

LEO RUSSELL - Interviewed by Klaus Hueneke, 15/2/1982

This is an interview with Leo Russell at his home, Yarrabee, near Adaminaby on the 15 February 1982. The Russell family have had a long association with the mountains and Leo is going to tell me part of the story - part of the story that he remembers.

KH: So Wingy used to come across to buy cattle over Jindabyne way did he?

LR: Around Adaminaby, not so much Jindabyne. He used to buy them from Yaouk, Yaouk was a big cattle-raising place in those days. Just prior to him, he sort of took over off John Pierce - John Pierce was the first that my father was associated with. My father used to then buy for him and if he was over himself, he'd take delivery of them afterwards and take them across. He also sold his own cattle.

KH: He would buy over here because they'd be cheaper, rather than on the upper Murray?

LR: No, because they were better cattle - the cold country cattle that fattened in half the time on the Murray. Some of the buyers, the fatteners on the upper Murray would go as far up north as Queensland and bring train loads of cattle down but they'd take about two years to fatten. The ones from here would be fattened - if you took them in the autumn, they'd get them off in the spring.

KH: What year would this be, when you remember Wingy Wheeler, the late 30s?

LR: No, much earlier than that. I would be a small school boy when I first met him. The last I remember him was in the early 40s, but he'd stopped coming across here then. I went to his place over there - I took a couple of horses and rode them for him.

KH: This would be back in the 20s?

LR: Yes, I remember him in the 20s and then up till I did these two horses for him in '45 I think it would be or '46.

KH: Did you ever go across to his hut below the Dargals?

LR: This time I did the horses, yes, I went down to pick them up at his place over the Murray, at Rosebank I think was the name of his place. He wasn't home but Charlie was there and we got the horses and shod them up and brought them back. Kevin Miners came with me, we were camped up at the Boobee then. Just to see the old fellow, we come back and stopped at his hut underneath the Dargals there <sup>that night.</sup> I can't remember enough to tell you what the hut was made out of. It was a well kept 2 or 3 roomed hut.

There were people there, he had some young lady friends of his.

KH: Does that strike anything in your memory [photograph] - the one on the right?

LR: Yes, it's got a skillion on the back hasn't it?

KH: Or these ones here, that Lila gave me. *We've got a painting of Wheelers hut*. That could have been about the *era* you were in there, when those photos were taken.

LR: Did she say this is Wheeler's hut?

KH: Yes that's Wheelers, and that's the one we know today.

LR: It's pretty hard to say, there seems to be too much clear country around it.

KH: Well that's looking down towards across <sup>to</sup> Jargunal in the distance there. That's the plain, that's the Toolong diggings down here.

LR: Yes, this one of Andys, it had a long background to it, more like this, you could see a way out.

KH: Did you call it Jagungal or <sup>the</sup> Big Bogong?

LR: I call it the Big Bogong. The extra room was around the back [looking at photos] - see this skillion, well we slept around the back on the other side of it. These young people had their camp there when we came.

KH: Can you remember at all who was there at the time?

LR: No..

KH: Wingy was there though?

LR: He was there, he brought the party up. I don't know who else - they weren't names that I would have known either. Lila was there, at home, at that stage, her and Charlie - we stayed there a night with them, over at Rosebank wasn't it, the name of their place?

KH: She didn't say.

LR: It's over the creek. If you've been over there at Towong, the Towong Village and race courses, it's on your right as you go up the road to Corryong.

KH: No I don't <sup>know</sup> Towong very well, I know where Towong Hill is and I know Khancoban.

LR: Well, this is a bit past Towong if you were going down to Welaregang.

KH: I haven't been across there for a long time.

LR: Nor have I, we just drove around there a couple of times.

KH: I'll leave that with you, it's an article I wrote some years ago about the history of the huts - what I knew then.

LR: You often see this picture of Coolamine. Did Tom Taylor tell you all about that?

KH: Yes.

LR: He told me he came there when he was four.

KH: Yes, in 1908 the Taylors arrived there. What was it you were telling me about Wingy - he'd come over here ...

LR: Well yes this was after Pierce's time. John Pierce, instead of coming over himself he'd often have my father buy cattle for him and take them over, as well as take his own. He'd take him across what he had - it was that sort of an arrangement between them - he'd give him his value. They traded with horses, my father used to breed race horses too and he'd take them over there, the mares and ~~foals~~ and grow them up in the winter. That's the best horse country - Upper Murray - that you could find. We used to take horses over there all the time - we'd work here all the year, probably break them in, my brother and me in the summer time and then work 'em to nothing nearly during mustering. We'd work for people down the Riverina area, they'd bring their sheep in here and have someone look after them for the summer and then they'd have to have fellows to help muster them and take them out through Lobbs Hole down Talbingo or somewhere. When you got that far, they'd be dead on themselves, they'd be finished, you'd come back and muster for some one else. We'd have these tired, nondescript looking horses, take them over there and leave them for the winter, you'd hardly know your own horse when you went back in the spring, he'd be fat and grown and looking good.

KH: This was a trade-off was it? You'd do something for them in turn.

LR: Oh yes, they'd give you grass in a good season for your horse.

KH: What was your father's Christian name?

LR: Mick. (C.M.)

KH: He would have known Wingy very well?

LR: Oh yes from a very young fellow, from lads I suppose, <sup>I'm</sup> not sure of that. My father worked with and for John Pierce, buying stuff and taking them across. <sup>When</sup> he was a very young man, he broke his thigh out in the Gulf coming from Greg Greg ...

KH: Your father did?

LR: Yes when he was probably 20 or something like that. Him and another friend of the family worked with them for years - Percy Kerns - they had dinner in the Gulf, as you call it, coming from the Round Mountain, in the Tumut River. They had this horse, his name was Greg Greg, they were bringing him across for Shanley, they bought him a race horse - they had their dinner and went to catch the horses and something happened and he <sup>e</sup>ared and struck and broke his thigh. Old Percy wrapped a towel around it and a strap and helped him on to his horse and he rode ten miles out of there up here to Crooks Racecourse, there was a hut there, left him there and come down here and picked

up Uncle Walter and went back in a wagon and brought him home. He was three days - and old Joe Schaeffer from down the river here went up and set it.

KH: Not the Dr. ?

LR: No he was the doctor's son, Dr Schaeffer would have been gone in those days but Joe said he learned the tricks ~~from~~ carrying his old man's valise. - he was a German fellow.

KH: What was it?

LR: A valise, he couldn't say valise, he'd say walise. It's a bag with the split down the middle and you hold it up and strapped it in front of the saddle. Like all Germans he used to get his 'v's' and 'w's' mixed up.

KH: He was the son of Dr Schaeffer?

LR: Yes.

KH: I heard about this Dr Schaeffer.

LR: Their property was just over the back. I've got a piece of Bellman's property, when the Snowy took it off him, the only piece left was the high ground and it went back to the Snowy and since to the Lands Department. It was originally Schaeffer's property and I helped pull the shed down that this old Joe Schaeffer erected, out of red gum timber that he took down from the back of the hill, for a stable. He must have been a powerful man, there were these great plates up in this high shed, he put an auger hole, an inch hole and then made a round peg and drove it - no nails up there.

KH: It was like a barn?

LR: Yeah - he had a good few horses apparently, he must have been going to farm a lot because my father said he had a good team of draught horses. When Reg Bellman got it he turned it into a shearing shed.

KH: Are there any Schaeffers left around here?

LR: None that I know of.

KH: Because they were involved with mining too I think, off the Kings Cross Road, up near what's Selwyn Quarry now.

LR: Could have been, I don't know, but there were Chaves too up there that were miners, somewhere towards Yarrangobilly.

KH: There's a Dick Chave!

LR: I don't know anyone personally I just know the name - heard it talked about - Chaves mine.

KH: I met a descendant of the Schaeffers in Sydney. He worked up there during the 30s in the mine off the Kings Cross Road.

LR: A son or grandson of Artie Schaeffer probably.

KH: Yes I think he is. His great grandfather was Dr Schaeffer.

LR: This was Artie's, the piece that joins us, it was Joe's further down <sup>where the</sup> old poplar trees are dead now, that's the high ones - they're

still there, the water rises and covers them and then goes away again. There's plenty of evidence of the old home, the stone ends they used to put in then. There's a good bit of granite still lying about there. Some beautiful granite down in this Bellman place. The kitchen part was made of stone and there's some stones there that they must have took a lot of trouble to cut, square as bricks a lot of them. ~~They are~~ as square as you like, especially down one side or perhaps two sides.

KH: This is not in the Gungahlin catchment?

LR: No this is just here, only a mile over the hill. It was on this side of the Eucumbene River.

KH: Was it you who knew something about Holston's hut?

LR: Yes.

KH: I think I got a letter at one stage, from a lady in Sydney, she must be quite an elderly lady, she mentioned your name, I think, as a person who might know more about Holstons. She was a granddaughter or great granddaughter of this Holston guy.

LR: She'd be a daughter of old Jimmy Holston and <sup>the</sup> fact that she'd say that I know more about it - a friend of ours, who was Heather McPhie, daughter of Archie McPhie - Heather's mother was a Holston, a sister of Auntie Pearl. George Holston was at Braemar where the caravan park is, or just down the side of the caravan park now. Heather's daughter brought her up here one day to say hello. She wanted to see this area, around this side of the lake - came over and we had an hour and took her up on the hill. She was lost, she wanted to get her bearings back, which I could give her. She mentioned about being up here, we owned that country see - the Snowy, I've sold my share. It was left to us from our grandfather. He took it over off Holstons as well as some other country. We had 1600 acres there and the Holston block was in it, it was a selection and <sup>the</sup> old lady Holston used to go up there and do residence occasionally, you had to do that then, to hold your selection. It was a very well constructed, dove-tailed log hut, with the mud put in the sides.

KH: It was a log cabin style?

LR: Yes with two rooms and the old walls remain there. It belongs now to Jackson.

KH: It's still on free-hold land is it?

LR: Yes. Jackson is one of the head directors in CSR sugar people. He bought this place from Mervin Mansfield who moved out. They got some of that country back off the Snowy then, that they bought from us. They bought it from my brother finally, I sold my share to him, he dealt with the Snowy.

Leo Russell

They were taking all the good off it and it was no good to him, so he got out. But the old hut's still there, the walls.

KH: Up on the top of the dam somewhere?

LR: It's this side of - you've got the Portal, the Tantangara - Providence tunnel, where it comes out, it comes out right at the foot of Mt Denison on the top. There's a creek goes in to what was the river, into the lake now, at the foot on Mt Denison on the bottom, it's just up the gully from that.

KH: It's most likely still there.

LR: It would be still there, unless these people did a lot of bulldozing, there would be no occasion for them to touch it, because it was cleared all around it.

KH: Did it still have a roof when you saw it last?

LR: No. My brother and me camped there a few years ago and we pitched our tent at the back of it - used it as a wind break, because it only had a dirt floor and it had been ripped up with rabbits, so we camped outside. It amuses my daughter and some of my nieces and nephews when they're here sometimes and we start talking about the frost. We used to have to go every morning with our rabbit setter and break the ice.

KH: In the dam?

LR: No, in a little spring, a beautiful clear spring it was, but you couldn't get at it unless you took something to smash the ice with.

KH: How long ago was that?

LR: I think it was during the War?

KH: Oh a long time ago.

LR: About then <sup>y</sup> anyway.

KH: Who built this hut?

LR: Mr Holston, James Holston must have built it. If he couldn't <sup>[do]</sup> that work himself he must have had somebody working with him, but I dare say he could do it. There's also a Holston's diggings - this is what the old lady asked me about. It never rang a bell until she said to me ... she wrote a good long story and it was published in one of the papers about her folk used to go out - this long trek, out to their diggings, at the back of the Bald Mountain, pretty well ahead of the Dodger Creek. The Dodger Creek goes into the Tumut just below the junction of the Doubtful and the Tumut. They had diggings, done a fair bit of work there. I've worked in there for years, I've rode across the creek, right at his diggings, God knows how many times. I didn't associate it with the old Jimmy Holston, I don't know why I didn't because the name's not real familiar.

KH: I didn't know there was diggings in there?

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LR: There's more than that.

KH: They're opposite Sams diggings?

LR: Further up the river, much further up the river. And then there's Sam's diggings - no - down the river from Sams then - Sams is just up from the Round Mountain Rails, as we call it.

KH: It's off the 15 mile spur I think.

LR: There's Sams and there's Sandys. One of them is just about straight opposite on a bit of a clearing, where the road goes away from the junction shaft - across the river at the junction shaft. *Either* Sams or Sandys is on your left and if you go up the river almost to the junction, the other fellows is there - one's Sams and one's Sandys.

KH: And the Holston's diggings?

LR: Was on this side - you're talking then about the other side of the Tumut River - Holston's diggings is on this side. If you went left at the Boobee hut and went as straight as you could go up the back of the hill and dropped over, you'd drop into Holston's diggings.

KH: On Dodger Creek?

LR: Yes, right where it falls. There's two main creeks come together that forms the Dodgers Creek and Holston's diggings is in the left hand one. It comes down ... there's a little dam up to the left of that you know, pretty fair dam and that was at the head of Waddell's diggings. Waddell's diggings is on the track going from the Boobee to the Farm Ridge up to the Doubtful Gap and this little dam was put in to hold the water for him <sup>to</sup> wash ...

KH: Is it still there? It probably is!

LR: You wouldn't see anything - the little dam would be there. If it didn't burst the years I knew it, it wouldn't burst after. It levels out - I haven't been in there for 20 years - it ~~was~~ a stock route, thousands of sheep and cattle went along it, a good pack-horse track. You'd be able to find it easy enough. You'd find it on account of the crossing in the creeks and the old gateways, they'd be chopped out a bit. But when you left the Boobee hut and went up through the horse paddock and you went through a narrow stretch, only perhaps less than half a mile wide from the tree line. You've got the tree line on your right, going on up the creek and they call that Waddell's diggings in the creek. There'd been a fair bit of dirt turned over.

KH: I know there's some race lines around there.

LR: Yes on the opposite side of the hill.

KH: Going up towards Mackays.

LR: Yes that's the <sup>Tibeaudos</sup> Creek that heads there at Mackays hut.

KH: Yes further down, not far from the Boobee hut, it's still in the

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Boobee catchment. A straight line between Boobee and Mackays.

LR: Not so straight between Boobees and <sup>Cook's</sup> racecourse say.

KH: Yes.

LR: There's definitely races there. That was Burke's diggings - Tom Taylor and old Jack Morrissey worked in there for a couple of years.

KH: Yes. in the 40s.

LR: Earlier than the 40s for sure. Because I was there in '39 and it was before that. I was there with my father when Tom Taylor and old Jack was camped down the bottom of the horse paddock. He used to call over here to pick up their mail.

KH: This is the horse paddock below Boobee?

LR: Yes. There would be no horse paddock there now, it would be all down.

KH: Yes. This would be when both the Boobee huts were still there.

LR: Yes. That Boobee hut - there was a letter in the paper that said that it came from somewhere - I can't remember now - it didn't ring real true to me because I knew, I was told by the earlier people that Sam <sup>Thomas</sup> shifted that hut from the Nine Mile in sections, the one that's burnt down, and he got bogged at the first creek when you pass the old draughting yard - as we call it - that's the saddle before you went to the hill to go around to Happy Jacks township that was. The track went from the Tabletop then, down across the river, across Mulligans Creek, across the river and went through that gap and up to the Boobee. Well at that creek, <sup>that</sup> first one past the draughting yard, he bogged her and the tracks were still there where he bogged her when I last was there. It sank in and there must have been that much dirt shifted getting it out with the bullocks and that's who took the hut there.

KH: What was his name again?

LR: Sam Thomas - he was the old dog trapper that you would have heard of.

KH: No I haven't heard of Sam Thomas.

LR: Oh God, I wouldn't have thought that anybody in the mountains wouldn't have heard <sup>of him</sup>. He would have been one of the main fellows in the mountains. He came in for Cheyneys for years with the stock, he <sup>was</sup> originally one of the Thomas' in Lobbs Hole - Yarrangobilly fellows. Old Sam told me that he was driving bullocks out of the copper mine, barefooted, when he was too small to yoke the bullocks. His brothers would be yoking them for him. He worked for Cheyneys then when I knew him and he was the number one dog trapper.

Leo Russell

When he left the stock business, when he knocked off work <sup>for</sup> Cheyneys in the mountains, he went on permanently ... and the Dingo Destruction Board would have been first ... when it got going ... to put on paid trappers - I think this would be about right - I don't think there would have been many paid trappers before then, probably only on a temporary basis anyway ... and Sam got the job over that way and I think he caught a hundred dogs in the first 12 months or 2 years that he was with them. From Tumb <sup>Arumba</sup> right back up to Khancoban. He caught Mrs Chisholm's <sup>Sealyham</sup> terriers. He thought it was a great joke. They didn't know what was killing their sheep and kicking up an awful shindy about it - the dingos were coming in and killing their sheep. He trapped - oh well, a way back - they used to leave home and travel the way back ... when I say <sup>Sealyhams</sup> ... I never saw the dog <sup>they were</sup> ... these long whiskery fellows, <sup>white ones</sup>.

KH: Then at the Boobee - that cottage came from the Nine Mile - would have been a miner's cottage at the Nine Mile probably!

LR: Yes I believe it was the manager's cottage at the Nine Mile.

KH: Do you remember when it was shifted or anything?

LR: No I couldn't tell you that but it must have been around about <sup>the 20's</sup>, when Cheyneys got that block - that's how it came by the name of the Boobee. Old man Cheyney, he was in that country - about the Eight Mile, it run down on to the Fifteen Mile - in pretty early times because my father said about going out there to pick up a bull. We were also inter-related and inter-mixed with the Cheyneys - old Cheyney married my aunt - my father's sister. Their headquarters was over here too. He went out there to pick up this bull and he said that the cattle were down around the river - he just happened to be telling me about this long day he'd had, so he went down there and picked up the bull and he said well instead of going a way back up to stop with them at the Eight Mile hut, he said I'm closer to home, I'll fetch him in around the Tabletop and down the Swamp Creek. He said he did it all in a day. From home he left and went out <sup>up</sup> to the Eight Mile and down into the Fifteen Mile and picked up the bull and started him walking and dropped him in Swamp Creek that night - it would be a pretty fair day wouldn't it?

KH: I'll say. What was the naming of the Boobee?

LR: Well old man Cheyney put in for several blocks and that was the last on his list - he said, 'I got the Boobee prize' - he was a character old John Cheyney.

KH: When you say the Cheyneys - they were involved with mining too, or with Tabletop hut or something like that?

LR: Not that I know of.

KH: The name Cheyney ???

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LR: They owned Belmore Station down at *Mumula* and they owned Possum Plain. They used to shear about 30,000 sheep and they'd go away and buy wethers a way down Hay and *Boofigal* - start them walking and get up here when the season <sup>came right</sup> ... probably bring those sheep back for another year then - often sold them here.

KH: What was their main lease then?

LR: The *Boobee* was the main lease when I knew them.

KH: Did they put up the shed too, the storage shed?

LR: It was Black Bill McLachlan built the shed, from Tumb*Arumba*.

KH: Who?

LR: Black Bill McLachlan - there were different Bill McLachlans - there was *Little Bill* and *Black Bill* and *Pheasant-Tail Bill*.

KH: The black part is a nick-name is it?

LR: Yes he was a dark skinned fellow, probably only from the sun but that was his nick-name. He was a good big lump of a man.

KH: He would have carted the iron in too?

LR: No I think it would have been carted from here at Adaminaby - old Jack O'Neill with his horse team would have carted it in. He used to cart the salt and supplies for Cheyneys in the early part of the year. They'd come up with the sheep and whoever was going to stay on with them would come down and put an order in for provisions for the year for the salt and what have you and get him to take it up on his <sup>horse</sup> dray.

KH: On a dray?

LR: Yes, three or four horse and a single shaft dray he used to have.

KH: And Black Bill built it.

LR: Yes - I don't know who built the hut but I think one of the Tumb*Arumba* Burgess' because it was one of the Burgess' - I forget his name - who put the name plate up on the front - he burnt it in and made a very good job - put 'Boobee' on it. A piece of board *this* long and tacked it up on the verandah - it had a verandah on it then. It was lined with ruberoid with *proper* rivets - big flat headed rivets.

KH: I think Wheeler's has got that on it too. Tom Taylor told me that burnt down in the 60s!

LR: Yeah some couple - some hikers through there got the blame for it, they were the last known to camp in it, but it was burnt down the next time one of the ranger fellows went there. Since then somebody has remodelled the shed I'm told.

KH: Yes, put a window in - we had a slow-combustion stove in there and that got knocked off and now another group have built an open fireplace.

Leo Russell

LR: If you were strong enough and wanted a good stove, I'd swear it would still be there, I don't know if anybody shifted it - <sup>its</sup> right at the junction of the Doubtful and the Tumut. Some of the earlier fellows who put the gauge and ... station crew, had a little tin gully there and there was this fine range left in it - the last time I was there it was there and I couldn't imagine anybody bringing it out.

KH: I think I've heard about it - someone told me about it.

LR: They had a track straight down off the dog, as straight as you could go and the last time I was there, there was a furrow cut in it three feet deep, more soil had gone off there, in the times that they put it, than all the sheep had kicked off it in the years that I knew. They went straight as straight as they could go, down with the bulldozer dragging stuff and then back up, when they made the track, with a four-wheel drive. Kicking that sort of stone, it's got to wash away. It's a pretty steep hill.

KH: Do you remember when Black Bill built that shed?

LR: No it was built when I first went to work there in '39. But I'd been there for a holiday, if you please, I'd go for a week with Dick *Hagger*, he was in charge with Cheyney - that's my brother-in-law - when I was a young fellow, I put a week or two in there. But the shed was there probably - built in the mid 30s. The hut, I'm not sure, but it would be somewhere in the early 20s because when I was up there in '39, old Ernie Murphy was a bullocky of some note and he put in his early days as a bullock driver with A.J. *Rial* - they had most of that country tied up until they had a reshuffle - this is the time the Cheyneys would have got the Boobee and O'Keefes would get their piece and Miners - no the Miners didn't get their paddock at that stage because my father had Miner's paddock when I was only a pretty small fellow. He had that paddock - it had cattle on it - because I was up there, only a small boy, mustering cattle and we brought them over to Happys hut - that's the first year Happy's hut was built and branded them in a big rough and tumble timber yard that used to be there - it would take up an acre or two with a stud and rail yard in the corner of it. I'll never forget that - a character - he's dead now, who we all knew well - Arthur Blake - a great fellow for wit. He was there to give <sup>us</sup> a hand to brand the calves and he'd - well he probably didn't have at that time - a change of clothes - he wasn't going to tear his about so ... old George Winters was a very big man, he was in charge of Montagues the first year they got it and he got the hut built - also Black Bill built it ...

KH: Built Montagues?

LR: Yes built Montagues at Happys - they call it Happys hut now. They'd gone of course before we started this calf branding operation - we were making

the hut our headquarters, we had the cattle in and were ready to brand and Skinny looks around for some togs - old George was a very big man and he used to wear <sup>kind of</sup> army type leggings and riding breeches - Skinny found an old pair of them that he fell out of. He put them on with no socks and a pair of his old boots, George's old boots, a very well made tan army-type <sup>of</sup> boot. He stepped out in this and he said "I'm now dressing for the second part of my performance!" Nobody in those days could afford to tear their pants, you only had the one pair. He mightn't have had much more, his main camp would have been here at Studlands - he'd be up for the day - but he mightn't have had much more at home either - it was pretty tight times.

KH: What year would that have been?

LR: I don't know, but I was still going to school.

KH: Because that would establish the year that Happys was built or Montagues.

LR: Well I would have knocked off school in '33 - I was still going to school at that stage.

KH: That would have been '30 or '31.

LR: Yeah '30 would be a good round figure.

KH: It's also known as the Dip isn't it?

LR: No it's not, that's wrong too. That country is but not anywhere near that hut. Right up in the main head of the creek, if you went from here, went over the hill and going up the track to Happys, as you get to the bottom of the horse paddock, go up the head of the creek and that's the Dip. There were two ship's tanks there and Fred Cox, when he was in charge <sup>for</sup> Montagues up there, went up with the slide and put one on and took it home and he put salt in it - bags of coarse salt, big 180 lb fellows - this is beside the point but this is what happened. He put it in before he went away, he had salt left over, and when he came back the next year, the salt was pretty hard and he couldn't draw it through the hole. He got in and thought he'd get it out that way - he got it half way out and he jammed <sup>it</sup> in the hole - it's a fairly hot day - he felt for his pocket knife and he didn't have it. There he is, in the bloomin' tank with the hole blocked and nobody closer than Adaminaby perhaps or the Boobee. <sup>said he</sup> He started to panic a bit and thought 'well this is no good'. He said when he got out, he had to edge it just a bit, when he did get it to go back in, he'd just about had it. He reckoned that was dangerous so he cut the whole side out of it and it is now in the fire place in that hut.

KH: At Happys?

LR: Yes and it's got stone ...

KH: What part of it is?

LR: Yes, he cut two sides out of it, so the smoke can go up and the front to put the wood in.

KH: Is that right! So he's used 1, 2, 3, 4, sides of this ship's ...

LR: He cut that top out and this out, this is still there, that's still there and the back's still there.

KH: And the bottom's still there.

LR: Yeah you can cart a log in - I often have - two men, one on each <sup>end</sup> - it can take a two-man log.

KH: At Happys!

LR: Let's not get our lines crossed, you're not calling Brooks hut Happys?

KH: No completely separate.

LR: Anyway let's go on. Now up at the Dip there was another tank left there no one interfered with. In the 40s I worked there, I used to work for Cheyney at the Boobee. In the 40s I worked for the new lessees, it was a syndicate, they didn't fence it. They cut the blocks in size, but they didn't fence it, they ran it together and it included my father and my elder brother and Haslingdens, Reids and Brooks'. There was a reshuffle after them, some of them.. my brother and my father, but not Haslingden I don't think ...

KH: Bruce Haslingden?

LR: Yes, his father for a start and then Bruce - they lost some of their leases and the Wallaces - the Jindabyne Wallaces - got the Happys part then and they got fiddling around up there one day and they tipped this tank, the one that was left, over. They must of thought they'd make something of it, give it a shake around. Then before they shifted their cattle away, two cows got poisoned, they must have come there licking it and the arsenic must have stayed in it that long, that it killed the two cows.

KH: Arsenic was in there?

LR: Well that's what it was all about, a dip for dipping foot-rotting sheep, for dipping sheep. In the very early days, long before my time. Now on the Arsenic Ridge ...

KH: Is that why it's called Arsenic ...

LR: Yes I'll tell you why it's called the Arsenic Ridge in a moment. At Reids hut or Brooks' hut - whatever you like to call it - Harry Reid and Billy Brooks ...

KH: Who built it?

LR: Old Harry Reid - J.H. Reid in '43 - I've got a note on that, I worked for him.

KH: Good.

LR: Not about building the hut, but the year I was working for them.

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I found a little book the other day, it's up in the shed - I'm sure that's the year.

KH: J.H. Reid ...

LR: Yes and Bill Brooks. The night that you rang me up I told you to ring Cliff Brooks, I've been speaking to him since and he say somebody rang him, rang his place when he wasn't there once.

KH: Yes I did, last year.

LR: Yes he got the message but he wasn't there.

KH: His son rang, it was his son who answered the phone.

LR: Anyway he said he got the message through to get in touch with Bill, his brother, he'd know more about it because Bill built it. But Cliff was there at the time, doing a bit of labouring. Harry Reid carted the stone down for the fire place with the old <sup>creamy</sup> horse and a forky stick slide. He came down one day along there ....

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1.

SIDE 2, TAPE 1.

KH: I'm sorry, who was that again?

LR: Old Harry Reid. So I'm the fellow with all the info, I said 'Well that's how it came by the name'. My father told me that a fellow came along there, in the very early times when - I'm not sure who used to bring the sheep in numbers then.. McKeahnies did at one stage, but they were up McKeachnies Creek, McKeahnies's hut is in what they call the Teddy Price paddock.

KH: At the top of the Gungarlin?

LR: No, after you come through Pole Gap, away from the head of the Gungarlin to get into this Happys catchment area - you'd cross it if you went out on the road, on the main road

KH: Yes it's this side of Tibewudo's Creek.

LR: Yes, well McKeahnies is coming down from Bald Mountain, back of the Bald Mountain. That's how it came by McKeahnies's hut, they must have had a hut there in the early times - I know they did - but it would be long before I was even thought of. I think Henry McKeahnies - he had a big team of men in there, <sup>shepherds and</sup> what have you. I can't be sure, I hardly think that it was his sheep when they were on the Arsenic. There's evidence there of big holding yards <sup>shepherds breaks</sup> on the Arsenic.

KH: Above Brooks?

LR: Yes above Brooks' hut. If you go up on to the high point of that one, that ridge behind Brooks' you'll see tree stumps, where trees have been

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cut off, there's a beautiful spring up there, right on top.

KH: Heading towards Tabletop?

LR: No in the opposite direction.

KH: Just behind Brooks, very close by.

LR: Yes, and if you went as far as it runs into where the trees cut out, it's a high point above the creek, where the creek bends around and comes into Happys River. You'll see plenty of evidence of where the old was there.

KH: I probably haven't looked very hard.

LR: If a mob of cattle go there today, anywhere within 10 miles of it they'd go to there for a starter. <sup>there's been old camps and that, it's sweeter.</sup> There's something about it <sup>my</sup> Anyway my father said that a fellow came there with a team of horses, for these - it must have been in the later periods, after the sheep had been there and the camp was established - he was bringing <sup>my</sup> supplies or whatever and he turned his team out there and he poisoned eight fine horses. It was covered over, the arsenic in the rocks, when they finished it and the horses - there must be a taste about it like salt - they poured the rock salt and underneath there was arsenic.

KH: Someone had taken the arsenic in there ...

LR: Yes for footrot, to bath the sheep. I think it's footrot, not a dip, I could never ever see any signs of a dip, a plunge dip for a swing. They used to make the little troughs and run it through. Anyway I knew all about this - the horses - that's how it come by the name Arsenic Ridge - this bloke poisoned his horses. Old Mr Reid came down and said what he'd found. He took me up and showed me where it was and very carefully we covered it over with stones, and there's enough arsenic there to poison half the Riverina - it's still there.

KH: It would be leaching out slowly all the time.

LR: I suppose you could still see evidence of the wood, it's like a little cherry box - a wooden box it was in - it was well preserved. There wouldn't be any grubs or anything eating it would there - if it was full of arsenic. I could find it - it's well overgrown.

KH: Yes it's hard to find things up there now.

LR: Yeah given half an hour I'd find it. Alan Reid would be another fellow who could find it - he was there at that time.

KH: How did these ship's tanks get into these places, in the middle of nowhere?

LR: There were bullock teams through there. They used to bring ... well, Sam Thomas brought the wagon around the Tabletop to take that hut ... <sup>I thought they might have been for freshwater on the old ships.</sup>



KH: There's ~~one~~ on the back verandah of Wheelers.

LR: They'd bring that up, they used to bring ... well in one of those pictures, the bullock dray at the hut. They used to come up the <sup>Yellow Bay</sup> and they used to turn off where there was a bag nailed on a tree, up <sup>over</sup> the top of the Dargals, down to their hut.

KH: Really.

LR: Yes, right along the top of the Dargals.

KH: Not via Snakey Plain?

LR: I don't know which one is Snakey Plain, I know Pretty Plain.

KH: Snakey Plain is on the way out towards Wolseley Gap from Wheelers. It's just north of the Dargals.

LR: You're still on the other side of the Tooma River?

KH: Yes on the Khancoban side of the Tooma River. It's the ridge behind ....

LR: Oh well you might call it that. When I said up over the Dargals, up over the main high fellow there, and then cut down to the hut. I won't argue about that. I'm not familiar with it.

KH: Did we finalise the story of Brooks?

LR: Brooks' was built in '43.

KH: It was the Brooks' brothers and this other guy.

LR: Bill Brooks was a carpenter by trade and old Harry Reid was his partner in the block. <sup>It was a share thing.</sup> Brooks' had a freehold paddock just in front of it. There was 3 freehold 1200 acre blocks. McPhie's first paddock that joined over near Montague's hut, there was the Billy Price paddock and then there was Brooks paddock and then a Teddy Price paddock.

KH: What freehold?

LR: Well, hold on - freehold is different <sup>tenure</sup>, isn't it? They were secured land, it could have been some other type of special lease or something. But they were secure.

KH: They would have had to have been compensated by the National Parks.

LR: Oh yes, that's for sure. Brooks' hut was the stable at the Boobee, pulled down and brought across on the slide.

KH: Is that right? So there were three huts at the Boobee.

LR: It was open-ended stable. I suppose someone knocked it down and burnt it for fire wood. The frame still stood there the last time I was there.

KH: Oh yes, there might be a bit.

LR: Tom Yan constructed the stables in the later days.

KH: And then they took it apart ...

LR: They pulled it apart and brought the iron over, there would be a little bit of sawn timber but mainly bush timber.

KH: Because Brooks is a good hut - a good hut, very neat and it's going to last a long time because it sits on rocks.

LR: The old chappy <sup>Bill Brooks</sup> built well - a very good carpenter, a very good worker and liked to do things properly. Old man Reid would have brought <sup>the rocks</sup> in, with the old creamy horse and the slide, he was all round the ridge there picking up <sup>suitable</sup> rock.

KH: What about Mackay's hut, do you remember that one at all?

LR: Yes. Teddy Eccleston, who was a builder in Adaminaby built it for Sam and Norm Mackay. His son Roy Eccleston still lives in Adaminaby.

KH: Did Ted Eccleston cart out the materials too?

LR: No, Jack O'Neill again would have carted them with a horse dray I'd say. I just can't be sure of that but it would be pretty-well for sure because he used to go up with them. They used to take stock to Kelly's hut at one stage and he used to go and take salt and their provisions up there for them. So he would for sure have taken the materials for the hut that they built there underneath the Spencers Peak or <sup>Tibeawdo's</sup> Creek. That's called <sup>Tibeawdo's</sup> Creek because - I never got on to Ernie Murphy yet - Ernie Murphy told me Watty <sup>Tibeawdo</sup> caught a dingo there.

KH: It's a very strange name?

LR: He must have been a Frenchman or a descendant. He was a man who used to work for Rial - a shepherd, a stockman.

KH: At Farm Ridge?

LR: Rial's headquarters would have been Farm Ridge but he had sheep - thousands and thousands of sheep and he had blokes at different camps all through the mountains tending them. He too would have owned the Boobee or <sup>had</sup> the Boobee. That Miners and Westons' block was known as Rial's mustering paddock - 5,000 acres. <sup>Cook's</sup> Racecourse is in it and it runs right up to Mackay's hut - <sup>Tibeawdo's</sup> that's the boundary. Right from the Pole Gap where the water drops into the Gungahlin one side and back into McGregor's Creek on the other - it goes right to there, they call it the .... then it runs back on to Teddy Price paddock of McPhies and over to where the road crosses McKeanie's creek, where it forks together. When the reshuffle came, Miners had it for a long time in the early reshuffle, and then they lost half of it. They got half of it back and Weston got the other half. That was Rial's mustering paddock.

KH: He was from Tumburumba?

LR: Yes. They ran right through Toolong - later on they had the Toolong hut, the Rials, his sons.

KH: Up on the ridge there between Jagungal and Round Mountain?

LR: Yes, well you know Sam's Rails, the road went through Sam's Rails and down across the Ogilvie's Creek and around Musical Hill which would have left the camp, this Snowy camp site at Ogilvie's Creek, left down the creek on your right and you go round on to the plain then and you would be on the Toolong Creek. This old hut that I'm talking about of Rials was a tin hut, but there was a fine little log hut made there, the Patons built it and somebody told me it got burnt.

KH: Patons is still there.

LR: A real well made little log hut is it?

KH: No, this is an iron one - it's known as Patons. It's above Tooma dam, overlooks the Tooma Plain.

LR: Well is there only one hut?

KH: Yes and further along towards Wheelers there's a pile of rocks and that might be the hut that you're talking about. That was burnt down apparently.

LR: I heard one of those huts was burnt down.

KH: And someone may have got burnt in the process??

LR: This one that I talk about, I'm pretty-well sure it was a log hut <sup>mountain ash logs.</sup>

KH: The new Patons is an iron hut, slabs on the floor, a big place.

LR: It's probably a new one.

KH: Another group have just built a chimney on it too. Do you know any more about this Watty Tibeauo?

LR: No I only know his name and the creek was named after him - Tibeauo's Creek. He used to be in that area, on that end somewhere for Rial. This man Ernie Murphy that I just mentioned, he was a bullock driver of great note. He worked in the mills here, in Kellys sawmill, drawing logs, that is how he was familiar in his later life about here. He was raised in about - it's in behind Rocky Plain, behind the Fletchers somewhere. He was away then for a long spell - he worked bullock teams in the irrigation area when Yanco was being made - these channels down there. Done a lot of pulling down <sup>of</sup> pine and that sort of thing. He used to come up with the wagon when Rial owned all that country. They used to bring the bullock wagon with all the camping gear, utensils, with the main mob and they they'd sort of work from the main headquarters. He decided that he was going to sell his bullocks, he was getting too old to handle them, and I was on my own up there, just about, George Finch was over at the Round Mountain and old Jack Morrisey was digging at Cooks Racecourse. We were the only sort of permanent residents. It was such a good year after the bush fires in the summer of '39 that nobody bothered to come <sup>up</sup> from that end. Ernie said could he bring his bullocks up and top them off for the summer and he was going to take them down and sell them. He camped with me and just looked at his bullocks getting fat. I used to

break in a few horses and he'd come for a ride with me. He'd talk all day. It was all about the early days there as a stockman or driving the bullocks. One day he came with me and we climbed up ... the thing - the Cairnor what ever you call it, with the north, south, east and west on it ... on the Far Bald Mountain, back of the Boobee. He dug <sup>out</sup> a bit of pencil and he said 'Put me name on it'. I got up and I said 'There's some fairly old ones here'. It was <sup>A.J. [?]</sup> H.A. Rial and Mick Casey, 1916, written in indelible pencil, on the tin. That refreshed his memory a bit and he said it was the year that the big fire - you know there's a lot of dead timber behind the Bald Mountain - it's probably all rotted and foul now - it's not green country at all. That was the year that fire killed that timber. So I put his name and mine along side it. Johnny Rudd had a mob up there a couple of years ago and he said 'I saw your name the other day'.

KH: I'd better have a closer look at these things next time.

LR: And I said 'Where was that', and he said 'It was on the tin on the trig side on the Bald Mountain.'

KH: Apparently Brooks was also called the V-hut'

LR: Yes, and it's got a little 'V' in the piece of wood over the fire place - Alan Reid put it there - I questioned him not very long ago about it. I took the local constable up there a couple of summers ago - he couldn't find where to get into it, where the track would turn off. He could see it in the distance, he knew it was there. He said, if he expected to get into these places in the winter when somebody gets lost, he's got to know how to. He asked me would I go and show him where there'd be a likely turn-off. We were in there having our dinner and I said it's the 'V' hut see. He was talking to someone about it, telling them how much he knew about it and they disagreed with him. He didn't know anything about it being called the 'V' hut. I said to Alan Reid one day 'Why did you call it the 'V' hut' and he said 'Because it was in the V of the hill there, it had to have a name'.

KH: You also talked about Wingy and his lollies!

LR: Yes. We were only pretty small people and he used to come over here buying cattle. He'd camp at home, leave his horses and he'd get Frank Yen who was the garage proprietor in Adaminaby to drive him around ....

KH: Frank Yen!

LR: Yes, Geoff Yen's father, Geoff lives here still. They were garage people, storekeepers, land holders, butchers, you name it - they were a pretty big name in Adaminaby in those days. Well, on his first trip to town Wingy he'd come home with the biggest bag of lollies we ever saw. A nice man in every way - a short fellow and nearly as wide as he was high - the most humourous man you could ever ...

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KH: What were you saying about the way he held his whip?  
 LR: He'd put the ... the reins when he started ... you'd be shooving cattle down ... when they didn't want to go ... he'd put the reins over this little bit here and sit that way and use the whip in this hand. The pony was that used to him.  
 KH: I knew he had one arm off, I didn't know which one.  
 LR: Oh yes an empty shirt sleeve altogether - I never saw the stump on the arm.  
 KH: And he still controlled his horse?  
 LR: Yes.  
 KH: Hold the reins over the back of his arms and cracked the whip with the other hand?  
 LR: Yes.  
 KH: And still ride along at a fair pace?  
 LR: Yes and make jokes and swear about everything. He could talk, if he knew somebody who didn't please him, it would take minutes and he'd never repeat himself, never raise a smile, never change his expression.

(interruption)

LR: That part of the Murray area consisted of Whiteheads and Patons and Pierces mainly. Just up a bit further the Mitchells and then up the top the old ...  
 KH: Nankervis?  
 LR: Not until afterwards, ~~they~~ came later.  
 KH: The Scammells?  
 LR: Dr Chisholm, Captain Chisholm - that name Scammell would be an old one. Nankervis would have come ....  
 (inaudible - clock chimes)  
 LR: I think they owned it, the Mitchells and To\_wong Hill must have been a section of it, an adjoining place, I'm <sup>not</sup> sure of that.  
 KH: So Wingy sounds like he was a generous fellow in some ways.  
 LR: Oh in all ways, oh yes.  
 KH: I think I read somewhere that he lost his arm as a child - he fell off his horse?  
 LR: I couldn't be sure of that, my sister would know all about it. One of my sisters used to holiday over there with them occasionally. She was some good long while over there at one stage. I'm not sure whether she worked out there or just holidayed.  
 KH: We talked about Kellys too. I think you said that Joe Haywood and Stuart Kelly had that?

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LR: I'm not terribly definite, but that would be the general go of it I think. Haywood's country joined Kelly's out here. Kelly's son has the country around the old Adaminaby cemetery and Haywoods owned what's Miners - Bolero Forest - was the Haywood place. And I know that Haywoods used to be up in ~~that~~ hut, in ~~that~~ section and I know that it's called Kelly's Hut. I think they were in partnership and I think Mackays came by it after Haywood sold out.  
 KH: Do you know who built it?  
 LR: No I don't.  
 KH: It's quite an old hut and it's got some very unusual characteristics.  
 LR: I've only been in it once or twice. It's about a two or three-roomed one isn't it?  
 KH: Yes. It's got plaster and lath walls and an arched fireplace.  
 LR: I told you that night to get in touch with Ian McPhie. I would have done better to have told you to get in touch with Angus McPhie. His memory would go back further. Angus is in at - on the Cooma part of the exchange - he'd be 'A.A.' (looking at telephone book).  
 LR: .... moved out earlier, his property was ...  
 KH: I keep on hearing that - the McPhies - Lindsay Willis told me about them too.  
 LR: Oh yes you wouldn't hear anything much bad about them.  
 KH: No, except that they were everywhere and when night time came they would just lie under the nearest tree and that'll do.  
 LR: Yes, my father said that Archie walked around a tree, way out there somewhere one night, it got dark, in the snow on snow shoes he was, looking for cattle. The night come on him and he didn't have anything to get a fire going with and he walked around and wasn't going to leave the tree. He couldn't see his hand in front him and he walked around the trunk of the tree all night so that he didn't go to sleep. He reckoned he wouldn't wake up if he went to sleep - that was little Archie. Yes, they went through with their bullocks, they used to run 'em everywhere. The bullocks run themselves, they found out where to go, and they couldn't muster them until all the lease holders had left the mountains, because they had to use their huts and their horse paddocks. Just start them way up the back and bring them in. Cattle looked after themselves when the weather got bad.  
 KH: But a lot of the others would bring their s down with them wouldn't they?

LR: They'd cut them out and they'd go back and be a general nuisance. People didn't take people's cattle much in those days. If anyone took one away they'd follow him to the Murray, he'd come back with the mob next year.

KH: So there wasn't much duffing?

LR: Not that I knew of, there might have been a couple of instances, a couple of areas.

KH: Because there's Duffers Gully off ~~Bolton's~~ Hill.

LR: No, it's further down, it goes down off the Nine Mile, goes down the Fifteen Mile Spur but I've never been in Duffers Gully but I've been all around .... Herbie Hain's saying it got the name because people used to duff cattle. I think it's called Duffers Gully because they started a damn mine down there and it's what they called a duffer, after they got the machine down there and all. That's how it got its right name I think, nothing to do with duffing cattle as far as I knew.

KH: There's a Lorna Doone mine in one of the gullies. Over near Clear Creek. That's the Lorna Doone that I know, off one of the ridges from the Nine Mile Diggings.

LR: The Lorna Doona mine is South Bloomfield ...

KH: That's the Elaine.

LR: I beg your pardon, I'm sorry, that's the Elaine. *and one of*

KH: The Hughes brothers and Barnett were mainly on the Elaine <sup>the</sup> Mark Foy's - I can't remember the others. The Lorna Doone gully, would you have known that as Duffers Gully? I'm a bit confused there, because the Duffers Gully is marked on the old maps - is further up the Tumut and comes down from Boltons Hill.

LR: Yes, that's where I'd go to expect to look for it. You'd go down the old *dray* track that went off the bottom end of the Nine Mile Diggings, the plain there. You could still find traces, if you look hard enough ...

KH: *Geordie's* Spur!

LR: Isn't *Geordie's* Spur on the left hand side as you take off?

KH: I'm a bit confused about that country, I think it's on the right hand side as you go down.

LR: Well you'd call the one on the left the Frenchman would you?

KH: Yes, that's right, that's Frenchmans Gully. I thought the Duffers Gully was further over still. I'm not exactly sure on Duffers Gully.

LR: Neither am I. I never went down into it, I rode around there until I got a sore hide looking for cattle. I was only there after the

Tumut Pond Dam and there was not occasion to go down that Clear Creek because all that cattle country was gone, there was only the steep sides and I never bothered going down there. Johnny Rudd said one day that he went down into Duffer Gully, nothing there he said to hold cattle, the good country had gone. There's a ridge just over from there that used to have a hut on it called Clackston <sup>(?)</sup> Spur - had a little hut on it. It goes down straight down off the back of the Tabletop making a way towards - on the opposite side of Temperance Creek - the Boltons Hill.

KH: You don't mean Tabletop hut?

LR: No, it's right on the ridge running the same way as Temperance Creek. If you came in around from ... you know the bit cut .. there was Smith's hut there at the face of the tunnel. All that's left there now is a sheet of tin, when I was there last. Well if you went, to get onto the Nine Mile Diggings, to go down the plain, you'll come to a big stud and rail yard ...

KH: Near some holding dams?

LR: Yes. Well if you turn directly sort of left back there, across a couple of minor gullies, you'd get on to this main ridge and that's *Clackstons(?)* Spur and when you left it you'd drop down into Temperance Creek and come up on the Boltons Hill side.

KH: That's the spur that I thought was *Geordie's* Spur.

LR: I don't think so.

KH: I think there's some confusion in that country with names and so on. Because you see different maps and they place things in another position, it's a bit hard to tell what's what there.

LR: That's why I said to you I don't want anybody to argue with me because I'm not that clear on it and I don't think anybody else is. The only fellow who knew it well and I was in there with a good while ago, was Wallace Smith, he'd know it like the back of your hand. They put in enough time at that hut, that I just said, it fell down there - cold nights and hot days. We weren't in that country mustering but there was sheep short out at Tabletop and we took a day out in there to see if would pick up tracks of the ones that got away. He used to just tell where we were going, but I never worked on the other side of the Tabletop until after they closed the mountains and we went in there with our cattle and keeping away from the rangers.

KH: There's still a bit of that I think.

LR: Not that much in this area, it's too hard I think. There's a trespass fee if they caught them.

KH: Yes they impound them and to get them out you've got to pay.

LR: Yes, as well, if they carted them away you'd have to pay the transport too.

KH: Someone's been in towards Kidmans and burnt all through there in the traditional way I think, over Brassy Gap, there are some very fresh burns there when I was in there last summer.

LR: Last summer, I think there was a lot of stock in there when it was real bad, they went right in on to the high country too and done a bit of dodging - from Snowy Plain. There's a bit of a stepping stone at Snowy Plain, there's secured country in there. Some people have got a bit ... Laurie Fletcher for one had his out there but he said he couldn't keep them in, the fence was getting bad. He came out one night ... it's rather surprising for one fellow to have come that far to ask another fellow .. he said, 'Where would a man go up there', no, he said 'Where would sheep go if they were out there'. Goodness one fellow's guess is near as good *as another.*

KH: There was some caught up near Gungarten last winter I believe.

LR: What do you call Gungarten?

KH: Part of the Kerrys, up near Tin hut, somewhere round Tin hut they were caught, I didn't see them. I saw some dead sheep in near Brassy Gap when we were skiing through there.

LR: You know the young fellow who came with us, the day that we went with you, with Ian and Ernie and <sup>Harold?</sup> Carrol - Bill from up at Cabramurra - Bill Temple. Well he was employed then, he still is, I presume, by the Snowy Authority and he's a - oh not geologist - checking on water gauges and things and he told us that day there was a mob of sheep that could have three years wool on them, out about - not as far <sup>as</sup> Geehi, not the Rocky Plain river, the Valentine - about the Valentine Falls <sup>there</sup> somewhere. He said would I know anything about them or anybody that would. The last I heard is that they went out and had a look around and couldn't see them. They'd just lay about if they've got that much wool on them.

KH: The last winter would have got a lot of them, because it was so heavy.

LR: They move a bit on top of it and get a bit of foliage.

KH: Now you talked about Happys and Montagues and I've got Bill McLachlan down in association with that.

LR: He built it, I'm sure of that.

KH: What about George Winters?

LR: George Winters would have been the first man to have camped in it - the first man in charge - he came up with Montague's sheep and

he would have had it built.

KH: And Montague's sheep came from out west?

LR: No down around the Rock.

KH: That's Wagga way isn't it.

LR: They'd go out and buy sheep - Dubbo - and bring them up here. He'd run them for a year or two and then sell them. It was a racket as a matter of fact. They took it off fellows to give it to bona fide owners for relief country and blokes got hold of it and used to deal off it. It wasn't much different from the way it was before. There wasn't so much of it in the one lump.

KH: There was a gally there before that apparently.

LR: Yes my father owned the block - the Arsenic - for years and years and years - held it as a lease and they still left him with what they call <sup>the</sup> mixed mustering paddock, that runs up to the head of the old dip, comes on to the range ... up from the old Tolbar camp, a fenced in paddock it was. That was his mustering paddock in those days. He would have been in there when he was a young man and his father before him - goodness knows how long they held that country. It was before there was fences, before McPhies fenced those blocks in because when I was kid I asked him what ... they'd be there still ... in front of Brooks hut, McPhies and Brooks' fences ran parallel, it was like this, this is McPhies and this is Brooks. The fences run along here, over the flat in front of Brooks hut you'll see ~~these~~ built up stones, well they were boundary markers for the shepherds in the early days. My father said ~~that~~ Jimmy Reid and he had a disagreement about boundaries one day and he was working for one of the lease holders on the other side and my fathers' blocks was the Arsenic. There was cattle running over and Jimmy was shepherding across the line, across the boundary. ~~Father~~ said 'You're making it a bit strong with a mob of sheep that size'. 'Well' he said, 'you got some of ours last year'. 'Ours' - he wouldn't have owned the hair in their tail. That's what people thought of their jobs in those days. They took an interest in the other fellows, the bloke that was paying them, as though they were their sheep - stop in there, camp in there and look after them. You'd have a bit of trouble getting someone to do it today. They'd tell you what to do with your sheep. That was all the boundary so that must have been before Brooks and McPhies took up that land.

KH: You also spoke about the old Round Mountain hut?

LR: Yes, you said that night about the Round Mountain hut being ... you pass it by on the bitumen road.

Leo Russell

KH: No, that's Bradleys.

LR: Oh well that's the one I thought you were calling Round Mountain.

KH: No, Round Mountain hut is on the track down to the Tumut River from Round Mountain.

LR: Right you go up pass Sams or Sandys or whatever you call it, get into the creek and cross it a couple of times, up into the horse paddock and there was the hut. Someone told me that hut got burnt down, it didn't then.

KH: There's a Round Mountain hut there today.

LR: It's still there then.

KH: It's a big hut, a big iron hut, very big.

LR: Yes fairly long I suppose. There was a salt shed thing out in front and you'd see the remains of a good big yard, a <sup>holding</sup> yard that you could hold a fair mob of cattle in.

KH: That's all gone.

LR: My father said he left the saddle on his grey mare all night, tied up one night, to keep her a bit warm, it was snowing like blazes, he was going through there from the Murray and he didn't take the saddle off because he thought it would help to keep her warm.

KH: He didn't mind a wet bum the next day? The saddle was still there in the morning?

LR: Yes, they used to ride thoroughbreds through there. He had this breed of greys he used to talk about. They went through there in a day and all this sort of caper.

KH: So there's only the one Round Mountain hut that you know of.

LR: Yes it's the only one I know of. You go past it and then up across Cool Plain and out to Sam's Rails. If you stop, instead of going out around that Round Mountain swamp, we called it, and through Sam's Rails, if you turned left you'd come along the - they called it the Basalt spur or range, they just called it the Basalt perhaps and there was a main sheep camp there called Richardson's Break - it was only a tent and galley. Old Tommy Richards used to come in there with sheep year after year and ...

KH: This is on the way to Jagungal?

LR: Yes it's called Richard's Break.

KH: What about the hut at Ogilvies? There's a hut, a small one, known as Ogilvies. You go across Cool Plain, a bit further west, there's a lot of fences there, old yards, I think it's a pretty recent hut, it's only small.

Leo Russell

LR: I know nothing of it. It wouldn't be on a stock route at all, though you never know it might be now, since the dam's went in. Nobody would be putting a hut there now.

KH: The fences are pretty old.

LR: No - Bradleys in the earlier days or someone like that might have been further in there, before there was some reshuffle. When that road went in - I don't know whether Bradleys hut would have been there before that road went in, from Tumut Pond dam to Tooma dam. That might be why they put the hut right on the road there because it was easy to get the material out. I know nothing of it.

KH: The Ogilvies that I know of is on the the Thiess fire trail, but that was put in during the Snowy Mountain scheme - after your time. Hainsworth?

LR: Hainsworth! He was one of the surveyors.

KH: This is back on the Long Plain isn't it.

LR: That is out of my reach. Is it Ains...

KH: No I think it's 'H' - Hainsworth.

LR: There was a fellow when the resurvey was done, Ray Ainsworth ...

END TAPE 1, SIDE TWO.

TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

KH: ... it sounds like it, I know of it as being just off what's called the Mosquito Creek fire trail.

LR: Yes, that would be right, it would be in the vicinity of that.

KH: Yes, it's not far off, that's Hainsworth.

LR: Yes.

KH: I haven't been there.

LR: I don't know who would have had the country, that lease, or anything about it. Tom Taylor would know all about it I should think.

KH: It's hard to keep him on one hut though. I like to follow things through and he just goes on.

LR: It's a pity because he'd have a wider knowledge of that area than anybody alive.

KH: If you are prepared to spend enough time with him you can piece it all together after a while but you've got to have incredible patience.

Leo Russell

KH: We went to Circuits that day, didn't we, because I've got a photo of you standing in front of Circuits. You said it was built for Tom Shanley.

LR: Yes, Tom Shanley was manager of Dangelong Station out from Cooma. I don't know what the name of the country was, probably Scottish investment, two or three big names around the mountains at that time. His travelling manager was a man named Circuit who lived, the last I heard, about Moss Vale and one of the big shareholders was a doctor called Dr Thring, Tom used to talk about him. I think a doctor of some note - he was one of the big shareholders, if not the biggest I'd say. They also had this big track of land down at Uabba near Uabbalong - it's a station called Uabba or Uabbalong - it's a town - it's either Uabba and the station Uabbalong or the town's Uabbalong and the station Uabba - I'm not sure which way it goes - out Condoblin way. They used to bring sheep from down there and sheep from Dan\_gelong and run them up there in the summer.

KH: They'd bring them overland.

LR: Oh yes.

KH: Three months or something?

LR: Well I don't know just how long it would take - they walked them up. Depending on the seasons and what it was like - they'd probably truck sheep at Junee to go out west if there was nothing on the road when they got them there. When I worked up there, I worked there in summer, and a Cootamundra drover brought them there so they must have been fairly well backed.

KH: They could rail them part of the way couldn't they?

LR: Yes, well that's what I say, trucked them. There wouldn't be much motor transport in those days at all - practically none.

KH: How long can sheep go without water?

LR: I don't know. It would vary. I've never left one long enough without water to find out.

KH: Because when we were in Orange, there seemed to be sheep trucks, and they were in there for days - it seemed like it.

LR: I think it would take a while if he was in good order. If it's real hot I think he'd dehydrate - if he was woolly he'd take longer to dehydrate than if he was shorn too, I think, it would keep the sun off him. It would depend on the seasonal conditions, if the ground was moist, I think you could put them in a paddock ... if there was green feed there and they'd last for months - probably the winter. It would rain a bit sometimes and it would pick a bit out of a puddle, but without permanent water I think you could put them in a pretty dry paddock for the winter.

Leo Russell

KH: Circuits - built late 1930s I think you said!

LR: Well, it was a pretty new sort of a hut when I first .. a well-kept sort of hut, no cracks in the wall or the paint not peeling off it or anything like that and the garden fence was still all nicely stayed in the very early 40s - '41 or something like that - say it was there for 5, 6, or 7 years - yeah I'd say early 30s. There was an old hut there, we saw it that day at the back...

KH: Very low walls.

LR: Yeah, that had sunk. The fellow that was there trapping rabbits camped in that hut the year that I was there - it was liveable then.

KH: Bark roof?

LR: I think it had iron on the roof. Somebody's taken it I guess. I'm not sure, I couldn't remember seeing anything odd about it and I think I would have noticed if it had a bark roof.

KH: Anything more on Delaneys?

LR: No I don't know when it would have been built. Arthur Delaney is still alive, he'd be one of that family, he lives in Berridale - he still owns his place up here at Buckenderra.

KH: He would be possibly a descendant of the Delaneys?

LR: He's a son of J.T. Delaney who would have been one of the fellows who had that hut built. They also had a lease at the Nine Mile - they'd tell you as much about Geordie's - which side of Geordie's Spur is the Frenchman - as anybody. They used to go up there and muster their cattle - they had a lease there fairly late.

KH: Quite approachable?

LR: Yes.

KH: I could ring him up.

LR: Yes he's a very steady spoken fellow. I've never talked to him much about bush life ever. Never mixed with him much. As I say I wasn't in that country when they were in there but he would have been there about this time that I was telling you about - when we were out there looking for the sheep off the Tabletop. Oh yes, he was in there with Sam Russell - Sam Russell is a bloke who can tell you all about the Tabletop - he lives in Tumut - he's retired and comes up here in the summer time, perhaps to get away from the heat sometimes, with a caravan and stays out of town.

KH: Sam Russell!

LR: Claude his name is - C.M. in fact.

KH: Is he related to you?

LR: Yes. There were two families of us. Most of the ones up and down this river and the ones to do with stock work and that would generally be of all this one source - and that's one old fellow ~~that~~ came with his bullock team I think and some of the sons had horse teams. They carted to Twofold Bay, I think that was the main port then from here.

KH: So you're the fourth generation?

LR: There's William and John and Mick and me - big families <sup>all</sup> of them. Some of these old places - that was they pulled it up there - Cudramurra, where the old Granny Russell shifted down to from Denison - they went on grazing then and John my grandfather married I suppose, he built this and called it Cudmurra - cut out the 'ra'. They get odd names on them, some of the writings and what have you, but that was it for sure and a lot of the timber in those places would have been sawn up the Sawpit Creek <sup>in a pit</sup>. One bloke up the top and one from down the bottom. Sawpit Creek is the deepest looking gully, running straight opposite Anglers <sup>(Reach)</sup> Ridge off the peninsula. If you were over on the peninsula and looked straight across where the old homestead was, it would be the next gully to the left of that. You can almost pick the mountain ash in the distance you know, especially in the morning with the different light on it, it looks darker than any of the other timber.

KH: It wouldn't have been sawn at the Alpine Creek saw mill?

LR: No I don't think ... some of it could have been. Some of it split, there was a hell of a lot of timber underneath the ~~verandahs~~ you could see it was split. They did things right in those days. My father used to say it was his uncle, that would have been his grand uncle Ted Hickey who did most of the cattle yards and stuff like that. There was a big yard over at the top place, we used to call it old Uncle Micks - that was my grand Uncle Mick - Uncle Mick and Aunt Liza were the last two bachelor and old maid of the family and they lived on there. My brother then bought the place, there was only the old Uncle Mick left and he couldn't manage any longer. He added it on to what was left to him, he inherited from my grandfather, this Cudramurra over here. He's dead now, that's the eldest brother, but his two sons live nearly half way between here and Cooma now. When the Snowy scheme came they had to get out. They gave them no option if they wanted to stay, it wouldn't be any good if they had enough - so he bought that place up there. What was I on about ... oh, the old yard builder - he used to go up in the forest there to get the right sort of timber, split it and have it carted down to the lagoons on the river - there was some big lagoons out off the river - the Eucumbene river - between here and the crossing going on to the

old homestead and he'd throw it in there for the best part of the summer to season it and then he would dress them and make gates, mortise all the heads and put a cap - the two gate posts would be high fellows, they'd square it, the top bit - or oblong rather, they'd cut an oblong hole in each end ...

KH: Very nice.

LR: I could show you one down here that Reg Bellman had and it washed it up in a gully, it's still there in the driftwood. I almost know the piece of stick, I used to bob my head to get out under it. We used to break in horses and my brother would work over there helping Reg at shearing time and if I had one ready to ride and wanted someone with me ... at lunch time he'd give me a hand to get on it and he'd have to get down on his neck to get out under this plate as you were coming out. The post would never shift and they had this top fellow put on ... that fellow over that post and that fellow over this post, but they made a nice round one then through there and at the head of this gate they chiseled him off until he was as round as a broom handle.

KH: Sounds like a hinge.

LR: He went through there and sunk another fellow in the ground and dished him and the bottom end was also rounded at the head of the gate and it sat in the hole at the bottom - it couldn't get away.

KH: Very neat.

LR: And this old fellow made these gates like that and there was a crush to treat horses or catch horses ... all mortised and there was one post, don't know how big around he would have been, but he would have been at least four lines of fence come into him and it would have been at least a five if not a six line fence.

KH: In five different directions?

LR: Yes five different sides. There is a chance that the likes of that post would still be lying over there somewhere but it would have been in the water.

KH: There's a nice gate at Daveys or you might know it as Williamsons or Hedges hut.

LR: No I don't know it well, that's up Snowy Plain.

KH: It's not quite as refined as that, it's got the top piece across it still, but it's held together with wire now. And of course there's the old sliprail gate that Tom Yan built near Four Mile hut.

LR: Yes he did.

KH: On that divide.

LR: Yes Crocket's paddock that is. You just got through that gate



a bit and you turn a little bit right and you can see in the clearing part that there was a big yard there.

KH: Yes, tumbled down now and there's one or two fruit trees down there.

LR: I followed that creek down a bit - as far as I thought that no further cattle would go and I came back, but that would take you down apparently towards this Lorna Doone would it?

KH: Yes, it's Clear Creek, it's the same catchment.

But Tom I thought may have said that there was a hut there - Crockett's hut. You don't know...?

LR: I know nothing of it. That Crockett was going to butcher there for Kiandra - there would probably be a killing house or something in the early days. He was going to be a butcher in Kiandra or I think he was a butcher but then the winters got so tough ... Aub Russell had that lease afterwards.

KH: So Tom did build that slip rail - 'cause that's quite a marker ....

LR: Tom built that slip rail and he built a fence for my brother - he built his woolshed and he built the sheep yard, he mortised every post, he split the rails going up the ridge towards Happys .... God knows how long it took him to do it, but he and his son George done that. It would be a four-rail and he mortised every one and put them in. I condemned his work one day, I said 'What's the good of having a rail a foot wide in the middle and only four inches on the end'. He had me on, he said 'If ever that rail breaks I'll swear to you that it will break in the middle, not on the end'. I saw a couple of rails later, when pressure come on it, they did break in the middle but none on the end. He was right on the ball because that's where they broke, the flood brought some of that stuff on to this side, the driftwood.

KH: Yes they were beautiful.

LR: They took a lot of time.

KH: I suppose we had better finish soon. I've still got my notes from that trip with you. Gavels hut - you knew a fair bit about Gavels?

LR: I was camped in Gavels - my brother stopped in it for a year or two - I worked for Gavel - he was a fellow who came in from out Condoblin every year.

KH: I can remember you said he brought thousands of them.

LR: It would have been 5,000 or more sheep, the year that I was up to give my brother a hand .... (clock chimes) ... about 5,000 sheep.

LR: .... used to bring in eight and nine thousand a year, the first year I was with them.

KH: Who's that?

LR: Cheyneys - they brought in over 8,000 sheep down on to the Boobee. We brought them through Lobbs Hole. Not Lobbs Hole that you know Lobbs Hole - O'Hares Creek come down. O'Hares Hill to what was Sue City. You know where O'Hares Creek goes - where the road is now, you cross going to Tumb arumba.

KH: Yeah, the Elliott Way.

LR: Where it crosses the Tumut River, we come down the main long spur from <sup>Colston's (?)</sup> Diggings, came in from Paddys River ...

KH: I don't know it well enough.

LR: And then straight up the Black Fold <sup>(?)</sup> on this side and came out here at the Tin hut.

KH: That's up Wallaces Creek isn't it?

LR: No Wallaces Creek is ... as you'd be coming up Wallaces Creek is over on your left and the section is Snakey Plain's on your right. You come up on to the tip just back from Three Mile dam and then down the ridge to the Three Mile dam.

KH: Gee that's a lot of sheep.

LR: Yes, in that sort of country because you couldn't work them - well you had to work them because there was only enough room for a certain amount to stay on the ridge. Once they got underneath like this you see, they left the ridge and got in here - they'd get into rough stuff - cliffs and that - and you couldn't get them back up. Your dog would be here working and these would be kicking stones and the dog would think you're pelting stones at him. You could be in trouble. Some fellows from down below - this is why they used to get us sort of blokes to go out and meet the sheep because the blokes from down below were - well you'd know how you'd be - and their dogs weren't used to it, or their horses, they were pretty useless. The dogs weren't used to that sort of thing - they could watch them work down the plains all the time, but couldn't have much chance to watch them in that sort of country, had to be dependent on them. Some fellows, it's been well known, that they started up the hill and the dogs got thirsty and went back to the river for a drink, they just spread and went for their life. One particular mob, they were in there weeks after ... a lot of the sheep too would go back.

KH: There wouldn't be much feed in the forest country.

LR: No but they'd run it up the ridges on that hop bush and that sort of stuff. Some would make up to come up all the time others would

go back for the water.

KH: You said Arthur Yen and Greg Welch had the lease last at Gavels!

LR: Arthur Yen - one of the storekeepers, yes. The Kiandra fellows are Yan. Tommy Yan was the son of old George Yan. George Yan was the storekeeper, they used to move down into the Ravine for the winter and run their cattle. Good big family of Yans. Yes Arthur Yen and Greg Welch had that, the last that I knew of. Then there's Venables, they had a section of it, it got all cut up and split into sections. There was Gavels on this end of the plain and you know when we first went on to the plain and went up a bit to Brayshaws, that was all Robinsons - there were two of them, there was J.O. Robinson and Jim Robinson. They owned all that top end and right down nearly opposite the Gulf hut, they went round behind the Gulf country and then the Dan gelong people owned the other end of the plain - there were three main owners on all that Nungar plain.

KH: Do you know anything about when Gavels was built?

LR: No, it was a well established hut when I first knew it.

KH: You spoke about rabbit trapping out there - you talked about someone else who was staying there, who was out there rabbiting.

LR: Reggie Casey!

KH: At Gavels!

LR: Lionel Kennedy - oh my brother and Jack Bellman went there rabbiting in the winter when he used to work up there. They'd go back to rabbit after the sheep got finished at Gavels. Then they'd come back to Jack Bells down here at Rock Forest, hear "At Mrs Hobbs" of a night time - her radio serial - I bet you've never heard of it.

KH: No, that's why it didn't register. (?)

LR: It would be about a 15 minute or half an hour serial - Mrs Hobbs - and there were a couple of others. They wouldn't come every night.

KH: You mean they had radio out there?

LR: No Jack Bell lived over here at Rock Forest. On odd nights they'd come down for something and they'd make sure they'd go down on the night it was Mrs Hobb's night - Bonnington's Irish Moss. Times have changed a bit.

KH: You talked a bit about rabbiting I think.

LR: This is probably what we said that day, that a lot of people, all those huts were full of people, that would go back to rabbit for their skins in the winter time. Half these people in Adaminaby kept their families on rabbits - so help me goodness they did - what they could catch and

make in the winter time. It was a place where the cold country fur was valuable, got big prices for your skins, they were the best you could get. It was a trade - several of these land holders around here got their properties from rabbits. They may not be the land holders around here now, at this present time, since the Snowy scheme - some that I could mention were bought up and moved away and that sort of thing - quite a few. They'd go back, they'd get the rights off the lease holders to be able to get their leases to trap in the winter time. There'd be a lot of competition for them. If fellows got there first and got the other fellows rabbits there'd be fights on and this sort of caper. There'd be a string of blokes - we've been working here at the yards - there used to be a yard down here, before any of this was here, and we'd be working cattle or sheep and Monday mornings there'd be a string of fellows in light spring carts and pack horses going up that road, all going out to get their camps set up for Monday and then they'd trap for the week. Might stay out for two weeks then bring their skins in. On Saturday there would be skin buyers come from Cooma and set up in the street - just for the skins. Some of them made quite a lot of money - skins were dear sometimes when there wasn't <sup>very</sup> much money about. Sometimes skins got up to 5/- or 6/- a pound and that was a 1/- a rabbit when wages would have only been two pounds a week. You could catch 50 or 60 rabbits a night - a lot of people made a lot of money.

KH: Did they use ferrets?

LR: No traps - set the trap and go round every morning and get the rabbit and skin him and take the trap and set it somewhere else to get another one.

KH: I think you said they'd skin them when they were cold and pack them at night so they'd get extra moisture or something.

LR: Yes, we mentioned that when we were at Pe dens hut. The Kennedy brothers used to - Ossie Kennedy had that lease and the three boys used to go back there and trap in the winter. The youngest one of those boys, he's still out here on a property. He said you could gain two pound in the 100 skins if you waited until it was frosty at night to pack your skins. A lot depended on the way you skinned a rabbit too, you could take an extra joint of his tail - 100 of those extra joints would probably be 6/- worth. They had to be skinned in a <sup>professional</sup> manner and pegged out so that the furrier would get the straight cut on them, that all counted what you were going to get for them. If you gave them half dried or shrivelled up, well they didn't bring much. The best rabbit was somebody in those

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days like shearers and horsemen and things like that. The fellow that was best at it was fairly proud of his achievement, which nobody seems to be now do they. You pay a bloke to put a house up, as long as it don't fall down while he was there, he's satisfied, he gets his money and he goes, in lots of cases. There's plenty of good men but there's plenty of the other sort.

KH: Do you know why Bill Jones is called Bill Jones? This is the one way up there ...

LR: Jones' hut?

KH: Yes, we went past it that day, we stopped there too.

LR: Well Bill Jones must have owned the block there.

KH: No one's ever mentioned him and I don't know anything about the history of that place.

LR: Well again, Tom Taylor is the man - it would be his next door neighbour - Tom Taylor lived in that hut, in Harris' hut after he would have been finished with the Coolamine, that would have been his main home there, if I'm not mistaken - the Harris hut.

KH: No, that was then Bill Harris - when Bill Harris married Irene, Tom's sister, they built it and they lived there for a long time. But Tom may have gone there after that!

LR: I believe so.

KH: Is that right?

LR: It might have been when he was away from there for a time and went back, it might have been then.

KH: Because I know he and Molly lived at the Pockets for a while too. He's probably lived in most of those huts at some stage.

LR: Yes, well I think the Harris' hut, I'm not sure of that.

KH: Do you get out to see Tom at all now?

LR: No, I see him in the street in town sometimes - I'm a bit cagey - he's all politics now - can't get away from the man.

KH: He talks about all sorts of things.

LR: Once he gets on to politics, it's his best subject. He's been reading lots of books that I've never heard of - he's back to some of the wars back in the 1400s I think now. He mentions everybody by name and goes crook on some of them - he's in this 'ism' and that 'ism' - he's studied the lot.

KH: He must read a lot!

LR: He must do and he must take it all in.

KH: Because he doesn't listen much to anybody, he never listens to me.

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LR: No, he doesn't listen to anybody I don't think.

KH: He has a hell of a lot to tell.

LR: He must take it in, whatever you say, and think about it afterwards.

KH: I ran a photography course a while ago, when we were out there with a group of photographers, staying at one of the cottages at Currango and he came over to check the kerosene fridge, to see if it was still working and we weren't packing it too tight. Then he came around to the front verandah and he sat there and we said could we take his photograph, this is about half a dozen of us, all photographers, clicking away madly - Tom just carried on - told us several new theories that he'd worked on in the previous few weeks.

LR: A great theory man.

KH: Yeah but hardly batted an eye-lid. Cameras couldn't disturb him.

LR: He had a fellow that was a match for him - they called him the Uranium King - his name was George Gavin. He was a prospector, he reckoned he had this radium mine one time. Fellows have told me that when the two of them got together in a hut, they took the floor and the things they talked about, the adventures, unthinkable. One trying to outdo the other. Tom was up there camped at the Boobee one night, I don't think he stopped talking until well after we went to bed. He shot dingos in flashes of lightning, things like that. 'I had this trap set' he said 'and I heard him howling, a hell of a storm, I went over and knew where the trap was' - he was a good shot mind you - he said, 'I got the rifle, I was standing on a log, a big long mountain ash log, a tree that had fell, come a flash of light and there he is, and I got him'. Old Jack Morrissey, that I mentioned here earlier, told me that Tom Taylor was a good shot and he said 'so he ought to be, he'd shoot all your ammunition practising'. He told me that they had a drive for a dingo out there at Peppercorn when Tom was a young fellow. Tom was driving, one of the drivers and was carrying a rifle, a 32, and he said he shot the dingo twice through the head before he had time to hit the ground. He was driving and he saw the dingo going, he was coming past a sapling and he lined him up with the sapling, as soon as he showed his head past the sapling he pulled and the dingo rebounded and he thought he never hit him and he give him another one - he had the two bullets in him. He used to go round here when there was still a few stockmen here. He'd get out in the old landrover with the hood off and go and just shoot them - rabbits - he'd just pop them off in the car lights with a 22. You've got to be quick.

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KH: He used to work for the Park didn't he?

LR: Yes, while the leases were still open for grazing. He was one of those blokes that counted in and counted off and seeing that you didn't break the rules.

KH: Yes, him and Jim Pattinson and Frank West.

LR: Yes and Harry Russell before Tom.

KH: It wouldn't be a very easy task I wouldn't think. You would be probably dobbing in your cobbers or something. It would be like joining the opposition.

LR: Yes, very unfashionable job it was. There wouldn't be too many fellows to take it. Some fellows took it pretty well, it didn't worry people too much, some of them weren't too good. Like some policemen, they might show their authority a bit but others want the least trouble they can possibly get. Dave Mackay was one of the popular rangers - one of the sons of the shareholders in that hut at the Tiberwades, Spencers Peak - young Dave he was. He was a very popular fellow.

KH: Did you ever use Mould's hut?

LR: No, just ridden past it the time that old Ernie Murphy was with me. Davey Williamson came in from Mawsons hut to arrange to see if he could get Ernie to take him out a waggon load of salt to Mawsons hut. He'd get someone from here with a motor truck to take it to Cooks racecourse. It wasn't a bad road then, the Grey Mare was going, they done this road up fairly well, you could take a truck that far. So Ernie agreed - he had to go across to see him, that's right - so I goes across with Ernie one day from the Boobee to Mawsons hut and we went via Mould's hut in the Basin - you'd have the big Bogong up on your right and Jackies Lookout I think, then move around through the Red Gap and then across Rocky Plain. This Ernie was a noted bullocky and a tremendous hand with the bullock whip - after they talked on for a while, they were sitting up there in the hut - Davey got on to bullock yarns and what have you and he said 'By crips you know Ernie, you could crack a whip, I'd like to hear you crack that whip' - this went on for about an hour. In the finish he talked him into it and he had the wagon out in front of the tin shed - there's a bit of a landing out in front of the shed where the wood heap used to be and then there's a drop away ...

KH: Which hut is this?

LR: At the Boobee. If you walked out of the tin shed, you walk out level then it drops. He had his wagon parked there and had a big long sapling stuck in the front of it and it came back in an arch to the

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back and he had a big tarpaulin pulled over the lot. When he considered that he might do it he went out, unrolled the whip and give it a couple of flicks. He started at about the corner of hut there, the shed, and he took a run and a sort of a skip and a jump, let her go almost to the bank, and let her go - I think you would have heard it almost at Snowy Plain. There was no doubt about him, he could crack it alright.

KH: Would he aim for anything.

LR: He'd aim for something if he wanted to. My goodness, he'd go under this one's belly and flick that fellow up the flank on the other side if he wasn't doing his work and all this sort of caper and he'd bring it over and flick this bloke under the brisket if he wasn't going.

KH: Would he get someone's cigarette out of their mouth?

LR: I don't think anybody would be game. But no doubt he would have been accurate.

KH: People did apparently.

LR: Yes, I did hear, he didn't tell me himself, but I did hear that for a bet he split a wool bale by hitting it three times on the same strike down the side and he came open. I don't know whether quite to believe it, I suppose so if he hit it hard enough. It would be a job for an axe almost. We decided to .... sneak a bit of wood .... he said, 'we'll hook up some bullocks to draw this wood'. You know how a tree will blow out by the roots, big old bushy headed snow gum, there were three blown out on the side across the creek. I said there'd be some wood in some of them, half a dozen bullocks would draw over pretty easy. We goes and collects the bullocks and starts yoking, he keeps on yoking .... he said 'I never like to draw a short two' and he yoked up twelve of them to draw this bit of wood. He was going along and coming up that rise that I just spoke about, across the little creek, we used to have a water race, had a piece of tin where you filled your billy on top, and then it dropped down over there and it was pretty swampy and straight bank. We were bringing this whole tree with the spikes still on it and it stuck in the bank. He looked back and apparently one of the bullocks wasn't doing his best. He hissed and pulled the whip back like this and the bullock groaned and lifted the whole bank - he knew what was coming - by George he had it trained. Then we went - to come across to Cooks Racecourse - we rode across the day before and picked a track and he yoked the big waggon with 18 bullocks on and he went as straight as he could possibly go across there.

KH: Across Doubtful Gap?

LR: No to <sup>r</sup>Cooks Racecourse, <sup>r</sup>from the Boobee, with an empty waggon...  
 KH: Straight across country ...  
 LR: And he stayed at the break on the waggon, he directed it from there - he'd say 'well Bill will do that' - never raised his voice - went over there and got his load to go out there to Daveys, Mawsons hut.  
 KH: He would have been one of the last teams then wouldn't he?  
 LR: Oh for sure yes. He picked up a load of bagged-up *shake* . . . .

END SIDE 3, TAPE 2.

SIDE 4, TAPE 2.

LR: . . . . his father and two uncles would have been old mountain people too. He came up there once when I was camped at the Boobee and brought one of his old uncles, Kim, <sup>(Bolton)</sup> just for the trip up with him, he was dog trapping. He used to just go round the camps and see if anyone was having any dog trouble and he'd set traps if you wanted him to. One of those old fellows most likely might have built that hut.

KH: There's been two. But the Boltons were on Snowy Plain too. In behind Williamsons there's a hut that the Boltons built. There's a Boltons house there - they're involved with the Grey Mare mine - one was delivering mail or something, <sup>-Tack-</sup> back in '35. Would he have been old enough.

LR: Perhaps not in '35. I'm talking about '39 and he was a dog trapper.

KH: He could have been.

LR: . . . brother older than me, had a mail contract one year in the mountains. He used to go out one day as far as the Grey Mare, there was a lot of camps then, that year. Glen Galvin canvassed round amongst them and they threw in enough to pay him to take the mail out once a week. It was all addressed over here, they used to address it there anyway, it was the main headquarters. These fellows that rode in on the short cuts would all come past here, it was their first bit of habitation in the mountains. They arranged to have the mail addressed here, if we weren't going up, or somebody from up there would be calling in. So anyway the mail used to come there, great heaps of them. They arranged to put a mailman on, he used to take it up one day and come back the next day.

KH: They call that hill over near Mawsons, the *Mail Box*. The story goes that there was some sort of place there, there literally was some

sort of holding place for mail.

LR: That wouldn't have to do with this lot.

KH: That would have been older I think.

LR: That would go up from Snowy Plain no doubt. This would have been out by Happys, the Boobee, O'Keefes, the <sup>o</sup>Bogong - there were different camps there that didn't have huts, like Richards Break and that and Round Mountain. He wouldn't go around them all, some of them would pick up their mail from somewhere else too, back in at Happy Jacks.

Where have you got to go tonight?

KH: I've got a tent at Adaminaby camping ground - pitched the tent.

LR: You're in the area for a while then?

KH:

END SIDE 4.

CONCLUSION