

Interviewed by Klaus Hueneker

17 June 1984

Tape 1 of 2

Side 1

This is an interview by Klaus Hueneker with Mrs Nell Chaffer on 17th June 1984 at her apartment on the Pacific Highway in Kallara.

KH: Perhaps I could use this to use as a base to ask you questions from.

NS: Yes...you can do what you like..as long as my voice..it doesn't sound too right to me, does it ?

KH: O, that's alright ; see I'm not..

NS: Is it throaty ?

KH: This is not for radio or anything

NS: No

KH: So it's just like my secretary. I mean, that's my secretary. Yeah, so..

NS It's good, isn't it.

KH: Yes,so at home I can write it down.

NS: We had one at home...a tape recorder Arthur had made too,a beautiful tape recorder...Playback 5 inch you know, and he made all the electrical apparatus for it.

KH: Was reel to reel was it?

NS: Reel to reel ; it was put out when I left Mosman. Alan, my son-in-law said, you won't want this any more, it's outdated.

And all his lovely recording apparatus. He used to start off by cutting his own records ...with an arm, a cutting arm.

Then he started off with the wire , doing the wire ones. He used to tape reels from any celebrities that came out from the Sydney townhall...Maria Callas, and all these famous people...he made tape recordings of all those and could play them back.

KH: Right

NS: It was wonderful, the apparatus. And he'd go from his study to his work room...he'd bring back...and Judith would say,"there goes Daddy again Mum,there's something wrong with it again this time"; and he worked on it from 1927 to make it. He brought back the first electric pickup into Sydney.

KH: Really !

NS: To Australia when he was in England getting his Diploma of Ophthalmology. He went to England to do that, but he studied in Sydney

KH: Really! He was an Eye Specialist ?

NS: Yes, he was an Ophthalmic Surgeon.

KH: Right.

NS: And he had his MBCHM DOMS...MB means doctor of medicine and MSC Master of Surgery.

And DOMS is Diploma of Ophthalmology and Surgery. I've got a book there with him in it.

KH: He was Arthur ?

NS: Arthur ; Arthur Ernest Fraser Chaffer.

KH: He was born 1900, you had written down here.

NS: 1900, and he died in 1962.

It will be on next week...24th of this month he died, 24th of June.

KH: Were you born about the same era ?

NS: I was born in 1905

KH: So you were 5 years younger

NS: I was born in May. I've just answered my birthday cards. I've just had my 79th birthday, and you don't expect me to have a good memory, do you ?

KH: Well, I don't know. I..the more old people I meet, the more I'm amazed and impressed by their memory. Yeah, like the Moppetts, Tom Moppett, I was there on Thursday.

NS: Yes

KH: And Jean, very good memory. They did a very early ski crossing from Kiandra to Kosciusko in 1936 and they've got photos of it, and things to go with it, so I was very interested to see them.

NS: You've seen them ? Memory good ?

KH: Yes, very good, excellent, fantastic.

NS: Well they'd be younger than me , cos they'd be skiers, you see.

KH: Yes, but then there are others like Paddy Pallin; you know who he is.

NS: Paddy, s the same age as Arthur, born the same year.

KH: Yeah, same year, that's right.

NS: We went with Paddy and May when they first...before I had Judith...before Judith was born, before she had any, and that was my last trip before Judith was born...the Fox's River and out there on the 40 mile.

KH: And how many children did you have ?

NS: Who, May Pallin ?

KH: No you.

NS: One, Judith.

KH: One daughter ? 400

NS: May had one after 3 months. I was sitting in the War Memorial Hospital knitting, for May's baby, and mine was out there born. You see, 3 months, she was born in August. Her first child.

KH: May Pallin ? O, I see.

NS: And Judith was born on the 10th of June She's turned 50 the other day...so I was married 3 years before she was born. See I was married in '31, and she was born in 1934.

KH: Now, you went on your honeymoon...you went down to the mountains in the Bugatti, was it ?

NS: In the Bugatti. Ever seen a Bugatti ?

KH: Well, I think so. I've seen photos of them.

NS: I'll show you a picture of it before you start that. Because you'll know what I'm talking about, camping on Ferguson's property, Ferguson's.

NS: Here's the Bugatti, and that's the camp, and that's the Bugatti up on the Main Range.

KH: Good heavens, are there any darker prints ?

NS: No, it's all I've got.

KH: That's a pity about that one . Maybe if it's copied it will come up darker.

NS: O, it might too.

Well, that's where...we didn't have a proper tent...We did have a tent that Paddy made us, but I've got the tent that I made after he made one. I made it better. He always skipped it for a penneth of tar. Don't you tell him. He lives down near Judith. he lives down in Bent Street.

KH: Paddy Pallin ? Yes, I was down there a couple of months ago

NS: Were you ?

KH: When I was down before , I went to see Paddy because....

NS: He used to be a handsome man, but when I last saw him I thought how ugly he'd got. He was so handsome, but he's really grown ugly.

...May was 6 foot, and I was 5, and the two of us walking out from Katoomba, you know, together like, it was the tall and short of it.

KH: Yes.

NS: We used to walk at night with torches (we nearly screamed) but that's in the mountains out here.

KH: What was this thing you just said a while ago about you did first walk somewhere...was that with the Mountain Trails Club ?

NS: No, it was with Paddy and May. O, the only one that I went with the Mountain trails club was with Myles Dunphy , and they were all men.

NS: But I was the only woman...the first one to go down 'Perry's Lookout'. Instead of walking down from Blackheath and down the ...six miles out ...I went down the Perry's Lookdown, straight, like that.

KH: Was there any steps there then ?

NS: No. nothing at all.

KH: Just climbing on the rocks and sliding down.

ND: O yes, but not on the usual track out of the Blue Gum Forest which is 6 miles out. But Judith walked out there when she was 6 years old.

Only a little girl.

KH: The Mountain Trail Club was pretty exclusively all men, wasn't it ?

NS: Yes, they were all men, and they used to carry axes and every ...axes slung over their packs and everything.

Myles Dunphy, as mentioned, he walked with a pram out, at Kanangra Walls. Have you been out there ? I've been there too and camped out there.

Virginia is keen, she's going mad on mountain climbing now. This 21 year old grand-daughter of mine.

KH: Right.

NS: And she's just been out to Kanangra Walls. I slept in the Dancing Cave out there.

KH: Did you ? Did you walk out down into the valley from Kanangra Walls ?

NS: No I walked right ...from Jenolan Caves House, up Kingdom Point, which took us an hour and a half to climb up the top of it. To get onto the track first, to go out to Kanangra ...22 miles you had to walk out...so it was a good walk, and we took () a girl with us who got blisters on her heels, and Arthur had to leave her there, come home, get down to Jenolan Caves, and get his car, and go right round over Oberon Hill, and go out and pick her up. She couldn't walk another step. Blistered all over. That's one thing about us. We've had good legs., and the doctor said to me, "you've walked a lot ; that's stuck to you". It has too. I've walked my legs off, but now my muscles have all gone through having this hurt, this fall. This muscle down here aches. I haven't been able to walk out anywhere yet, but it'll come good.

KH: So you were born in 1905 ?

NS: In May

KH: Where did you go, what was your first school ?

NS: My first school was Willoughby Public School.

NS: I wrote the project of 'my life in Willoughby', 23 years, and it was accepted and put in 'The Good Old Days'...

KH: O, I see. What about the next school ?

NS: The next school I went to was Chatswood to get my Qualifying Certificate. You have to leave the Willoughby School, then, and go into highschool...you've got to go to Chatswood which is along here. That wasn't a highschool then, but it was just Chatswood School where they did the QC. Took you after you finished with Willoughby.

Then I went from Chatswood where I got my QC, and then went on to Greenwoods.

Domestic Science was turned into the Boys Technical College at North Sydney after that. That's where I spent two years, and then just before the Leaving Certificate, I went for... Stott & Underwood's secretarial course, and I won a 3/4 scholarship to go to business college.

But I defied my mother and said I wasn't going to be a secretary. I wanted to sew. But she didn't want me to sew, but I got my own way in the end because I cried.

I said, "I don't want to do a business course, I want to learn dressmaking - which I did until I was 21, and I started on my own until I was 26 when I got married.

KH: How do you mean, you started on your own ? You had your own shop ?

NS: I didn't have a shop...I worked at home.

KH: Making dresses and things for other people, people would come to you with orders ?

NS: Yes, and be fitted. And when I was going to be married...I knew I was going to be married on December, because the 16th of December was the part where the hospital closed down their Outpatients, and that was the opportunity for Arthur to take his holiday, so he had a month every year. So that's why we got married on the 16th of December. So he could have the Outpatients done, and forget everything about it, and he had that Bugatti.

KH: So that was your first journey to the mountains ?

NS: Yes...my first journey down to the Alps. We started there, and we ended up back at Jenolan Caves, where we used to go up there to see Bill Casey when he was managing it, and we used to go up there at weekends.

KH: Jenolan Caves, was it very popular ?

NS: O, I used to like that place. We'd be up there in time for breakfast, in that car.

KH: When was your daughter born ?

NS: Judith was born in 1934 on the 10th of June.

KH: About 3 years afterwards ?

NS: Three and a half...I was married in December in '31, and she was born 10th of June 1934. So that makes...do you want a pencil?

KH: No...it's going on tape.

NS: You're not on tape ! Are you really?

KH: Yes you are.

NS: Am I? My goodness.

KH: It's alright, it's quite harmless.

NS: I got married from the home my father built in Willoughby. When I went to Willoughby school, I was 5 years old.

KH: What was your father, what was his profession?

NS: My father was a builder, and he built the house I lived in, and when he died in 1912 in Sydney Hospital, under an... anaesthetic - he had two operations for hernia, and the second one he didn't come out of. So my mother was left at home. Luckily she had the home and it was up for sale, but she went and pulled the board down. When he died, she had three little kids to look after. So she had to struggle, but I was the eldest. I was 7 when he died in 1912. He's buried at Gore Hill cemetery...the old cemetery down there.

But anyway, we had a happy life, and I wrote all about that in the Willoughby project. 23 years I was there, from when I was three years old. My father built places in Ernest Street CrowsNest, where I was actually born. In Ernest street. And then we moved up to Willoughby, where he built the house that my mother was living in plus some other houses up in (?)Lauren Street, Willoughby. Federation type, nice brick houses. But this house was going to be sold, and she pulled the board down, and then we lived there until I got married in 1931. And I walked out of the house that he had built. My mother was there with one sister after me, and my brother, but my sister died in 1947.

KH: This trip to the mountains in 1931...you must have gone over some pretty rough roads. I mean there wouldn't have been much tarred road.

NS: In the Bugatti ?

KH: The roads must have been pretty poor at the time ?

NS: It was pretty poor alright, but it was a very low comfortable car. It was really not suitable for taking a baby in. So three years after when Judith was born, we got a Rover, and we went to the mountains always in the Rover. I had a Rover, and I used to drive down to the Alps in it, and I'd leave my Rover at Fred Fletcher's in the shed sometimes.... but you wanted to ask me something different...

KH: This journey, did you have any punctures, get bogged or anything? That first journey in 1931? Anything dramatic happen?

NS: No, we didn't have any trouble whatsoever. We ended up at Jenolan Caves House where they gave us a great welcome. We had been up there before and taken my mother up, and we'd been back and forwards, and when we ended up at Jenolan Caves House, they gave us a great welcome. We were just married.

KH: I see, but you camped out several times? On the way down to the Alps?

NS: We camped all the time until we got to the Jenolan Caves.

KH: Did you do any walking in the mountains at that time? In 1931?

NS: No we didn't do any walking.

KH: You just camped near this ---west of Cooma ---east of Cooma at (?) isn't it?

NS: Yes, Countaginie Station .

I learned how to trout fish by Doctor...what's his name? Brandon. He taught me to trout fish on that river down there because he was a great trout fisherman, and a friend of Arthur's, but he gave me my rod, the greenhide rod, and I used to catch plenty of trout...cos after that we used to go fishing...down the Snowy; we used to go trout fishing afterwards.

KH: After this? Did you go down every year after that for a while?

NS: I went down to the Cregl fishing several years, and then I still had my rod. We went over onto Geehi...that's the Snowy River isn't it?

KH: No, the Geehi runs into the Murray. To get to the Geehi, you must have gone right around by Tumut and Tumberumba.

NS: O sorry, I made a mistake, we did. We went down the steepest hill in NSW. Steepest and longest.

KH: The Alpine Way?

NS: The Yarrangobilly, and we saw a Rolls Royce burnt to the ground on that hill.

KH: Down into Lobb's Hole? 405

NS: No.

KH: Down Talbingo Mountain?

NS: Yes, Talbingo Mountain.

KH: Down into the Talbingo Valley... ^{Tounama} Creek...

NS: Right out there through... must have gone through Tumut, and we went out through Bulio and all those places, and the Wombeyan Caves.

KH: Now, wait a minute. Did you go round to the Geehi?

NS: Well I couldn't have gone to the Geehi Valley that year because... Geehi?

KH: Geehi Valley.

NS: Well I couldn't have gone to the Geehi Valley that year because there was no Alpine Way.

KH: No.

NS: The Alpine way was Friday Flat where the Thredbo is. I've got a picture of that., where we camped there.

KH: So you didn't go to Geehi before. Not 'til after The Alpine Way was built?

NS: That's right.

KH: Because in the early days you had to ride into Geehi.

NS: No, I didn't.

KH: You didn't?

NS: No, I didn't ride. We went by car, and we went over there, and I went up Scammell's Lookout and we were camped I've got a picture of Geehi Flats, and I went up Olson's Lookout, and I've been out to Tumberumba, Corr yong, where the train came in and just ended in a paddock.

KH: Really!

NS: Corryong, or Kiancoban... it just came along from Albury and into a paddock. Well I've been in through the mountains, in through that way, through Albury.

KH: After this, '31, just staying with that for a moment, what were your next trips down to the alps? They were mainly fishing trips, were they?

NS: After that? Yes, mainly fishing trips until we started our walking days.

KH: When did that start?

NS: Well... I've always walked in the mountains - the Blue Mts, but you're not interested in those.

KH: Not so much, no, just in general. You did some walking in the Blue Mts....

406

NS: All over the Blue Mts. and Arthur was the one with Paddy, and John Hopkins that found the trail. Made the way over the Yellow Dog. They hadn't been seen before, and Arthur and Paddy and Tom Hopkins made their way over the Yellow dog. I wasn't with them then.

KH: Did you mainly walk with a group of friends?

NS: I used to know them, but Arthur didn't want to join the Sydney Bushwalkers Club. He wanted to be freelance, just go walking, and we did have Paddy. We did a lot of walks with Paddy.

KH: Did you, right.

NS: A lot of walks with Paddy and May. And Paddy wrote a book called 'Bushwalks and Byways,' and Arthur gave him thanks for helping him do it. It was written in the little book, "my thanks go to Arthur for helping me do this book".

KH: Do you still see Paddy Pallin?

NS: Well, I haven't seen him for a long time. But Judith sees him. I went over to see May, and took the photos over one day, and I left some with them, some photos that I have, and she said, 'O, Paddy will be thrilled to see these.' I was going again, but Judith said that May hadn't been too good, and she was losing... she had cataracts coming on, and I wanted her to come over here, but I never got to see her again. I went over and took the photos, and Paddy wasn't there the day I was there. But Judith does often see him about, and his son lives down near Judith, so she can keep in touch with him.

KH: So, in the Bugatti days, you'd go off for the weekend in the car, and walk somewhere in the Blue Mts?

NS: Always in the Blue Mts and fishing; going up to Jenolan; I knew every bit of Jenolan, and I walked right up from Jenolan Caves, right (?) Harry Perry's River (?), and even Mr — the manager; It was when, what was the governor's name? You wouldn't remember. No, you're not old enough for that.

He was out there, and he said to Arthur and I, he said, 'I want to get away from that crowd', he said. 'Will you come walking with me? And Arthur and I jumped at it. We went, and we went right up Harry's River, and they cut us sandwiches from Jenolan Caves House, and he liked us because we liked walking, and I explored caves that nobody had been in.

NS: They were opened especially for us to go in. We carried lamps.

KH: Carbide lamps?

NS: What's the name of another lamp? Aladdin's lamps? Sodium, was it?

KH: There were carbide lamps.

NS: It might have been those.

KH: It has a funny smell, carbide.

NS: Yes, I think they did. Well, we went down with lamps, because there was only the two of us and Mr Wibur, and I had to step on his knee when he put his knee there, and he said, 'but you won't know what's below you. There's about 40 foot depth between that crevice, so when I think of what I've done and got out of those caves, and just the two of...three of us, until Mr Wibur, who was the director of the Caves House...he discovered the caves...I went through all the caves that are there. I've been through the River, the Lucas, and all that...all those caves.

KH: What about, did you do any long walks, like from Kanangra Walls across to Katoomba, or 3 or 4 day walks?

NS: O yes, we walked from Explorer's Tree: you know where the three men were lost? the three men that got lost?

KH: Yeah, I heard of it.

NS: I've been on that walk, and they went down to Breakfast Creek, and then they got out of their way, somewhere they got lost. And I knew every bit of that country where they had walked, down to Breakfast Creek, and I've got pictures of it. And how on earth...that was down the Megalong (?) Nellies Glen, Megalong and Mr Car----(?) that lives in the house at the end of Megalong Valley; I knew Mr Carlin then. He's still the Mr Carlin that was on television. He was one being interviewed by these last people, but we always came back round that way, back through Carlin's property and then back through Megalong; that's when we went on the mountain walks.

KH: So you got quite used to walking with a pack?

NS: O, Paddy made my pack.

KH: It was a Paddy pack?

NS: I've still got my ruck sack, a steel frame ruck sack and it's a little one made to fit me, and the bag that went on it; it laced onto it.

KH: Have you got some photos of that period, walking in the Blue Mts?

NS: Yes, I've got some of Paddy and us.

KH: I'll have a look at those later on.

KH: Cos I want some that sort of show the gear of the times, you know.

NS: The gear?

KH: The packs and that sort of thing.

NS: Well it's still the same pack that's in this ...these packs here. I still used the same pack when I went down to the Alps. See that sleeping bag there that's hanging on the ...on there? That's my original sleeping bag which I still have.

KH: Did you make that one?

NS: No, Paddy made it. It's mutton bird down and it's blown into the bags. It's blown in. I've still got mine, and I've still got Arthur's, and I've got the bag that they go into. I made bags to fit them into, brown kind of material, not canvas, as heavy as that, but they fitted in. You roll them up a certain way, and you get them just to go into this cylindrical bag, with a little base on it, and draw it together with a drawstring.

KH: They'll have to go in a museum, won't they? They're building the Australian Museum in Canberra...or they're going to.

NS: I had my fishing rod until I left home in Mosman too, but I don't know what they did with all my things. But I've got two cupboards down there with a tent that I've got in it that I've made, and I improved on Paddy's because he didn't make them lap enough, and I made one with a (?) wardent cloth. You know the landrover, the landrover that Arthur had, it's in this kit over here. The landrover with the hood...well when he died, I had to sell that to Geoff Smith of Newcastle. He came down and he said, 'I'd like to buy the landrover.' So I said, 'I'll take it to the NRMA and get them to give me a genuine price on it.' This was in 1963. 'A genuine price on it, and then Geoff, you may have it.' And I'd made saddle bags inside the landrover, and a galvanised rod to put on that to carry all our camping gear in, and he had a box made to put on the front of the landrover to carry the tools and camping things in. And all the groundsheets and ponchos, I still have all those that Paddy made; They're downstairs.

KH: You've got a veritable museum here by the sound of it!

NS: And I've got all those movie slides too in Kodachrome, with all those lovely things that were taken at Kossie. And now I haven't got a projector. They sold my projector; They got rid of that, and they got rid of everything. That's my...well, Alan and Judy were responsible for getting rid of all the things at Lorna Doone that I lived in. All those years in Mosman.

KH: Why did you call it Lorna Doone?

NS: Because Arthur's mother, they built the house at (?)Arbuta Street, Mosman, and when it was being built in 1903, 1903 it was built; She was reading the book Lorna Doone. And it's in lead-light windows still, over the top of the door, 'Lorna Doone', and I've got the little Lorna Doone bell sitting on my hall table there.

KH: There's a mine near Kiandra that's called the Lorna Doone, an old gold mine.

NS: Yes, I've heard of that.

KH: I've written it up in a book.

NS: Yes, I saw that. Lorna Doone, and it was a beautiful house, and I had a lovely...Arthur built the dark room just after we were married. Had it built and it was really lovely.

He could go out there, do his brome oils(?) every night when he wanted to, go out and, 'I think I'll do a brome oil tonight.' And so he was always at that. he was the first to do colour.

KH: Colour prints?

NS: Colour printing, yes, colour processing. There's a couple in the hall of his, carbo(?) process., and I've got a box of all his colour work too. A packet there I'll show you sometime.

H: And with regard to the mountains then, with regards to the Alps, you didn't really go down again, what, until...apart from some fishing trips, you didn't really start walking until christmas 1944 or 1945.?

S: And I'll tell you how we came to, if I'm not really getting ahead of myself. The reason we went into the Alpine hut was, we'd made arrangements with Bill Casey to get us into the Chalet; 'Arthur Ghafter and his party', and they would look after us there, and make that our base to walk, and then...we had to find out a month before we set off...only a month's notice, to say, Bill said 'I'm afraid it's all taken up with refugees.' 39 of them put into the Chalet!

H: Really! What nationalities were the refugees?

S: O, they were brought in from all over the place; they had to put them somewhere, so they put them in the Chalet. So that fixed us, going to the Chalet. So then after that, Arthur said, 'well we'll still go to Kosciusko. I know Tom Armstrong.' Have you heard about Tom Armstrong? He was one of the starters of the Alpine hut. Well, Tom Armstrong was in the syndicate that built.... he belonged to it, the syndicate of the Alpine hut, when it was built, and he was Dr Armstrong. He was an Eye man, he was a friend of Arthur's. And there was Dick Toppin, you've heard of Dick Toppin? What about Dr Mackindoo?

NS: Dr Mackindoo was the first cousin of Ian Griffiths. I knew the family and the Mackindoos. Well, he left his...he used to go to Switzerland skiing, and come back each year to the Alpine hut, and his things were still there when we used to go there.

KH: Oliver Moriarty, did you meet him?

NS: No, I didn't meet Moriarty; I met Ray Adams. He stayed at the hut one night, because the stockmen were always invited to stay when they came in to see us...when they were going through. They could always sleep in the big dining room, the big floor. They were made very welcome...but these cakes that I made, every year I made 10 Christmas cakes.

KH: Christmas cakes, heavy ones? Did you carry those in?

NS: No, they were sent in on the pack horses. I'll show you a print. Loading the pack horses in black and white. But we found Naphthali's hut.

KH: Naphthali's Snowy Plains house?

NS: Yes, that's there.

KH: That was still there!

NS: That was still there. I've got the photos of that, and I've got Arthur, and myself and Judith, the four of us standing on the verandah. Did you call it Naphthali's?

KH: I call it Naphthali's.

NS: So do I, Naphthali's hut. I've heard people saying Naphthali's hut, but it's not, it's Naphthali's hut. It was an old hut, and it was where Fred used to meet us. Fred Fletcher, he was our stockman. They're dying to meet me, and I haven't been down there. I was going down to Marjory's this year, but I couldn't get down because I was...it got too cold. The Fletchers, in a letter I've got there, the Fletchers want to see me, Fred and Elsie. I'm very fond of those people. They've been very good to me, but Fred especially. But we always had our stuff ordered in September, from Hain & Company. We ordered all our stuff, and started in September, and I made cakes, and then we went down in '45. '45 was our first, was our first year when we started off, but we had to take the train that year, because there was no petrol. We had to sleep on the floor. And then we ended up at, when we had to meet Cec Constance, who was taking us out to Snowy Plains; and he took us out in a great...I called it a blitz buggy, but it was a big, like a truck. It had an open back, and we sat on that, and went out as far as the plains in that, just with our personal gear. And next year....

KH: Was Fletcher's hut there then? On the Gungarlin Plain? Just after Nimmo Hill? It might have been called Weekly's or some other hut? It was a new iron hut.

NS: O, I've got photos of that. That's Mrs Casey's.

KH: No, no, Mrs Casey's holiday house is next door to this other one.

NS: I've got the photo of that one with Noel Weston. That was his hut, because he was the stockman for Mrs Casey. That's Noel's hut. We started there, but we camped outside Noel's. I've slept in that hut, because we had to step over all men in the kitchen, and they gave me a bed, and Arthur a bed. It was a great big bed, a spring bed. I had to get up in the night, and I had to step over all the stockmen to go out the back door. So I said to Arthur, 'I'm not going to go past those men again. I'm going to put up the window.' So I climbed out the window.

KH: Because you wanted to go to the toilet? That must have been a bit formidable.

NS: I'd rather have camped, you see, because we camped outside before and after we had the landrover.... I'm getting too far ahead. I'd bent over to get something out of the back, and I ricked a rib, tore a muscle between a rib, and I had to lie in my camping bed that night, out on the ground in my sleeping bag, and it did hurt. Anyway, that's beside the point.

KH: That would be as far as you could drive, wouldn't it? Casey's house? You could drive that far, I imagine, did you?

NS: In the cars? Yes, we could drive as far as... Mrs Casey? No, we couldn't get down that far. We only got that far in the land-rover. We had to walk from Snowy Plains, right into the Alpine hut. It was 15 miles with our own personal things in our packs.

KH: Past Naphthali's house, and past that other little one?

NS: Past Harvey's, see, down Teddy's creek, down there. Right over the Brassy Gap, and up that beautiful rise with all the lovely snowgums in it; and right up to the Brassy Gap, and then up the diggings which was... we only had to map our way in. We had no indication other than photographs, that Arthur photographed off a map, and enlarged and carried with him, and took our party in. And Kidman's hut was there; we looked in Kidman's; it was full of bags of flour and cheeses, and I've never seen such a waste of food in all my life. They were great big cheeses, and I've never seen such a waste of food in my life. They were great big cheeses like this. You couldn't carry them in your pack.

KH: Were they meant for the Alpine hut?

NS: Yes, don't let them know I've ever told you this, but there was that much waste. When we got into the Alpine hut, we paid their debt at Hain & Co, but don't repeat that. Because we were part owners of the Alpine hut.

KH: O, there was a syndicate of people, was there?

NS: Yes, and there were owners. See, Dick Toppin died, and then we got his shares.

KH: O, right, and how many shareholders were there?

NS: Well, there was Tom, what's his name, Armstrong, who was the Eye man. He put it to the board, when we couldn't get into that Chalet, if we could use the Alpine hut in the summertime. So, through him, we were able to go in, and then that was the first time we had walked in. Instead of going to the Chalet, we went into the Alpine hut, and we had to get up 'the diggings'. You know 'the diggings?' And then turn round to the left, and see the Brassy all along there; and then keep on turning to the left, and we were waiting for each little river crossing that Arthur named on the map. He said to me I hope we get there before dark, because he said, we'll be sunk if we don't. We had a party with us then... have you ever heard of Joyce Calditz?

Well, she was a wonderful geologist, interested in the country; we only liked people who were interested in the country, and could walk, to choose for our parties, because you'd be let down. I mean, if you were stuck in there, and you had someone incapable of walking, well, it was no good to you, because we wanted to walk. That's what we were going to do from the chalet.

KH: And all those supplies that were left at Kidman's hut, they hadn't been taken on for some reason?

NS: They were never brought in.

KH: I suppose the rats and mice would get into it.

NS: O, there was flour, look I couldn't tell you all the things that were there, Klaus. It was just a waste, and they got it all from Hain & Company, and it was for last winter. And when we did approach the Alpine hut, and we said there it is, it was just surrounded by tins... they all shone in the sun, in the light, you know, they were all buried under the snow, They couldn't see what they were doing. And when the snow melted, there were all these piles and piles of tins.

Well anyway, our party soon fixed that up after a couple of years. We dug holes, they dug and dug, and they moved the baby Alpine hut which was stuck right in the front of it, to the side over there, and I've got a picture in there of when they moved that. But then we found out, that they had owed Hain a lot of money, so then Arthur said, well I'm going to put a charge on this hut for every member that I take in; They're going to pay back what they owe Hain & Co. So we paid their debt of all the food that went in.

KH: Which Hain was active then?

NS: The same one that's there now.

KH: Herb Hain, isn't it?

NS: He's got a beautiful home. They've just done the Hain's store up. I was down there a couple of years ago, and Mr Hain said, go out and have a look at my garden, and I went out with Marjory; because I drove down that year, all by myself. I drove down and drove back because I had no-one to go with. I drove in the Triumph I've got downstairs...I had a lovely trip, very successful, but I stayed... broke my journey at Mittagong, and then I was in with all the trucks going on the next morning; I'll never forget that. Never do that again, but Hain & Co have been there....their store, all those years. And also we have stayed, at the second place, we have stayed at the Alpine Hotel in Cooma, waiting for Cec Constance to come out to take us out to the plains, because we had no means of getting out other thanCec always took us out.

KH: Every year?

NS: Yes, until we got the landrover in 1953.

KH: So there were about 8 years, nearly, where you were always transported in there?

NS: We were always transported in there, whether or no. Hain & Co did that, but then the pack horses took it always in. We didn't have to cart it.

KH: So you didn't have to carry food?

NS: It was sent into Nap. thali 's hut, just for our party.

KH: You would have been one of the few to use it in the summer?

NS: The only ones. We were the first and only ones that I know of, until some boys, the Youth something or other took it over. They tried to get access in there, but they found it wasn't very convenient to drop food in. But they didn't take it over. But you see, when Arthur died, I didn't know anything about what shares he had in the Alpine hut, and I couldn't say to my solicitor, 'I own this,' or 'I own that'. I had, my head was buzzing like anything when Arthur died, and I had to handle all that myself, but I didn't remember anything about the Alpine hut shares until I was reminded, 'what did you do with those Alpine hut shares?' and then I had to tell them, 'well, I don't know anything about them. But what you better do is divide them up between the other share-holders that are left. I just relinquished them; that's all I had to do; couldn't do anything else. But Cec always took us in.

KH: Which was the year that you came across the corroboree frogs?

NS: The corroboree frog was...four years before they were asking for it, I found one

NS: I was on the track walking out to Pretty plains, the time we were going out to Pretty Plains.

KH: From Alpine hut across Pretty Plains?

NS: Yes, and I picked up this dear little thing; it was only...you know the size of it...a postage stamp. I picked up this little thing; I said, 'O look, Arthur; I thought it was a little toy. It was not a toy, it was a real live thing. And that was about four years before they asked to find it. That must have been about 1954. We had found it before that.

KH: You were one of the first people to find it?

NS: Yes, I was the first one to find it. It said a medico from Sydney in the piece -- did you get that piece?

KH: I've been sent something, yes, I've got something there.

NS: Yes, 'a medico from Sydney found the frog four years before it was asked for, because we met Doctor Emmonds (?) of Sydney University. He was professor of Veterinary Physiology at Sydney University, and he said to us, because we were interested in tropical fish too; He said, 'when you're out in the Alps these times, will you have a look for a frog that they know that's been found, but they won't name it on one specimen; and it had been found I think on Towong (?). by some fencers, and they had this, but he asked, would we look for it. I said, 'O, what's it look like? He said, 'well, it's yellow and black. I said, well I've already found one of those, just like that.

He said, 'you have? Do you think you could find some more? I said, 'Yes, I'll know where to find them.'

And I've got the picture taken where I found them, and they're right in front of the Alpine hut, and I dug for them. I worked and worked and worked, until I found this frog, and listened, and I thought, there's no frogs about here. Then one day, I was in the *sphagnum* moss, and I was skirting around like this, and I thought, well, they're here somewhere, because they lived above 5000 feet. We found that out, because the first one was found above 5000 feet, and the Alpine hut was above 5000 feet.

So, I thought, they must be in this lovely spagham moss somewhere so I used to channel and channel in 'til at last I found the frogs. So I said, 'Arthur, we'll be able to take a lot back for Doctor Emmonds, won't we?' Just like that. He said, bring back as many as you can! We found 60, and we put them in a box. We covered it with a bag, and we put *sphagnum* moss a/l around it. The next morning there were 42 (gone). A snake had eaten 42. We

didn't know anything could get into the box.

NS: We had bag down over the box. It was tucked in at the bottom, and he had, and he had, like, all damp and water around it, but we had no idea there'd be a snake there to eat them. Anyway, that's what happened. So I said, We'll go out and look for some more, so we did find more to bring back. Would you remember the Arnotts biscuits tins? Well, we brought the frogs back in an Arnotts biscuit tin.

KH: Big square tins, that high?

NS: Yes, we had them out the Alpine hut too. We put the frogs in the Arnotts biscuit tin with *Sphagnum* moss, and then covered it all with a wet sack. And coming back, every river and crossing, every drop of water we came to, Arthur dunked this into water to keep it cold and moist, to bring back to Doctor Emmonds.

Dr Emmonds, when we got back, was there waiting for us to arrive with the frogs, so he took them, and then there were a dozen sent by Qantas to America, and a dozen sent to England. And Qantas squashed the ones that went to America, and I never heard what happened to the English ones. But anyway, that's what happened to the frogs. But then, Uncle Tom, the naturalist, was asking about...he wanted to talk to the children. He used to talk to the children on the air, and he was 'Uncle Tom', Tom Allen Colefax. Well, then this was all written up about frogs in the Lumian (?) Society, and it's still with them, all the facts about the frogs, and then I had brought home for myself...I had a tank, a fish tank called a terrarium, and I filled it with all sorts of nice stuff that was like the *Sphagnum* moss, and I kept them for two years. And I can't find my pictures of the frogs eating their ants, and I've got pictures somewhere.

KH: Did they breed at all?

NS: No, but they did on the way back. We had a batch of little ones on the way back. The eggs hatched out; brought back eggs too.

KH: They'd be tadpoles initially, wouldn't they?

NS: Well they would, but I never saw them as tadpoles. I never saw them in ponds or anything, as tadpoles. But we found at the end, where I found the track leading in, it was like a little burrow and it went in; and always at the end of that burrow, there was a little tiny sort of pool of water. That's where they came out, in this tiny little pool. You could put your hand in like that, and I said, 'Arthur, come and see,' and we looked and he said, 'That's marvellous you know, to think we found the frog', and he was so proud. I said, 'well it's your party.' I found it, but he found it. So that was about the frog. That would be before 1954.

KH: And how long did you stay at the Alpine hut at a time?

NS: A month every year

KH: A month every year!

NS: We had to take in by order ...

(Tape side ends here.)

side 2 Tape 1

KH: You were in there for a month every year.

NS: Yes, and by the time the bread ran out...it used to come out, two dozen in a big sack, and we'd use that until it was finished; and then after that, I made dampers in the stove. We had a big stove in the Alpine hut, a double oven, and it used to blow smoke out of the side, and I plastered it up- with mud and everything, to stop it from smoking, but I still cooked for the party every year.

KH: Sort of a party of sometimes only 4? Sometimes up to 8?

NS: No, there was only one party of only 4, and that was the Easter we went in to see if there were any frogs there; and there was Judith and another girl and myself and Arthur. That was the small party, but there were always...sometimes it was repeated, but they were all different. I mean, each year, there was never less than 8.

KH: But you found this corroborree frog on the way to Pretty Plains, on the track? Did you stay at Pretty Plains?

NS: Yes, overnight.

KH: You walked there in a day?

NS: I walked there in a day, and I walked straight through; 'O what a beautiful hut,' I said. Isn't it beautiful? Pretty Plains hut! Arthur said, 'We're there' And I said, well, I went straight through the door with my pack, and I put it on a bed, and I said, 'well, that's where I'm sleeping,' and my knees just about caved in; But we slept there, and then I've got a photo of Judith sitting at the fireplace in Pretty Plains hut, and all of a sudden she said....in a deckchair, all of a sudden she said, very casual, she said, 'there's a black snake just went past the door.' So Ray Cox, you'll see there mentioned — the Scout Commissioner — and he said, 'black snake?' And Judith said, 'yes'. So Ray didn't settle 'til he found that snake, and we waited and waited and waited. He went and raked up a piece of chair from somewhere, and he said I'll get it, because, he said, you can't leave a black snake round the hut like that. He got it, and he killed it. That was the end of the black snake out at Pretty Plains hut.

KH: Did you have many run-ins with snakes?

NS: We only found one tiger snake up on the Main Range in all our walking.

NS: We only came across one and Arthur said, 'let's get away from it, because we're down below it, and it'll come down at us, so get away from it; and he wouldn't try to kill it or touch it. He'd say, come away from it. Leave it there. It was a tiger.'

KH: You didn't see any copperheads?

NS: No, but I saved a sheep that was down a hole. They had leases out there then, in the early days they had snow leases. There was one right in front of the Alpine hut.

KH: Yes, who had that?

NS: The Fletchers I think. And Fred had...and Mould...they had one to

KH: Reg Mould?

NS: Reg Mould, yes, because there used to be a lot of flies out there in those days, they were just like dive-bombers. They wouldn't go on anything because we took in collapsible safes that used to fold up. They were made of mosquito net, with a base like that. We left them all in there. But anything like that went into these safes, but I'll tell you, when we got into the huts, you couldn't move for the food that was hanging up in the corridor. There were sides of bacon, and it was just as bad as the other hut we'd passed on the way. And the waste was something dreadful.

KH: It would hang there all summer?

NS: Until next winter. They overstretched the Alpine hut. That's why they got into debt. Anyway, the debt was paid back to Hain & Co. Then everybody that came in, we did. Arthur did; we put money into that to pay that debt back before we'd do anything.

KH: Were there any other stockmen you knew of in your time?

NS: Yes, I met Ray Adams, and someone from Moomby...what was his name? He had a white horse.

KH: Any of the Russells come in there?

NS: No, no I didn't know that name.

KH: Leo Russell? Any McGuffickes?

NS: Yes, Barry McGufficke. There was a hut there, wasn't there?

KH: I don't know.

NS: He was a stockman. See, Reg Mould had his sheep, and their son was Boyd Mould. Boyd used to come in, and Reg Mould came in on his horse when Judy graduated...to get her BSC. He came in on horse, and brought the results from the university, and he said to Judith, 'You don't expect to pass, do you?' She looked at her father and said, 'O, I did hope so'. And he said, 'well you did. You topped the university.' Jeanette Adrienne, the other little girl that did geology...she's never married, she's still with the coal board, and she was Judy's friend; and they used to go geology picking together, you know, and poor Jeanette had to be told she failed in chemistry.

NS: That was the sad part of it. Anyway, Judith topped the university that year with her BSC.

KH: And while you were in there, did you ever have any snow?

NS: Yes, I've written it down on that page today. One year a boy went in. I think he was ordered by Ken Breakspear...you know (him)? He was one of the skiers. He was ordered to go into the Alpine hut. He was one of the syndicate too, Ken Breakspear, and Moriarty, and Fred Fletcher. Fred took all the stuff in, sledged it in. He was responsible, a wonderful worker, a very kind man. Very fond of Fred, and then the McPhies were just around there from them. The McPhies had beautiful saddle bags, saddle horses you know, beautiful.

KH: Which McPhies?

NS: Well, you know Fletcher's house at Berridale, called Belleview? Well, Mcphie was just round from off that road, just round that corner. That was McPhies property.

KH: What about Morris Fletcher, was he in there?

NS: No, I didn't meet Morris Fletcher.

We used to have oranges sent from Griffith, bags of oranges, cases of oranges from Mr Savage, because he was a patient of Arthur's in Sydney. But he used to send us all these oranges out, cases of them; and we'd get a kerosene tin full of eggs from Gundagai. That was all sent out, a whole kero tin full, packed with bran and the eggs. And one day once, when the horses were going in a load, one horse went down in the bog, and it had all tins, and there wasn't one egg broken. But the tins had lost the labels...

I said, 'Fred, don't overload your horses,' because I can't stand cruelty to animals. I'm an animal lover too. And we had our dogs; you'll notice our two cockers went everywhere with us. The first year we left them behind, because they were nine months old. They were too young to take out, so the breeders of them came and stayed at our place at Mosman, and brought their own cocker, and kept ours there, and minded our house with our two cockers.

KH: You wouldn't be allowed to take them in there now! You can't take dogs into the National Park.

NS: Well, our cockers had all those lovely years in the Alpine hut with us, and then they were 14 years old when I parted with them. And then I got the two golden ones, and they were in there a couple of years with us, that's all.

KH: When you did the walk across the Pretty Plains, did you call in at the Grey Mare hut?

NS: No.

KH: Or Mawson's hut?

NS: Yes we called into Mawson's hut, and I tell you, Jack Thorpe wouldn't go in Mawson's door. He said it was full of bugs. Jack Thorpe. He would not!

KH: Were there any stockmen at Mawson's hut?

NS: No, I didn't meet any stockmen at Mawson's at all. We were on our own there, and we photographed from Mawson's, out looking out to Jagungal, and I still don't know why we didn't go to Jagungal.

KH: You didn't go to Jagungal in all that time?

NS: I'm so sorry, I can't say I've been to Jagungal. I don't know why we didn't go, because I'm looking at the map, you look straight....

KH: Yes, you had plenty of time, and plenty of opportunities, I would have thought.

NS: Well, look, that beautiful mountain sitting up there, two peaks, and it always had a bit of snow on it. All summer, it had a bit of snow. Did you know that?

KH: I could imagine that.

NS: It never lost that snow.

KH: But you didn't call in at the Gray Mare?

NS: No.

KH: Did you only walk across to Pretty Plains the once?

NS: Yes.

KH: Was there anyone at Pretty Plains?

NS: No, not a soul, but Arthur's been to Pretty Plains more than once. He walked out from Tumberumba with Jack. He went in and made detailed notes of what he did on a piece of paper...notes on how he got in. Penders, that was, Penders.

KH: That's right, Penders.

NS: Penders was a postman, wasn't he?

KH: Bolton I think was a postman.

NS: Bolton brought Arthur and Jack in as far as Pretty Plains.

KH: When, from Tumberumba?

NS: Into Pretty Plains; and then they walked into the Alpine hut, and then Cec picked them up on the way back, on the road back.

KH: So they walked right through the mountains.

NS: He walked right through, walked right over. They couldn't find the Alpine hut. It got foggy on them; it got dark on them before they got to the Alpine hut. So they camped. Jack said, 'I'm not going to camp in the bush, there might be animals.' He hated snakes, and everything everybody would. He said, 'I'm not going to camp down in the bush.'

NS: Judy reminded me the other day: 'remember what Jack said about camping? he wasn't going to camp in the bush.' They camped on a flat rock, up above, on Big Brassy, and through the next day. Ofcourse, the Alpine hut was just down below. But to get to the Alpine hut, you had to walk right along past the end of the Big Brassy, to come down and round. There was no way; there were bush walkers walking along the top, and we had to cooee (to them) to go round, go right down and round. They never could have got through.

KH: No, too scrubby.

NS: You couldn't. It was impossible. They had to make their way down, and several of them called in...bushwalkers. I've got pictures of them.

KH: You did have bushwalkers calling in?

NS: Bushwalkers called in.

KH: But not other stockmen?

NS: Well, not that many stockmen. But whoever came in, there was Ray Adams; I remember distinctly, Ray Adams.

KH: What was he like?

NS: Red faced man, brilliantly, real red, good colour you know, must have been nature. So did Cec Constance. His face was always peeling, never stopped peeling, all the year. He was known for that, and when I saw him last, it was still the same.

KH: Did they stay at night, some of them?

NS: O yes, we always asked them to stay the night.

KH: Do you remember any of the stories that they told?

NS: I think Arthur would have known all the stories. I don't think I heard many stories of the stockmen. They were all very nice men, you know, but I used to always give them food to eat, and pieces of Christmas cake which they appreciated. But I can't remember any stories that they told, at all.

KH: Did you ever have any snow when you were there?

NS: Yes, I was going to tell you; I wrote it down today. We had snow all day Christmas day. A boy called Jeff Baker...going into the hut in advance of us one year; early in the piece; It wasn't the first or second year, but he was sent in there to do repairs to the corridor. It was all in a terrible state. You'd fall down, you know it was only a little bit aboy that big to walk on, but he boarded it in across. He was told by Ken Break-spear to go and fix the corridor. And it had a shower like a tin, a big kero tin; you filled it and then you pulled a chain, you see. Well, that was over a gap, in a hole in the floor, right down there. Well he had

NS: to do all that, and then this boy Baker, his name was Jeff Baker, I think I've written it on that pad there behind you, Jeff Baker; he went out and there was snow....

I rang Judy and said, 'do you remember the year it snowed?' She said, 'Yes, but I can't tell you the date'. Well, it was the year Jeff Baker went in there. I got Jeff Baker's photo there. Standing in Dead Horse Creek with a stick in his hand. It's not a gun, it's a stick, and he was the boy that had to do the repair job that was in there. So he was there with us.

Well, on Christmas morning, it started to snow, and it snowed all day, and it was the first time we'd seen snow, and it was falling like this; and he had a red sweater, so out he goes into the snow, and Arthur with his movie ofcourse. It's on the movie. I've got no record of that. And then on New Years Day, it did the same thing. And that very year, it snowed over at Mawsons, and there were 13 of them snowed in. A walking party.

That's true, there were 13 of them after we left, it must have been about the 13th of January.

KH: Right. It was about '48 I think.

NS: '48? Well, it might have been.

KH: —(?) told me that story. He was a bushwalker who came across from Gray Mare to Mawson's hut.

NS: Well, he was one that was snowed in?

KH: Yes, he told me the story. I think there were 13 men, there were; I don't know. 11 dogs under the floor boards, 16 horses and ..

NS: Well, Arthur said, it was just as well we got out that year. We got out with just those falls on Christmas Day and New Years Day, and then after that, it was the same year, the same time, it snowed and they were all snowed in Mawson's. So we were lucky that year, well that's true.

KH: Did they lose any sheep in that snow? It melted again I suppose.

NS: No, I don't remember them losing any. I did rescue one sheep, and it was down a big hole like that, and my dogs went over and they told me everything; if there was a snake about, or if there was even a little fox, and they found a little fox for me too. And I said...O, I went over to see what they were looking for in the tussock, and I said, 'O, the dear little thing.' And I took it, picked it up, put it in my hand, and it bit me. Dulcie was there, Dulcie'd tell you that. She said, 'do you remember the fox?' she said, 'it nearly took the top of your finger off.' I said, 'O, it's got me in its little sharp teeth!' It bled like anything, and then it went right down the front of me. A fox, dear little baby fox, so I said, 'put it back in its nest so the mother will come for it;

422
NS: because you see they've got to come back and get that little fox. So I put it back, and brought the dogs away from the tussock. It was in a big tussock. It was in, like a tussock; I've seen several foxes out there.

KH: Yeah, I've seen foxes, but I thought they had more of a lair between rocks and things.

NS: Well, this didn't, this was in a tussock.

KH: Out in the open?

NS: Well, it was up near the big rocks, those big boulders. It was in a tussock though, where I found it.

KH: Just the one? Could it walk?

NS: Yes. Yes, it could walk. Just about walk -- it was only a baby though. I don't know how old it would be. Like a little baby puppy, about that big.

KH: Was it gone the next day?

NS: I didn't look anymore, because I didn't want the dogs to go near it, and I didn't want to worry it. But I found, nearby, a hole, and the dogs were sniffing around this big hole, and I went over. What do you think it was? a sheep down the hole! So I thought well, I'll have to save that sheep. I don't know how I got down, it was at least that deep.

KH: Three feet deep?

NS: But I got down into it, then I thought, I'll have to get it up, so I had to get it by the back legs, and I had nobody round me, only my dogs barking, and the rest of the party way over there. And I was singing out 'help, help', you know, and nobody came, but I legged it up and up and up and up, and then the party came over, and I had it up onto the top. So I rescued that.

KH: Did you see many wombats at that time?

NS: Plenty of burrows, but didn't see any wombat. I've got pictures of me in a movie going past wombat burrows. Always anxious to see one, but we didn't see one. No kangaroos, plenty of rabbits, but the dogs chased them everywhere, but they never caught a thing. They'd go all over the mountains to try and catch a rabbit, but they never caught one. The rabbit went into the burrow before they got near it. They were always anxious to catch it, and they chased the birds. 'course, they're hunting dogs, the cockers. They're English dogs. They won't harm anything. When they catch a bird or anything they go hunting for, the jowls go in, and they protect that bird. They never injure

KH: And what about at the other huts, like Harvey's hut. Was there anyone in residence there?

NS: Well I've got a picture of Harvey's hut with Mr Harvey in the front of it. He was killed.

KH: What was his Christian name?

NS: Not Les....

423

KH: Did he build that hut?

NS: Yes, that was their own hut, but it was burnt down, but that one was killed in a plane, that boy, later on.

KH: What about at Napthali's? Anyone living there?

NS: No, it was just a derelict hut. It was very neglected and that. I've got a picture there.

KH: Wasn't material taken away for that later on?

NS: Later on it was, yes.

KH: Taken somewhere else?

NS: Yes, I don't know where it was put, supposed to have been taken over onto Rocky Plains somewhere, but I don't know where. Snowy Plains, wasn't it? No, Rocky Plains...Snowy Plains...

Well, Mould's hut was out on the plains. Yes, Mould's hut was up higher.

KH: Did you go there?

NS: No.

KH: Did you go to Tin Hut at all?

NS: O yes, we went to Tin Hut a lot....because we used to pass the Tin Hut so often to go over -- right up the mountain on the way, over the range, to Valentine Falls..

KH: No, you'd go past Mawson's to go to Valentine.

You'd go to Gungahlin, or Whites River.

NS: O that's right; we were on our way to White's River. Well, we went to White's River...I've been to White's River. That was very well catered for; people who wanted flour and all that. The flour was there, and all that sort of thing.

But this time, the first time I went to Tin Hut, I said 'we passed it', and I said to Arthur, 'that was four miles from the Alpine hut on the back way, up over Dead Horse Creek, and up round...I could go there tomorrow, and find the Tin Hut.

Well anyway, the first time, I said to Arthur, 'there's somebody in that hut,' and he said, 'well don't look in, don't be inquisitive and he wouldn't push himself in. Next time we went over, the same man was sitting by the fire again, so I said, 'I'm going to speak to that gentleman, whoever he is.' It was Tom Blyton, because I asked him. I put my head in the door, and I said, 'How do you do?' And he said, 'How do you do?' And I said 'well, we're staying over at the Alpine hut, and he said, 'come in, I'll make you a cup of tea.' I said, well on this day we were on our way over to White's River. So he said, 'I'll tell you what I'll do,' 'cause it was a great walk right round from the Tin Hut. You could see the track going way over. Couldn't tell you how far, but the track to Tin Hut went right across and round and down like that.

424

NS: Ofcourse he could see us coming back, and he said, 'but I'll tell you.' He said, 'I'll watch for you coming back, and' he said, 'I'll have the billy boiling when you're coming back.' And that was my downfall. I got sunstroke. I got heatstroke. You don't get sunstroke in Australia. You only get heatstroke. And he said 'Come in, I've got the kettle...' as soon as I put my head inside. My joints all stiffened up -- that's a symptom of heatstroke. And I'd walked, and I'd been used to walking, but I had shorts on that day. But other days I had pants. When you got once sunburnt, you had to cover that, because if you got burnt on top of that, it was agony. So I had shorts. I don't think I brought my long pants, don't think I had them with me, because I had Arthur's windjacket on top...my own windjacket. I've still got my wind jacket in there, it's in here, upstairs, and I've got Judy's here too, that I made to go to Kosciuszko, and she's still got the university badge pinned on hers. Now that's a long time ago. And I made the tent out of Japarra...no it was called ____ (?) It was stuff we got from Anthony Horderns. You remember Anthony Horderns. Provided us with that material to make wind jackets, and also to make a tent.

KH: Was it a Japarra?

NS: Japarra. But the 'windcole' (?) was what they used on Mount Everest to make the wind jackets, and I made Arthur's coats, raincoats of that, and our windjackets.

Alan's got Arthur's windjacket, khaki colour, not khaki, a nice beige colour. Ours are dark red. It's in there, won't let the air through. It's water-proof, and it's wind-proof, and it's everything proof, and you can't wet it, and it's lined. I've got mine in there, I'll show you, and I've got Judy's too. I wouldn't part with it, and I hope she doesn't. It's lovely to keep those things. I don't like parting with things.

KH: So you went in there, and you had a cup of tea.

NS: O, I didn't get a chance to have a cup of tea. Soon as ever I went into the hut...it was the heat in the hut...on top of me. I got heatstroke, so Arthur said, 'outside you go,' and my knees stiffened, and I couldn't walk. So then, it took two and a half hours to get me back to the Alpine hut. I was delirious for two days, and he had to pack me with...give me aspirin every so often, and pack me with every sleeping thing I could get on. And I was in a rigor, and I couldn't speak. My teeth clattered together. It's terrible to be heatstruck! Yes, I've had it twice. It's the ultra violet.

KH: The cold would affect me, not the heat so much.

NS: You don't go into a rigor though, and your teeth would clatter.
Your temperature rises to such an extent that you go into a rigor, and you shake. It's a dreadful feeling. Anyway, he gave me aspirin, and covered me, and I was in bed for two days, and I survived. Anyway, to come back from the Alpine hut, I had his windjacket on, my own, and they covered me with teatowels and everything he could find to cover my legs, and pin them --- had plenty of safety pins with us. I was all covered, all down my legs so the sun wouldn't shine on me. I'll never forget that. That was Tom Blyton, on the Tin Hut.

KH: Where was Tom Blyton from?

NS: He was from, down on the road out to the Eucumbene. On the range, his house was on the right, before you get down to the Eucumbene River. You know the little bit they've left through now? You've been out the Eucumbene?

KH: The Nimmo Hill.

NS: Yes, well you go down the hill to go down to the foot of Nimmo. And you go over Nimmo, down to Gungahlin. Well that's Eucumbene at the foot there's the old bridge...they've repaired it now. There was an Army thing, something at the end of that bridge, all set out for the Army on the other side of the bridge

KH: Tom Blyton had a farm in there?

NS: No, he lived in his house on the right of the road as you went down, before you got down to the Eucumbene.

KH: What was he like?

NS: He was a nice old chap; he was the one in the hut. He used to be in there three to four months at a time. Tin Hut. He lived in there.

KH: He took sheep in there, did he? He wasn't married?

NS: I don't think so, Tom Blyton.

KH: It was unusual for stockmen to be in there for a very long time.

NS: Well he used to be in there all that time. He used to stay in there. That was Lichfield built that; Lichfield's hut. The picture's there, newspaper picture's in there. And also down at the Whites River hut too, there were nice pictures.

KH: Were there any stockmen when you went in there?

NS: No, not a soul. See summertime, you'd never see a soul.

KH: I would have thought you saw stockmen, you see, because they were still bringing sheep into that country.

NS: No. There was a transmitter at the Alpine hut. It used to

transmit into Kozzi.

KH: The Chalet?

NS: Yes.

420
KH: Did you ever walk all the way across to the Chalet? From Alpine

NS: No, we walked a bit further on. No, never walked down to the Chalet.

KH: But you walked onto the Rolling grounds I suppose? Above Whites River?

NS: No, never went past Whites River. Kept to the mountains. In the mountains all the time. We never went out onto any roads.

KH: Now, the Rolling Grounds.

NS: O, the Rolling Grounds. O, we went over the Rolling Grounds. What did I think you said!

KH: You said the roads or something.

NS: O, the Rolling Grounds, yes, they're well known around in the district.

KH: You went up there?

NS: Yes, onto the Rolling Grounds.

KH: Did you go across to Mount Tate?

NS: No, didn't go to Mount Tate.

KH: And you went to the Valentine Falls?

NS: Well, as a matter of fact...is that the host? Well I never went to the falls, but Arthur brought a telephoto lens, and he got a photo of it. Because where you walk, you couldn't get down to the Valentine Falls. And he photographed it right across with his telephoto lens. That's what he got it for, he said, 'I'm going to photograph "the ghost", wasn't it called?

KH: Yes, that's the Ghost. It's right near there.

NS: Well, my memory's not too bad; the more you talk to me, the more I remember. I couldn't write this all down...well then came the lost boy. The lost boy was found in the Gray Mare hut.

KH: O, really, I didn't know about the lost boy. Where did he come from?

NS: He came from...he left his party from Whites River. And he got lost. And he went round. Believe it or not, that year we got our landrover in on top of the Brassy Gap, and we had a great big tarpaulin made specially to cover the landrover, and it was strapped down and tied down with ropes so nothing could possibly get into that landrover, because we were going to further our holiday. We were going over the Barry Way that year. We were going over, see. So in it we had a case of dog food tins, and Arthur liked very much, he liked licorice allsorts, and I bought a great big tin of licorice allsorts, because he was always chewing them. That's the only sweet he liked. Licorice allsorts,

and they were in a big tin like a biscuit tin.

It would go in just in front of the landrover with me;

NS: And I had a bag in my pantry there that I had made for the landrover. I keep dusters in it, and it's made of beautiful, green, heavier than japarra...something like that, and it was hooked onto the side of the landrover, and I had this big tin of sweets in there. Well, when we heard about the lost boy, 'course that caused havoc, 'cause it came over my little radio, was made to take in there. Arthur made that; I took that in. I made a cover for it; he made this; this was the second one he made. But this was taken into the Alpine hut, and that's still the dial that was put on it in there. He put that on there to get the channels, and it's a beautiful transmitter; if you could see inside of it; he made it all with a magnifying glass.

KH: Is that someone knocking at your door?

NS: It might be. I don't think so. I hope not.

(Visitor conversation, and conversation relating to visitor.)

KH: You were talking about the lost boy.

NS: O yes. Well this day we heard that there was a lost boy...he made that for me, and I carried it out there, and we could hear on that, but you couldn't use the transmitter. You couldn't hear anything on that. He made me one before that and he had valves, but ofcourse the valves got broken in the carrying out, and Jack Thorpe had to come back to Sydney and get a new set of valves for it. It was worth his while, 'cause it was his birthday. He had to come home for his birthday, but he went back. He came back, got the new set of valves, but they're not satisfactory; only the transmitters work properly. Anyway, the boy: Then Arthur said, 'I wonder where he's gone.' The police were going out looking for him out from...they hadn't left Cooma then, but they were wondering. He got off the...left his party, and he got lost somewhere out on the Gray Mare. And came back to the landrover. He must have seen the landrover, because he got into the landrover, and he ate the whole box of sweets, and set a whole box of matches alight, and dropped all the matches on the floor. One box of matches, he could have set fire to the whole thing, and it could have gone up like that. Arthur said, 'I don't know how he could have got into it.'

KH: How old was he?

NS: How old would he have been? O, he must have been in his late twenties. He was with a walking crowd. But he left the party, he went round in circles. He went up onto the top of the Big Brassy, the Brassy Gap, and he went round to the Gray Mare again. He was lost. He was going in circles.

KH: How many days was he lost for?

NS: Something like four or five days. He was just about dehydrated when he got to the Alpine hut. Well, I'll tell you, Bert Jamieson; he was a ...Jamiesons came from out that way, a very well known family, very respected family, friend of the Moulds, and I'd met Bert; and as a matter of fact, he married one of the girls, the girl Moulds but I'm not saying anything about that, because, they, he was no good for her....Bert was a good fellow as far as we knew, and all that, and I liked Bert Jamieson. I thought he was a fine fellow. But still, he said, he went out to the Gray Mare, just on his horse, and had another horse with him. He must have been doing something with stock, because when he walked into the Gray Mare, here was this dehydrated boy, lying on a bed, nearly dead. So he got him onto the horse, and he brought him into the Alpine hut. I've got a photo in the slides there; you might find it. No, I don't know if he was shaking hands with Bert, but he was there with his horse. We came out, and Arthur came. He said, 'is that the boy that's lost? The chap that's lost?' And Bert said, 'Yes.' He said, 'well for goodness sake,' he said to me, 'get in and make orange drink and glucose D.' We had pounds and pounds of glucose D. 'Course it gives you immediate energy. So I went in and made him....we had cases of oranges and that, so I was able to do that, and Arthur made a bed for him along the log in the shade, but he wouldn't let him come into the hut, 'cause he knew immediately he got in there, he'd go out to it. He was weak. He couldn't walk. Bert had him on a horse. So I got him off and got him down, and made him comfortable. I got a couple of pillows, and gave him his drink, andhe was a bit slow, he couldn't speak. He was just about had it.

KH: It was Bert Jamieson who brought him over on a horse.

NS: And then we saved him. Anyway, Arthur said, 'well you can't take him yet,' he said, 'you can't take him yet.' The police'll be out looking for him by now. ' But they hadn't started.

KH: What was the name of the fellow that was lost?

NS: I couldn't tell you. We just called him the 'lost boy.' It was in the papers and all, and when we came to Sydney, everybody knew about the lost boy that was in the Alps. But see, I don't remember the name. I don't think we knew his name. Didn't ask him his name, I think. I don't know.

KH: Do you remember the year at all?

NS: Yes, well, I know the year by the picture of Bert Jamieson. it must have been after 1953. It was the first year we took the landrover in. We got the landrover in '53.

So that must have been Christmas 1954, '53-'54, the year after '53

KH: Yeah, it'd be the summer of '53/'54, and Jeanette Adrienne was there, and Jeanette Littlejohn, Jeff Smith and Ray Cox...he's written down here.

NS: Jeanette Littlejohn's in Canberra now. She married Ken Walker the geologist....she was Judith's friend as well as Jeanette Littlejohn. See, they were all doing geology. But anyway, that must have been the year. And in the end, Bert came in and had some refreshments inside, and we left the boy just to come around and when he was good enough to put on the horse, to get Bert into Whites River, and then over to the Chalet.

KH: Right. That was the easiest way.

NS: That was the easiest way to get him in, so that's what he did. He took him back that way. So that was an experience we had.

KH: Were there any others that you remember? Any rescues like that, or people being lost?

NS: Only the people that came from the top. The bushwalkers that came from the top. We had to call them down, and tell them to go round to there, but they didn't have any bearings at all. You know, in twos and threes, as a matter of fact, Jeff Baker...Jeff Smith that got our landrover, and John Marshall that's mentioned there from Newcastle...they were walking, and that's how we met them in the first place. And they came down to the Alpine hut. But they had to go right round towards the Diggings, to get back to the Alpine hut too. But they came; they were bushwalkers. It was Jeff that got the landrover.

KH: And it's mentioned here that you stayed at Snow Revellers. Is that right, '55-'56?

NS: Yes, I've got a picture of them there, in black and white.

KH: That's at a lodge in Perisher? It was a group called the 'Snow Revellers'.

NS: Yes, we had some tea. We were out walking, and met them, and (I didn't put them in with your lot because I thought you wouldn't be interested in them). Do you know any of the bushwalkers?

KH: No.

NS: I didn't know them either, but I thought one looked like Paddy, but I would have known Paddy Pallin. But Paddy didn't have much to do with the Alps. But he was always in the skiing business; 'course he made all the apparatus; sleeping bags, our ponchos, you know what a poncho is? Goes right over everything.

KH: Yes, like a hood sort of thing.

NS: Many's the time we had to use our ponchos walking in the rain,

NS: or when we'd go out for walks. We didn't care if it was wet, because that covered our packs and all. I wore boots, army girl boots. We were well protected, you know. These things, I've still got all those down in the cupboard, and my rucksack, my little steel framed rucksack that Paddy made for me.

KH: It was an A-frame, wasn't it?

NS: It was a frame that sat on your hip; the support went onto there. You just pulled in your shoulders, and put the weight ...I had all the things on top; you know, the pack fitted. I think my pack was about....if I'm not right; I could just get it off the ground if someone helped me on with it. Once I got up...I couldn't sort of get up...had to be helped on...about 120 lbs.

KH: Do you reckon?

NS: Yes.

KH: How long did you carry that for? How far?

NS: Only to the Alpine hut with full load. Once we got in there, 'course we could unload it....but I always carried my camera.

KH: Did you always carry your Roloflex camera in there?

NS: Yes.

KH: So how long have you had your Roloflex?

NS: I've had my Roloflex since as far back as I've been doing photography. Longer back than that, because I used to take pictures. As a matter of fact, see those two? I took those two, and Arthur processed them, but I never processed my films in those days. And I was able to use my own negatives that I took. He used to process all my work.

KH: Did he have a camera too?

NS: Have a camera! He had a ...where do I start? I've got a Lieca that he have me, 30 or 40 years ago. It's got a little tiny peephole you know, that you can hardly focus through it. You know the little Lieca? It's beautiful; It's in there if you want to see it. It's in there, and I used to use a Beewee (?) meter to tell the lighting.

End of tape 1, side 2

Commencing tape 2, side 1.

NS: People that were using Roloflexes, couldn't focus them, because there was something wrong with the little eye piece in there. He got his from Henry York; you know they were the importers of the Roloflex. Did you know them?

KH: No.

NS: He got his...Judith has my Roloflex, and I have Arthur's automat.

KH: No.

NS: I've got a light meter called , ah, you put a little thing in the top... what's the name of it? When I was in Tasmania, I had my little meter round me, and the little one of them fell out of the top, so I've got to take a reading. For black and white, you've always got to take a reading. It's an 'incident meter reading'. You've got to look. You've got the subject; It's got a ... he had different meters. He had Western (?) meters, but I have this lovely meter called , ah, look let me tell you them...

KH: No, it's alright, it's not that important.

NS: It's an oval one like that. It's called 'incident meter' to read, 'incident', but you look at the subject, and you look at the meter this way, but you read what it says this way. See, and I never got any bad results. I never did. They were all good negatives with that meter...

KH: They were all big negatives, weren't they? Six by six, two and a quarter, six cm.

NS: I got the enlarger to take the two and a quarter negative which is the two and a quarter, and then I got a Belair lens for it, and I've got the 35mm for it. Recent ones are all 35mm, I can blow them up to 16/20 easy with a Pentax. I've got a Spotmatic. I've got three Spotmatics, and Judy has been taught off the Spotmatic that Arthur had in 1969; and I let her use her own imagination for lighting, and I said, 'if you go by the little paper with its light', and told her what exposure to set it on (125), but if it got duller, to open it up a bit more. I explained it all to her, about the meter, and she's wonderfully clever now. So Lindsay's been taught. He's got M.E., He's got an automatic. I don't like automatics.

KH: No, I don't. I've got Olympus now. I use the Rolocort for my transparencies. My colour work, large transparencies.

NS: What do you do with your colour?

KH: Transparencies, slides?

NS: Yes, what with?

KH: With my Rolocort.

NS: O, your Rolocort. O, you've got nice big ones.

KH: Yes, so the cover of the Huts book, that was taken with a Rolocort, big slides.

NS: He had Ansco, and he processed all his own, in two and a quarter square. Ansco.

KH: Are they mounted? What form are they in, are they still in rolls, in sheets, or...?

NS: Sheets, I think. They could be done on glass slides or anything.

NS: But he had more than that, he had a studio camera called a Soho, and he had a Speedgraphic; but he never carried those out with him; but he's carried his flashgun out there. He made it and he built it, so that he could change the batteries. He made the charger. Change the batteries so that when the ball went down, it was ready to come up. It was beyond me, what he did in regards to all that. He photographed all those flowers with it, his flash which he made. He had a born hobby.

KH: Did he ever write any articles about the mountains?

NS: No, but he used to give a darned lot of lectures in judging. Judging colour. Black and white, he was a master at it.

KH: And it's mentioned here that you stayed at Bett's camp one year. Is that right?

NS: Yes, we stayed twice at Bett's camp. One was burnt down; remember the one that was burnt down? There was a new one built on the bend of the.... Well we stayed there, and then we also had a little while up at the 'Snow Reveller's hut. Did I put that in?

KH: Yes, you went to Blue Lake, or something.

NS: Because Jeff Smith had a share in the Snow Revellers or something, and he was out there, and he took his landrover out there then one year, and we went out to Happy Jack's; and we must have got out there in the landrovers; you couldn't have got out any other way. We took the landrovers, and I found frogs out there.

KH: O, Happy Jack's Plain.

NS: I said, 'I know there's frogs out here,' and I found them. And then in the meantime, the others went out looking at one of the snow... one of the projects, and they came back, and the eyebrows, you couldn't see them. They were just white with dust.

KH: What from?

NS: They went out to see one of the Snowy Schemes you see.

KH: O, people working? O, right.

NS: By the way, my son-in-law, Alan Day, was the first to go through Tumut Pond dam there, before the water went through with it, because with his seismograph, Alan, and he took his seismograph through there, at Cabramurra, and Arthur had to go right round to the other end where -- he and Arthur went together -- and they stayed at Cabramurra where there was a big hostel; and Arthur had his landrover, and Alan took his from Sydney Uni. with his seismograph, so he could go through the tunnel. 14 miles through the tunnel, he had to walk on his own. I'll make you a cup of tea.

KH: I'll need a break soon. Yeah, I suppose that's a good idea.

NS: You must be shivering with the cold.

KH: No, I'm very warm, actually.

NS: Are you? You want the light on in there, don't you? That's better, down the other end. Well, these are for you here...all these here are for you.

KH: O well, I better have a look at these, I suppose. I'll turn the tape off for a while

.....
NS: Arthur said to her, 'you do what you want to do, not what the professor wants you to do. She did first-year medicine first, a medical student. But she said 'I don't like the human side of it, Dad, I like the botanical side of it, but I don't like the human side of it, so I'm not going to do medicine.' And he said, 'well that's all about it. You do what you want to do.'

That old mat should be out on the verandah, just to wipe feet on the verandah, but that doesn't matter.

I'm terrified about that place, if they do have a vacancy, I'm not going to accept it. Look, would you like me to make you a nice tomato and cheese sandwich?

KH: I'm right. I had lunch just before I came.

NS: Some of this?

KH: You go right ahead. They'll have dinner for me when I get back to Manly.

NS: Well, that's the worst thing, I'm not too keen on cooking for myself, that's all. But then, you've got to feed yourself, you've got to eat, and I see that I get plenty of orange juice. You know, vitamins, and I love salads. I'm very fond of salads.

KH: Well, that's very good for you, isn't it.

NS: I eat chicken and fish. You don't like the fish?

KH: No, I like fish. I don't like fish on sandwiches that much. There has to be a certain time that I'll eat fish. I'll eat cooked fish. I like fish at night.

NS: Well I was nearly going to make some cheese and...I could get some nice cheese for you to have.

KH: Don't worry, I'm not very hungry. It's alright, this is just a good snack.

NS: ...a cup of tea, but I thought, most, you know, people, (I don't want that plate, I'll eat it off this plate). I only sometimes make sandwiches for my tea; have a bit of salad with them, so I can use this. I love my salmon.

KH: And the Nichols lady, she went with you too, to the mountains?

NS: Yes, Dulcie went too. And I don't remember, I think it's 1950... 1950. I said, 'Dulcie, how many times did you go?'
She said, 'well I went when Jill and Una were there,

NS: and I went when Jeff and John Marshall were there, but I don't think Una and Jill were the same year. She must have gone twice. I remember saying to Dulcie when I got heatstroke....because Dulcie slept in the bed opposite me there, because there was a women's dormitory, and a men's down at the end. It accommodated about 20. And they had 200 blankets there. Over 200. Somebody got in and pinched some blankets. They were nice grey woollen blankets, beautiful blankets. Sometimes the girls would call out: 'We want two more blankets,' and Arthur would go to this big iron cupboard and get more blankets. 'How many do you want?' Someone... 'Four more.' Used to get cold at night, but we had a beautiful log fire.

KH: And there were stoves in the other rooms, weren't there? Those long iron stoves. with the big pipe going up?

NS: We didn't light them though. Being in the summer, you wouldn't think you'd need them, but at night we had the big fire in. And all the men, on the big table, the great big long table; I've never seen such a long table. Well, I used to make macaroni cheese, and, oh, we had tins of...we had fresh bread, and we had bacon and we had eggs that were fresh, and we had oranges. Fresh vegetables from the first week or two. But ofcourse once the bread got dried.. it was all eaten just the same. Then I'd start and make dampers. See I could make them alright in that.

(You got that silly little cushion! There's one over there.)

The dampers; and we always had tins of fruit and I'd make custard, baked custard. The oven was alright, the two ovens, but one side smoked where the stove started the hob, you know, at the brickwork. And the smoke would come up there, so I used to go down to the river, and get some clay and try and poke in there, to keep the smoke from coming through, but it still came.

KH: It must have been the devil of a job, getting that stove in there. I think Fred Fletcher dragged that in there on a bit of a sled.

NS: All those double decker beds. They were all double decker. Iron beds; mattresses; pillows. Pillows! I sat one day and I repaired pillows 'til I was blue in the face, because they were all starting to get pretty worn and holey. But I did repair a lot of things like that. Slept like anything; couldn't breathe your own breath back you know, it was so cold. I used to put my whole head under.

KH: Yeah, I stayed there a couple of times before it went.

NS: Did you, at the Alpine? Did you? Did you see the big cupboard where they kept the blankets, and the big larder place where all the food was?

KH: Yes, there were still great big tins of dried onions and dried potatoes, rice, great big tins of it, when I was there.

NS: We had a box made, left a box down underneath the pantry floor, that Arthur used to put on a board and rollers, and roll it in sometimes, and leave it there from one year to the other. That would be still in there.

KH: I think it's mostly been cleaned up now. And then there were prunes. We used to get those big tins of prunes.

NS: We had all good food. But the stuff that was left from the winter was all wasted.

KH: Some of it would keep though, anything that was in tins, surely.

NS: There was nothing like that there. It was all perishable food that was there that wouldn't keep. Like sides of bacon, and cheese, and things like that....would you like another cup?

KH: Yeah, I'm quite partial to tea.

(conversation re tea)

NS: And then, Reg Mould too; he's been out on several occasions on his horse, and brought us out a leg of lamb, all cooked.

KH: O, that was nice!

NS: And I remember Ray Cox. He used to fight, who was going to have a leg, the bone. He was getting next to the bone. Dear oh dear, we were devils for a bit of cold meat.

KH: Reg Mould is dead now, isn't he?

NS: Yes, he died; I went to his funeral. I flew down to his funeral. He had a police escort. He's buried up on the Jesuit (?) church on the hill.

KH: O, I've been there.

NS: I took a photo. I went down with Virginia. She came with me. We went in advance. One day we stopped in at Berridale. I stayed at that nice motel at Berridale. They had a cottage at Berridale, and the water was low, and gee, it gave Judy a terrible time with gastritis. She came and had to drive back with those kids all by herself, because Alan had to go and pick up a swag of books that were coming from overseas after his Sabbatical Leave, or something. But he had to go. He didn't go. But the cottage was just in Berridale, round a side street, like that, and there was a septic tank somewhere, and I couldn't bear it. But the motel; I'd say, 'come over there. We'll have a nice tea over at the motel's.' I'd make them do that. It was Mrs.... and the Thiesss. Remember the Thiess the builders? They were wonderful cooks.

KH: Did Mrs Mould go up to the mountains very much? Reg's wife?

NS: No, but I've got a letter there that she wrote a couple of months ago, and she said she went ...see she belongs to the

Garden Club, and they go on tours.

NS: She said they went as far as they could in the bus, and they got right towards the top. I don't know how far they got up.

KH: But in earlier times, she didn't go in with her husband or anything? She didn't go up to Mould's hut?

NS: No, and she lived in Glenrowan. Between Berridale and Jindabyne. They had...that was their property, Barney's Range, on Barney's Range.

KH: O, I see. She still there?

NS: No, because she gave it up. She was on her own when Reg died. The boy Mould, he manages it. He has to handle his own out at Dalgety and that too. It was left to his boys; it wasn't left to Marjorie at all. But she had a mother who left her some money, and she bought a lovely cottage down in Cooma, and I was going down there right up to a few weeks ago, because it got too cold, and then I got sick.

KH: Yeah. What about the Flanagan's? Did you ever meet any of the Flanagan's?

NS: No, I don't think I know the name. The Mould are related to just about everyone round the place. The people next door, what were they called, the Scarletts. Scarletts. But she's stayed here quite a bit with me and I've been down to see her, but she wanted to come the other day. I told her if she gave me a day's notice, you know, come up in the deisel train. And then (she) rang to say she was up, and could they come up the next day. Ofcourse their son-in-law had the day off; he's with ICI. I said, 'O Marjorie, I'm too sick to have anybody.' I was, honestly, I'm not putting it on. I couldn't stand up in the mornings. My legs were so bad...must have been through lying in bed, and through this fall. I had a dreadful fall. I had twelve doses of that ultrasound on my spine. I'm sick and tired of looking at medicines and doctors' bills. I paid the hospital bill, but they paid me nearly all back.

KH: I might try one of these. would you like one?

NS: I don't eat biscuits.

KH: I should have brought my kids as well. They would have eaten them.

NS: How many?

KH: I've got two daughters.

NS: I didn't know you were married even; I never gave it a thought. Where's your wife?

KH: My wife's in Canberra.

NS: O, you've got two little girls!

KH: O, big. One's 14, and the other one's 12.

NS: O, you shock me. That's wonderful. What are their names?

KH: Anna and Abigail.

NS: Isn't that nice! Well, I didn't know you were married.

KH: O yeah, I'm not that young.

NS: Well, you look very young. I'll show you one of Alan. He was born in 50....30s. That makes him an even number. Christmas time's his birthday. Alan Day, Judy's husband...I don't know how the students get on, but he's got a bad temper.

KH: My parents are a little bit younger than you.

NS: Bit younger than me?

KH: About 74.

NS: I wish I was 74 again. I've turned 79, but I feel I look terribly old lately, since I haven't been well. I've aged a lot.. But I don't think...I said to Alan when he told me I should put my name down to go to a village, and I said 'look, what about grandmother, your own mother, Alan, she's older than me?' She was 82, and here she is over in London at the moment. Alan's mother. My mother died in 47 -- 1947.

KH: Yeah, like my parents are; have really got the travel bug. They went over to New Zealand early this year. They were in Fiji last year. They were in Europe a few years ago.

NS: Well, they've got just themselves, have they?

KH: Yes, just themselves. All us kids ofcourse are gone.

NS: How many of you were there?

KH: Four. Two of each.

NS: That's what Judith has. I feel, being left alone. See, I'm a lonesome. I've got nobody in the world. I've only got one now, and that's Judith. I haven't got anyone else. No relations.

KH: Have to create some! Make some.

NS: Well, I have really acquired a cousin, second cousin, and she writes me a beautiful letter. Calls me dear cousin Nellie, and she's on my father's side. She's the only Bentley family. 'course he died in 1912, my father. I was only seven. I remember my father to this day, sitting on his knee when he was going to hospital. They won't believe me, but I can remember sitting there.

KH: At seven? I can imagine that.

NS: And my sister on this knee, two years younger than me. And he said, 'you'll be good little girls for your mother while I'm away?' Now, they won't believe that I remember that. I do remember it, I've written it down.

KH: You were seven; yes, I can imagine that. I remember things when I was five, and I know people who remember things when they were four.

NS: Yes, I remember when I left the place my father built in Crows Nest, because I remember getting into trouble for giving my mother's teaspoons to the garbage man through the fence. And I did. I used to be very generous, wanting to give my mother's things away...to the garbage man.

KH: It seems as though you're still very generous.

NS: O no, I don't know whether I'm very generous. I like people, but I really do like people, and I like company. See, that's what I don't get.

KH: Are there some groups you can belong to? Some local things you can be involved in?

NS: Yes. I belong to the Lindfield Senior Citizens group which... they're very nice people. Lately, I have't been able to go. Since April, I've been nowhere. I still have my car.

KH: It seems like you're a fairly gregarious sort of person. You need to bring some people in, or get out and see people.

NS: Well that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to ask people from the Senior Citizens will they come up. I haven't made really good friends with them, because they all live down that way. There's none of them up near me. But I can still ask. Have another cup of tea.

KH: No thankyou, that's good. No, that's good.

NS: Have some bickies. they're there for you.

KH: I've had one. I've had three or four of those. I don't eat all that much.

NS: No wonder you're slim.

KH: I don't put any weight on. I just keep eating, and I don't put any weight on. I've been the same weight for 15 years or something.

NS: Well, that was just like Arthur. He never gained. He never was over ten stone...ten and a half, for forty years, he never gained weight. He was such an active man. And yet he went off like that, at the Medical Eye Service. No, never had a doctor, one of his colleagues, take a blood pressure or anything. In 1963 he died, training another doctor at the hospital. I've got it written up, a beautiful piece Doctor Copley (?) wrote about him.

KH: You never went skiing in the mountains, did you?

NS: No, I never went in the winter. No.

KH: Arthur didn't either?

NS: No, we didn't go in the winter, because you see his holiday was that time of the year, and he kept to that all those years. Every Christmas we went away, and then ofcourse when Alan came back. I'll show you his photo. Judy didn't know Alan until he came back from Los Angeles, where...he was at Cambridge doing his PHD.

NS: Then he won a scholarship to Los Angeles, and he was there for a couple of years. But he was away from his mother for so many years, that he was used to doing things for himself. And I think Judy knows him better than his mother does, because his father and mother travelled on every year after Judy and Alan were married. The father was only home five days. He wouldn't drink a cup of tea. It was a drug. He wouldn't drink a cup of anything, wouldn't drink anything.

So you can't blame what he had. He had a ...he must have had something to kill him, because he died five days after they came back from overseas, (their) overseas trip, and he was 80. And she's 80! He's been gone about two and a half years, and then she's been alone, and I said, 'what about grandma?' 'What about...' I call her grandma, 'cause the children do. I call her Florence to her face. She stayed here with me, and...she's not my type. If she saw me talking to someone, she'd walk away. She's not the friendly type, like me. I'm friendly, but I know who I'm talking to. I mean, I just don't talk to anybody. I do talk to people.

KH: Judy Nichols visits you sometimes, doesn't she?

NS: Dulcie? Dulcie and Bob, they often come up. Yes.

Dulcie rang me yesterday, and I said, 'did you know Klaus is coming to see me tomorrow?' She said, 'yes, I know. I was talking to him.'

And I said, 'I don't know whether...' She said, 'no, I'm not coming, because he wants to be alone when he's doing anything like that, and instead of everyone talking so you can't concentrate on anything.' So I said, 'well that's alright with you Dulcie, it's alright with me.' But Bob and Dulcie....he's my god-son, Neil. The boy, he's 28 now. And I've known her a long time. She's a nice girl; never changed in all the years.

KH: 'course her brother, Ken...

NS: I didn't know Ken. One of her brothers died recently, not Ken.

KH: No, 'cause Ken was an early...he went to Kiandra. About 1928-29.

NS: Yes.

KH: And she wrote it all up, and he's got an old photo album from that time, which I've copied. So I was out at the Lambie sisters - Olive Lambie and her Lambie sisters out at Durral. They're old skiers, and they told me about Ken Nichols, you see, and they showed me the album. So that's

KH: how one thing led to another. So I wrote to Ken Nichols, and he must have mentioned it to his sister, Dulcie, and she heard about you, and so that's the way it sort of works.

NS: Yes, she was in the photographic society where Arthur was before I met her. Yes, she did, and she did a bit of photography in their dark rooms.

KH: Has she got many photographs of the mountains?

NS: Well I tried to get out of her, 'what have you got?' I said, 'what have you got?' She said, 'well she's got a Rolocort, because Arthur got it for her. He got her the Rolocort. She said, 'I've only got ...' She wasn't out at Pretty Plains. She wasn't there that year with us, but she's been out to the Tin (?), and I used to say to Dulcie when I got that heatstroke, 'Dulcie, I'm "incapapitated"' I often remind her, 'remember me when I was incapapitated?' I wouldn't talk properly. No, we spent a good deal of time together, but not of late, because see, Bob retired. He was in the dairy farmers, and it was where she met him. He was the chief chemist in the dairy farmers; now he's retired, and ofcourse for me, going over to 'Lourdes'. They're all for that They want me to go, and Bob even came over to look at the place, and wanted to measure up the room. Measure the pieces of furniture I wanted to take, and put it in its place.

KH: Is this all your furniture here?

NS: Everything in the house is mine. But I couldn't take...I could only take what I could put in a bed-sitting room... my bed, and I don't think I want to get rid of all my stuff. See Judy's got all the big furniture from Mosman which is a mighty lot of stuff, and I...

KH: Well, if you ever want to sell your Roloflex, I'd be interested in it.

NS: You would? I'd only let someone like you have it. Anything of mine that I'd let go, it would have to be someone that I knew that looked after things, like you do.

KH: Well, I bought...the Rolocort that I've got, my father always had a Rolocort, and I bought that Rolocort second hand. But I've done some of my best work with a Rolocort, because the lens is so good.

NS: Yes.

KH: It's got a Zenar I think.

NS: I think mine's got a ...

KH: It's a 3.5. It's not very fast.

NS: Mine's a 3.5.

KH: But all my big transparencies - I sometimes sell photographs for calendars and things, so they're the ones that are very desirable, 'cause they're so sharp.

NS: O, they're sharp. They are sharp. Well, when you come to think, you know, that you can blow a portion of that negative up to get what you could, and you'd think it was taken from a whole negative. If you can just take a piece out of it.

KH: But I could never afford a Roloflex. They always seemed... the Rolocort was the poor man's Roloflex.

NS: Yes, I believe that. Well, Dulcie wanted the Rolocort, so I wanted one, so Arthur got her a Rolocort from Yorks, but he had his own. Mine is what you called an automat- roly. I'll show it to you..

KH: Roloflex also made a telephoto Roloflex, with a telephoto-lens. Always on it, not interchangeable.

NS: No, you can't interchange mine.

KH: No, you can't, normally. No, this was a fixed telephoto-lens.

NS: And you looked down the little...

KH: Special model, 'cause I love that big view-finder.. Waist-level view-finder. I think that's terrific.

NS: Has yours got a little mirror that you bring up? and look at it? Well, a lot of them found they couldn't focus it, a lot of Arthur's friends. And Arthur said, 'well you must want your eyes testing, and they found their glasses were wrong. William Metcalf, Jimmy Metcalfe....William Metcalfe, I've got a big portrait of him. One's gone to the library, I think, but that one in a big case in there...under the bed with Arthur's work. A whole case of it, and then, that's all, everywhere, and it's all done so technically, beautiful you couldn't fault it.

KH: Did Arthur do any prints from the High Country? In the Alps?

NS: No...yes, he did do some I think. He did do some, but I'm just trying to think what he did do, because he had the movie; that was in the first years, he took movies. That's why I can't complete....

KH: And the movie film, you've got the movie film too?

NS: I haven't got the movie; I've got the films down there. Ofcourse they sold my things down there. They sold the projector. I had two speakers, an Altec (?) speaker from all the apparatus. I had another speaker called a roley something...a Roller...Roller speaker for it. I've got the films.

KH: And they would be what? 1000 feet?

NS: Well, they were different sizes, different years, because there would be 700 feet on perhaps one, and might be 300 feet on another, like that. But it's a 16 mm. It's not just an 8 mm It's a bigger one. But we used to have all the different things that we used to have to run the films through. He tried all the different machines, you know, that would give him satisfaction. And he used to take it back; that was no good; and that was no good. Then the noise was no good alongside, and then he had a splicer too for the film. I think I've still got the splicer. But O dear O dear, the apparatus that's gone through our hands! We took on tropical fish breeding, and I had 24 tanks of tropical fish. I used to breed them, and we wrote articles on how to breed tropical fish.

KH: This was in your house at Lorna Doone?

NS: Down at Lorna Doone we had one room, and it had seven tanks all lit up, and the plants in them were absolutely beautiful. And then I bred one of the big orange cyclid family, and it was called the Astronotis Oscillatus.(?) It's eyes used to go round, you know.

KH: Oscillate?

NS: We used to feed them with garden worms. They'd come and take them out of my hands. And then the velvet cyclid, I wrote an article; Arthur and I did, on it. And Arthur joined, with Doctor Emmonds then, and formed the North Sydney.....have a cushion...

KH: No, it's alright. I'll probably...I might get up in a moment and I'll have to start going soon, so perhaps if we can...

NS: What about getting some, those pictures? You going to take those pictures with you?

KH: If I could take that box with me. And some of the big photos, and some of those and anything, and I'll take out the things that are useful for my next book, or the other books I'm writing, and then bring you back the others.

NS: Alright, I'm quite happy about that.

KH: How soon would you like me to bring them back?

NS: I don't care, because I won't be going from here. I've got a cache that big in the hall of Arthur's beautiful work that's got to go to the library.

KH: Can you show me those?

NS: I've never opened it, but I can show you.