in the mountains at all.

DP That was the only one I know of, Napthali used to shear a few sheep.

KH On the Gungarlin?

DP I don't know.

KH There were no big sheds around...(long unclear description by DP, unable to understand)

KH You told me a long story about a Russian guy.

DP He was a bloke that came after the 1914 war. He brought him out, he used to be on the tarpaulin on the wagon. He worked his way around, he went down on the Snowy River,

way down at the border. When they first went down, see Freebodys used to be.... When they left Dalgety, got into a little bit of trouble there they got in there looking after McKay's cattle. The main crossing of the Snowy River was at Guttamurh and he walked down the river that morning and they came over there with men and horses and when they came out of the river I remember the bloody sand was still wet, they was all around Ingeegoodbee. They trailed that through, he got up there, pinched a bit of tucker as he went through.

KH Where was he heading for?

DP Well, he must have been heading for Bairnsdale or something. Anyhow he found his way up to Ingeegoodbee. They got the police out looking for him and they couldn't find him. Little later on one night Paddy was there on his own and he said they'd been away all day riding in the bush and fed his horse. He was making the fire, it was all dark. He looked around and he said "The Bastard was inside the door! I said "Good Night" and he said "Good Night" and his voice seemed stronger than mine. I was uneasy and the kettle was the slowest ever in its life boiling. They had a lot of under the table where they used to have the meat and bread. I got the meat and bread out and set a place for him. He hadn't said anything and I watched him all the time, me eyes was aching. I said "You gonna have some tea?" and he sat down at the table, put his hand in his pocket and he laid a revolver beside him, and the more I looked at it, the more it looked like mine. Mine should have been on that loft over there. I took a bite of bread and a piece of meat and it would go 'round and around and it wouldn't go down! He got up and went outside. I got up and made a rush outside onto the bed. I put my hand straight onto my revolver, I just got it in my pocket as I was getting down and there was a packet of cigarettes. I got the cigarettes, he said "I didn't smoke, someone must have left them." and I was no better off. I didn't know whether it was loaded or not. I said "I'll let my horse go", I left the bridle on him. I pulled the bag off him and put him on the rail. I said "You've had a big day and you've got a bigger bloody night." He said "You know that I could hear that bastard running behind me. I came down the river" he said " I kicked the rails down, I didn't worry about putting them up." "I got to Ingebyra to Dick Woodhouse'" was the first place he come to. Dick's house had a verandah and Paddy was running around on the verandah and Dick said "What are you doing?" He said "I'm going to the Jindabyne police. I want a fresh horse and a new arse." Galloped all the way bareback! Anyhow they got the police and blacktrackers. Next

morning the sergeant from Omeo and Billy Brindle, would be the blacktracker from Cooma, they went down and had a look around and come back up. He said "Did you see any tracks?" and he said "No." "Holy Ghost" he said " There's no man who can carry two horses!" Weighed 150 pounds on each shoulder. What did he want them for?

KH Who do you reckon took them?

DP Don't know.

KH Sounds like the Freebody - Carter story.

DP Anyhow he went through to Corryong. He was working on Spring Creek on the Upper Murray.

KH The Russian?

DP Yes broke into the jewellery shop at Corryong, he didn't take much, diamond ring and watch. They picked him up, brought him back to Cooma for the hearing (rest of conversation unclear)

(end of tape 1)

Tape 2 Side 1

KH You were up to the Tin Can?

DP We went up there and said "That's our billy can" and he said "That's what we used to take our butter in." Anyway he took it home and he used to use it for measuring the oats bags for the horses. I thought that was a funny thing for measuring out the feed for the horses. He said that might have poison in it.

KH This Russian guy did he escape from a ship or something at Eden?

DP I don't know.

KH How come he was being transported to Cooma?

DP He hitch hiked, he jumped on the wagon. They don't know what became of him until they picked him up with the jewellery job at Corryong.

KH Was he put in gaol for that or anything?

DP They took him away and I don't know what happened.

- KH He was in the mountains for quite a while?
- DP I don't know how long, well, the war finished in 1919. I don't remember, but he turned up in Cooma and said he wanted a lift. I said "Jump on the wagon." He was pretty good at reading a map, he had maps with him.
- KH That's pretty wild country if you have never been in it before. He must have known his way about, and maps weren't very good in those days.
- DP He went from Ingeegoodbee to Corryong. Anyway he told them at the court he only shot two head of cattle. One while he was in Ingeegoodbee area and the other one somewhere in the Groggin area, he didn't know the name but that's the only things he shot.
- KH Amazing!
- DP Would you like a cup of tea?
- KH Yes, that would be nice. You told me that apparently Carter had a fight with Jack Connors? Was that a box up was it, was that fisticuffs?
- DP Connors had cattle and always wanted to fight. Then one morning Carter was going up a track and Connors was coming down and they decided to fight. They picked this place on the side there. They got out and straightened up, so Carter shoved his fist up, dignified like and he said "I rushed over to him like pork barrels altogether and this is what happened." He got the first shot.
(rest of conversation and story unclear)
- KH Was Connors friendly with the Free bodys? It seems quite a few people didn't like Carter for some reason or another.
- DP I don't know.
- KH Was it because Carter was different, was it because he was well educated?
- DP Freebodys didn't like anybody!
- KH Sounds like a wild time in the 20's and 30's.
- DP Many years ago at Jindabyne you could go down there on a Saturday and you couldn't get in there for three months it would be all booked out. Jindabyne! "I'll have you!" "I'll have you next!" Arthur White, he lived up about

- Willis's, he brought a Morris Cowley car, had spokes. little wire wheels, he pulled up at the pub and there was the publican and a few on the verandah, and he said "Where's everybody else?" and someone said "At the fight!" "Where's the fight?" "At Beloka Creek" they said. "Oh come on!" They all jumped in and went to see the fight and they came back and took the car up. The only person injured was Arthur White, had his ribs and nose broken, and he wasn't in the fight. (laughing) That's the way things go.
- KH What about Bolton's Hut, did you ever go there, below Tin Hut?
- DP Oh yes!
- KH Up above Tolbar?
- DP Yes.
- KH That slab hut there.
- DP Yes Harry Bolton had two huts. He had the one at Tolbar Creek.
- KH Yes the ruin's still there, the ruins anyway. Harry Bolton built that?
- DP They called it Harry Bolton's Hut.
- KH Did they?
- DP Harry Bolton built that one and one over at Finns River.
- KH Would he have built both of them?
- DP Well, I think....
- KH The Moulds had a bit of a hut up Spencer's Peak didn't they?
- DP Yes they did. We got to the Tin Hut once, we got to the sheep, used to have sheep up there, Gungarlin right through to Whites River. Anyway Mouldie he had a bottle of rum, we had a few drinks.
- KH This was at Tin Hut?
- DP Yes anyhow Mouldie got up, I was up. "Did you get drunk last night son?" I said "It's alright my teeth are still in the drain." Drank the bloody water that Reg has soaked his teeth in. Holy Ghost! then he was sick!

KH What, just from thinking about it?

DP Yeah.

KH I thought you might have been up there this week up at the hut, and I was going to come out there to talk to you.

DP I was to do some log fencing, I'm trying to sell two blocks here at the back.

KH It's a bit different up here to the hut, isn't it?

DP I like it up there at the hut.

KH It's a good hut. Friends of mine loved it, they thought it was fantastic.

DP Gauze door, stops the bull flies getting in.

KH Used to have plastic strips. I was skiing up there in early September, up at Cesjacks and Flanagan's. Stayed at Flannagans for a few nights. Walked in from Nimmo Hill. There were a lot of people in the mountains this year?

DP They had a lot of snow.
(General talk about snow and councils and the Park)

KH Most of the Gungarlin's freehold, isn't it?

DP Most.

KH I'm surprised that Ron Flanagan can buy his leasehold. I've talked to Ron but he didn't give much away. I certainly got the impression he didn't like the Park, very strong impression.

(More general talk about owners of property around Gungarlin, difficult to follow and transcribe)

KH Did you do any more droving trips across the mountains like when you were 14 years old?

DP Oh God! I've been droving for years.

KH But you must have gone elsewhere, not just around here?

DP I've droved down around Young, Bairnsdale, down the coast, right through to Sale. 52 - 56 mile, I took sheep from the Cooma saleyards to Albury, I was one of the last one through there.

KH When you had stock with you, you went a lot slower didn't you?

DP Oh yes!

KH What would you do, fifteen - twenty miles a day?

DP No!

KH Not that much?
(More general talk of droving very hard to understand)

KH Did you build any huts up there yourself?

DP I've never built even built a dog kennel!

KH Did any of the stockmen or any others play any musical instruments or anything like that?

DP No.

KH What did you do at night time, just sort of yarn?

DP Smoke, mainly smoke.

KH Smoke and yarn did you? What sort of yarns. Do you remember any more yarns?

DP Some would make your hair curl and some pretty tall ones too.

KH I don't mind a bit of curly hair, I don't mind if they're tall stories. Were you around in the big snowfalls in 1946?

DP Yes.

KH And you were snowed in?

DP Trying to get Flanagan's sheep I was camped down at O'Keefe's Hut. We had a mob of horses trying to break the snow down to get the sheep out. We just went down over the side.

KH What time of the year was that?

DP In Autumn, pretty late, pretty late.

KH Like what, April? Easter? The snows come early that year?

- DP No, no the sheep weren't there that late before winter.
- KH Did you get any of Flanagan's sheep out in '46?
- DP Yes, the four foot fence up at the Bogong, there was no sign of it, no bloody sign of it.
- KH And you still got the sheep out?
- DP Yes.
- KH A lot of that fence is still there.
- DP It was frozen pretty well.....a few of them got snowed in underneath it.
- KH Did you meet many bushwalkers or people from the cities in the early days?
- DP Yes, you did on the other side, but not on this side. One at Ingeegoodbee, schoolteacher.
- KH A fellow called Miles or Milo Dunphy, have you ever come across him?
- DP No, Wakefield I think his name was, he had gone out onto the tops to see what kind of flowers grew on the highest. Wakefield was his name. They used to come through the other side at Tin Mine. Odd ones used to come in but, now there's more, bushwalkers.
- KH Did you ever go out with Lindsay Willis?
- DP No, no, no, never had a trip with Lindsay, he had a sort of a permanent job with Davey Williamson, used to have a job with these sheep on the Bobundra. Davey Williamson used to leave the job with his men. (some conversation unable to understand) I was never up in that area when Lindsay was there. Jack Bolton he was in with Davey, Lindsay, Con Bolton, Dudley Blyton, Bung Harris.
- KH Apparently at the Bolton Hut at the Finns River there was another hut there too, like the hut that's there now. There was another one before it, apparently?
- DP Not that I remember.
- KH There's also one at the Tolbar Hut, that's the one you call Jack Boltons?
- DP No, Harry Boltons.

- KH There's a big stockyard there too, a big corral, was that for brumbies?
- DP Cattle. Anyhow, Reg took a few sheep up with Harry Bolton and his son Ross, anyway they took the sheep over Tolbar Creek. It's pretty good open flat there and Harry's filling his pipe and talking to Reg. Anyhow Reg he should be starting them, it was getting late. I walked up the creek and I walked back down the creek, it was a pretty steep track, it went round and around the hill. Ross offered to put the back pack on the horse and went down the hill to the creek with a billy can. (unclear what is said here) "Keep out the way, got no leader yet!" Ross came back and the sheep started to run. Reg said I'll go around the side. Harry was very anxious to start the day. Anyhow the sheep kept coming... (long untranscribeable story about sheep getting away)
- KH This was going up towards Bolton's?
- DP Right out to the hut on Finns River.
- KH Coming up from Tolbar up to the top.
- DP That was the most uneasiest trip I ever had in my life! I've got no patience!
- KH That's a steep pitch up there? I've only walked down it so far, found bits of the track a few years ago.
- DP This is quite a long time ago. Reg had a few sheep up there, he didn't have paddocks then. Harry Bolton had taken a few out for a bit of grass.
- KH That's steep country, steep all around there up from Island Bend too. There used to be a track up to Finns itself, up from the Snowy, did you ever ride up there?
- DP Yes it takes a bit of battling down.
- KH That must be really, really rugged in there? It would be very overgrown now.
- DP It's in a bad way, very bad way indeed. I went down to Young and Cootamundra, picked up all the way through. Some was up atWalgett! Cattle, sheep up at Walgett! Back down to Young. It was about three months before we got back here. There was no hurry.
- KH They used to bring a lot of stock in from the west didn't they?

DP Anyhow, we got up through Rossengrand.

KH Do you know a guy called Cecil Piper down there?

DP No, I wouldn't remember their bloody names now. Stock Reserve down there where they buried Joe Morgan the bushranger. (talking while doing dishes).....Jack put his bed down Jack slept on the ashes. I was looking for the place where we boiled the billy - Jack's asleep on it!

KH Nice warm spot!

DP He didn't know!

KH Oh, he didn't know!

DP There's a bloke around here, it was a while back. He's the bloke that wrote "If I'd Only Listened To Grandpa."

KH A fellow called McAdoo. Did he come and see you?

DP Yes, his son brought him out from Cooma. He's the manager of the Royal Hotel. I'd hear about him before. He wanted a few bits of stories.

KH Have you and Lindsay seen the book?

DP Oh yes.

KH Good! 'Cause they were asking me about it too.

DP I've got it!

KH You've got it, too. Your wife reads them. Does anybody read them to you? I remember you couldn't write.

DP Yes, I can't write or read. I've got to keep everything here (in my brain) that's why a lot of stories have had it, because you've got to think of the late ones... I often say to people when they're telling yarns why didn't you write a bloody book! One time I could count sheep into a paddock and I could count them in, now, by the time I walk out the yard I can't remember how many there was.

KH So that fellow's going to do one on Grandma is he?

DP He's gonna try. I couldn't think of anything much to tell him. I think I told him the Charlie Spencer yarn.

KH The Charlie.....?

DP Charlie Spencer. He was a real old hard case you know.

KH Charlie Spencer, where did he live?

DP Jindabyne. He looked after Barry's sheep, when Old George Barry and Jim Barry had that country. They ringbarked some of that country. (story unable to transcribe about falling in the river)
.....You fell in Mate. My bloody oath I did!
(laughing)

DP I told him that one.

KH Did you! Cause he didn't put in all the interviews, did he? He put the one in with Lindsay and he did one with Norman McGufficke and he did one with Herbie Hain I think. I'd like to do a book on the stories people tell me, and yarns, change the names and then they are like fiction! Nobody gets involved.

DP Like me telling you the one about Charlie Spencer, there's a lot of them, they don't like it!

KH No.

DP See if you put it in a false name!

KH Yes that's why I think the story between the Freebodys and Charlie Carter, that would make a good basis, for almost a novel! You could write quite a story about that, but you change the names, you just use that, the feuding and all the fighting and everything. All the brumbies and that, it would make a good adventure story.

DP I'd like to read it.

KH (Laughing)

DP I often told blokes telling yarns, why don't you write a book, we ought to have a tape recorder up there.

KH Well thats right, and I think it would be great to have a tape recorder on and a group of you three or four.

DP Can you run them on a battery?

KH Yes I could take it up the Chalet and run it there, its a different atmosphere, you think of more things up there.

DP It would be no good till after Christmas. They'll be fencing and taking the stock up.

KH Perhaps I could give you my phone number.

(looking for a book)

DP Looks like mother's home!

General conversation while looking at pictures.

KH Stockyards, and Napthali's all that's left. That's Daveys.

DP Did you see the grave?

KH Yes the stone, yes. One of the Williamson children, is that right?

DP Yes.

(More general talk about the photos of the Snowy Plain area)

DP It was a good hut, O'Keefes, it used to have a bath in it.

KH Yes in the back room, it's still there I think.

DP Yes, big ovens.

KH Ovens, what, camp ovens were they?

DP I think they were big enough to bath in! I think they got stolen. They cleaned everything out, they got the ute out. They are worth money.

KH I might move on then, that's good.

DP I hope I've given you some information.

(Interview concluded)

Transcribed by Pauline Downing
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