

BILL HUGHES

INTERVIEW: 2 October 1976

INTERVIEWER: Klaus Hueneke and Wilf Hilder.

CASSETTE ONE - SIDE ONE

BH: Two foolscap sheets missing from my article in the Sydney Mail.

KH: Did they find them later on Bill or not ...?

BH: I don't know what happened, I didn't do anything about it.

People who read it told me afterwards they couldn't follow me - couldn't follow that story at all.

KH: Is that in the Ski Year Book?

BH: I don't know whether it went in that or the Sydney Mail or some other publication, but I remember well, it mucked the whole thing up.

KH: I didn't realise you had written for the Sydney Mail.

BH: Garrett portable engine - the engine was on top of the boiler - around the air compressor, that's a separate item of course.

(Looking at old slides)

KH: This is the old dredge on the Gungarlin - I haven't seen it yet but I've heard about it.

Peter Conroy described the big drum to me.

WH: I'll get the viewer out.

KH: ... a big dredge out on the Gungarlin River.

BH: What might have happened is that they stripped the essential working parts from Kiandra.

WH: They're pretty big pieces, Bill.

BH: ... left the remainder of it.

WH: It's been there a long time though, probably 50-70 years.

BH: The dredge that I can remember at Kiandra, was on one part of the river there, the flood shifted it down - it was down a 100 yards or so, then further down still. From one year to year heavy floods used to keep moving it. It wouldn't be worth taking away at all.

WH: This one on the Gungarlin looks like they just got it round there and they turned over about five wheelbarrow loads of ground and gave it away. When ground is turned over it stands out on the photograph. I suppose you can pick it if you walk on it, it's got a look about it that is quite different to ordinary ground from the air, there's none of that around that pond at the Gungarlin. They just dug a pond and that was it.

BH: Have you been into the Grey Mare at Boogong?

KH: Yes.

BH: Is there a lot of machinery there still in the cases, still in the packing?

KH: There was some stampers in boxes, a big wheel, a one cylinder motor is still half in boxes.

BH: There is a chap named George Bell, that we spoke about, he was in charge of that place in the 30s. This plant was bought and sent there and they never unpacked it.

WH: I thought it might have been in the 50s - another revival.

BH: I've never seen it myself, but his son told me about it.

WH: One thing surprised me there last time - I took a wander over into the creek - photos show something strange about the next gully to the south has been worked and interfered with. When I came over the hill, I ran into a couple of the old original huts there. On my way across I found a couple of big pits next to the creek - strange - found all these big bits of machinery and I suddenly realised they are all bits of stamper battery. Must have had a water powered stamper battery there at one stage of the game. A long time ago. Because it's on a bend in the gully it would have to be a water powered crusher of some sort.

BH: I was there once in summer and there were 7 or 8 men there - they knew nothing at all about mining - they were just lost, they didn't know how to carry on. They wanted me to stay with them and put them on the right track. I didn't think it was right for me to go along and push in on another mine manager's job. It was not the right thing to do.

KH: When would this have been? In the 30s?

BH: Some time in the 30s in the summer.

KH: There are a few Bells aren't there? There's a George Bell ...

WH: There's only one George, though, which is the guy I was talking with at Nine Mile, that Bill was telling me - at the Empress.

BH: I remember well that this was summer time because the March flies - little ones you know, not the big ones, they were there by the thousand. Trying to wash the dishes - you'd get bit on the arm - they were really bad.

WH: The big ones get a bit nasty.  
(Looking at photo of Garrett traction engine).

WH: You can see the winch there that apparently they used to move it around with - its broken.

KH: Do you remember the winch being there?

BH: No, I don't. That could have been taken at a later date. It's a thing that you can pull apart. Some of the gear has been taken off the top.

WH: The front wheels have dropped off a little.

KH: I wanted to show you - this was 3-4 weeks ago - that's looking back to the mine shaft entrance and the big dam of earth - spoils from the shaft - this looks like the inside of that shed, its got these things, old ... that's

from a collapsible bed, those iron bits and these look like lamp frames of some kind. Did you have ...?

BH: This is for a frying pan to be swung over the fire, a wire/cage gadget.

KH: I immediately thought there was some other thing in here which was a kerosene lattern. This is the shed that sits next to that fallen down hut, this is the stuff inside.

WH: There's a completely burnt out one.

KH: That was the blacksmiths ... I understood that that was the workshop.

BH: We had a fire there one night, we'd left the mine - about 4 or 5 men. We were in bed and about one o'clock in the morning there was this terrific bang - just about lifted everyone out of bed - they were completely still. There was a good deal of snow on the ground and suddenly in the middle of night - 'bang'. Everybody rushed out and the sheds were on fire at the mine, they had been burning for an hour probably and they'd burnt until the fire had got into this package of detonators. We had the detonators by themselves, we didn't pack the detonators and dynamite together naturally - they went off with a terrific bang. It burnt out practically all of the mine sheds. This boiler and the engine was in it. It probably didn't do it much damage. We couldn't put the thing out - there was some water running out of the mine. Above it there was a tank, so we punched holes in the tank so that the water would go out onto it. It was absolutely destroyed.

KH: Did you rebuild it?

BH: It was just after that, that I left there. I don't know whether they rebuilt it or not. It was rather a peculiar thing. If you imagine a shed built around timber and galvanised iron, galvanised iron roof and an earth floor, burning, with 3 or 4 feet of snow around it - you wouldn't have expected to. If anyone would have asked me to burn it down I would have asked for 5 or 6 gallons of kerosene or 50 gallons of kerosene for that matter.

WH: That explains all that rusty iron down by the side.

KH: There is a lot of burnt stuff where I thought was the blacksmith shop.

BH: That charcoal would be the timber supplied for the blacksmith shop adjacent to it and the detonators, we stored them in where the charcoal was - a safe dry place.

KH: It's surprising that the great stack of wood didn't go up - it might have been wet.

BH: It was tightly packed, we were able to put that out. It didn't burn very quickly. All the charcoal didn't burn, we were able to throw buckets on it.

WH: Of the three huts that were built at Elaine, were all three used for accommodation or only two?

BH: All for accommodation.

WH: There is some sign of a workshop north of the actual shaft.

BH: That was a very small workshop ... that was storage for petrol and things like that.

WH: There ~~are~~ still bits of glass tubing for that safety valve on the stationery engine.

KH: Yes, that's right - all stored.

BH: It was some distance away for safety sake. I've forgotten now just where we stored our explosives.

KH: It would have to be in a little hole in the hill I suppose.

BH: I think that was back towards the Bloomfield workings.

WH: You dug a little shaft or had a little shed.

BH: A little drive into the hillside.  
It should be still there shouldn't it?

BH: It probably would be - its that sort of thing that would last.

KH: Can I just get it straight on a sketch. I've got - when I went there - I really want to get the story of life at Elaine as good as we can. This is the sketch that I made out there once before and I've got an engine - a compressor type engine near the mine entrance, you come down the track from the hill and there's the big slag heap ..

BH: That's going in from Kiandra.

KH: Yes.

WH: Actually this road doesn't join, it dead ends up here, you really have to come in this way.

BH: It goes up practically to Milkman's Flat and around and across Four Mile Creek and down back towards Kiandra.

WH: There are two pumps here ...

KH: They are on this side I think - they are also on this side of the tunnel. There's foundations here for those pumps. All the charcoal and stuff is sitting down in here so it looked as though there was a blacksmith shop of some kind in here.

BH: The blacksmith shop was really between the charcoal and the mouth of the tunnel.

KH: Ok - we'll call this the blacksmith shop.

WH: Have you got any photos of the actual mineshafts themselves?

KH: That's coming down this lower track, and these piles of wood are on your right, coming down into the gully from Kiandra. Here's the mine entrance and that is one of the trolleys, then the blacksmith shop would be positioned just in there, another stack of timber here, and that shed with the frying pan thing, I showed you before - this shed and this hut is in the tree there.

BH: I'm just trying to remember whether there was 2 or 3 huts there.

WH: The only thing is, in here - the one with the shed is that ...

KH: Here's the shed ...

WH: In between that and here, if you look very hard you'll see the burnt remains of a hut on that bench.

KH: That's where I've put that - foundations of old hut and chimney. It looks as though there was a chimney on it. I think we identified that hut - the ruins of it. I redrew this again and some of it is probably wrong.

BH: The hut furthest up the creek - this is the creek coming down here ...

WH: There's a hut in this tiny gully up there ...

BH: That's the one that my brother and I occupied. There were two other huts close together.

WH: That's where the shed is. Immediately behind the shed about 6 or 7' back, if you look very hard you'll find charcoal in the grass. I walked over it about three times and I suddenly realised there must have been another hut there. There's a shallow gully and this is sort of in there.

BH: Did you notice the remains of a toilet about half way between the mouth of the tunnel and the first hut? Sometimes those sort of things remain there. Just an ordinary shaft with a toilet built over it.

KH: There were three huts for living in.

BH: They were brought down from the Nine-mile and I recognize the typical chimneys and one of those ...

KH: That chimney - its likely they built them at Nine Mile, like that.

BH: Yes, that's lined with malthoid - damn good stuff.

KH: It will probably stay there for a long time - all on the ground.

BH: Lined completely with malthoid. Snow used to blow in at times, it would weigh the ceiling down but it still didn't leak.

KH: The roofs were pitch roof.

BH: Yes.

KH: You had a ceiling inside, but the snow used to blow in under the roof?

KH: There was a food dump that we found below that hut, tins and bottles and things - there's a few up in here too I think.

BH: There's a race coming from this creek around above the huts.

WH: This is the one the road crosses down here somewhere. It was an old race - don't know how far up it goes because that's not the main race that goes to south Bloomfield, that's something else.

KH: I know that one - it's a little Snowy Mountains Authority hut. I don't know Mulligans.

WR: Unfinished I reckon - there's no nails on the outside of the roof to hold the iron down. One can souvenir the windows and put them in the one at Bolton's Hill.

KH: It's in a bad position for ski touring - Mulligans.

WH: It's half way up the side of a hill amongst scrub and trees.

KH: If you couldn't make it to Brooks ...

WH: It's very tricky to find.

BH: Is the hut habitable there or is it ... the Four Mile hut?

KH: Yes, I've got some photos of the Four Mile.

WH: Its not the Four Mile that Bill knows, not the original.

KH: I've seen the ruins of old Glennie hut, that's the hut that your brother lived in, in later days apparently.

BH: Yes, that's younger than any of the other places I think. One of the huts was left at Nine Mile - a fellow named Sanko Smith bought it. He had a lease over there.

KH: I'd like to do a proper job on Elaine.

BH: I was there once, 800<sup>feet</sup> underground and the lightning struck the rails out on the dump and the shock came right through. Its rather a strange thing to be struck by lightning 800<sup>feet</sup> underground.

KH: The rails, were they on wood bearers?

BH: Yes, the same as a railway rail.

KH: Would you have used this timber from the stacks?

BH: They were there for propping the tunnel up. I don't know why there are such stacks of it there. Somebody went mad on ordering timber.

WH: It mentions in the prospectus that you had a lot of wood available.

BH: We were working in mineralized stuff there for quite a long time and I'd be interested to have a sample of it. It's like white iron phosphate, could possibly be nickel, I don't know if it was ever assayed to find out what it was. You'll find in that dump most of the stuff is brown now I suppose.

WH: There's some bluey quartz there.

BH: By breaking some of these larger pieces you might find there's mineral in them.

WH: I know what mineralized quartz looks like. I'd soon pick it up.

BH: There is a chance there is some there.

WH: I only had a quick look.

BH: That's a good picture.

WH: I should have taken more of this, that's the third chimney, there's Gordon Broom standing right in front of the entrance. The entrance is well hidden there.

BH: Have you been very far up these tunnels?

WH: About 30', there is a little bit of the timber come down, friends told me I can't go in there because it's dangerous. Although the timber was rotten the roof's quite sound - solid rock.

BH: I wouldn't recommend it. It might appear sound, but you just give it a little bit of a touch and it will come down.

WH: I've travelled in a lot of mine shafts, I know what to look for. If that roofs not right I won't go in, but the roof is as sound as a bell.

BH: It's very hard rock. But the air gets into rock, years and years of it, it airs up and big boulders might come off.

WH: I didn't go that far because the water was too deep, I didn't have any gum boots, and we didn't have enough time, I reckon you could go in all the way with out much trouble.

BH: I was told that everything had been shifted away from there. One of the chaps up there doing some carting, he told me everything had been shifted. I don't know why people tell lies like that. It was nothing to his advantage in telling me.

WH: Perhaps he never went, perhaps someone told him. Those trolleys, you were saying the other day, they were the ones from around at the Empress, would that be right?

BH: Yes, they'd be from the Empress, the tunnel. There's one thing about that tunnel under the Empress. It was only low, it wasn't well timbered, in coming out with the trucks - George Bell's son and myself used to stand on the back of a truck - they have a lever at the back, a handle that goes through and opens it. Our heads were right down because we had to keep practically behind the truck, if we had stood up we would have collected one of the caps. In places, looking out towards the daylight, you could see the low spots, sometimes a leg - you know the leg - they call it leg on each side and a cap across the top. A leg would be a bit too far in and the truck would just scrape by it.

WH: It must have been risky?

BH: It was rather hazardous, a terrible thing to be doing.

KH: How did you get in there - you walked up?

BH: Yes, there was a lot of water running out as well because water from the mine was coming out. Sometimes it was in a gutter beside the line, the line was just ordinary 14 pound to the yard rails, and other times it was running between them and of course a good deal of dripping - from the roof and the timber was all slimey and wet. One time there they got quite a lot of gold in there, working that tunnel. It was quartz gold. This was Nine Mile.

WH: You were saying they were able to drain that water out of the Empress tunnel were they?

BH: Yes, they were draining, but the mine itself, the bottom rock was dipping away and they had difficulty in getting the water from the place.

WH: Did they put any pumps in to get that water out?

BH: I don't remember them ever having any pumps - pumps didn't seem to be very popular in those days, I suppose there wasn't very many of them.

WH: I suppose you could use a bucket - a very slow process.

BH: There were all sorts of primitive ways of doing it.

KH: The whole tunnel was at a slight incline upwards into the hill, so the water could run freely - how did you get the little trolleys up into it?

BH: Pushing them up.

KH: And when they were full you could just let them roll...?

BH: Yes, they'd go themselves, the steeper the incline the faster they went naturally.

KH: What did you have at the far end to slow them down?

BH: It flattened out. The last 100<sup>feet</sup> and then they were tipped into this reservoir/bin.

KH: I was reading through my notes - the Dept. of Mines reports that either you or somebody else put a tunnel into the north of the Empress. Were there several tunnels put in at Nine Mile?

BH: It was Bell who put a tunnel into the north. A much higher level.

WH: There are alluvial workings up above the entrance. When you walk along that road, there are signs of activity all around there where Bill's old house used to be.

BH: There had been a creek come into the main leads, its an old river bed there, goes right through to Kiandra and then on to Talbingo. It had tributaries, and I think a tributary came in there from Frenchman Gully side or further over, between the Nine Mile Creek and Scots Gully. What they were working on up there was the tributary not the main lead - just one that ran into it. They were getting gold and their rock level was much higher than the Empress.

KH: Where is the Empress tunnel in relation to the big sluicing hole?

BH: It goes right in underneath, it's not very deep. Is there a big trench there that leads right into the old sluicing.

KH: Yes.

BH: Well this is under that again.

WH: There's a big trench down the bottom, a sort of big hole and then a trench lower down.

BH: The tunnel goes right in underneath the trench.

WH: I wondered why they put the trench in.

BH: The trench must have been an earlier date when they were sluicing and then they put the tunnel in underneath it. It may not be exactly, but generally.

KH: That Empress tunnel went in a long way didn't it?

BH: Yes it was a long tunnel.

WH: Pretty dangerous hole to work in wasn't it?

BH: It was dangerous because it was too close to the surface - hadn't enough over us, water would come in from the bottom of that gutter and that kind of thing and made it worse, very slippery and the timber - it was put in haphazardly.

KH: Would they have blown up the entrance when they had finished because there's no entrance now?

BH: It would fall in naturally, I don't think it was blown up - just collapsed. If you were to dig in there you would probably find the old tunnel still standing in places.

KH: When were you working on the Empress, was this before ...?

BH: I was only there as a lad on this job, used to go in for the fun of it with one of Bell's sons.

KH: What about Bob, what was he up to then?

BH: He was doing some work for them, he worked in the Empress at one time.

KH: Was he quite a few years older than you?

BH: Yes, he was the eldest of our family, I was the youngest. Bob would be 18 years older than me.

KH: If he was still alive he would be nearly 90 or something now.

WH: I was saying to Klaus about Bob spending a bit on salvation reading these books, I was telling Bill. Bill was saying that he wouldn't have spent too much time at it, he would have spent more time digging for gold. The books were not very well worn, they were in marvellously good condition.

KH: The fact that there were 3 or 4 of them there, way out in the middle of nowhere and very little other reading matter, it just seemed - he may have taken all his better books out with him - that would be the explanation I think.

BH: He didn't read very much, he was a funny chap, Bob. There was no need for him to be up there, for financial reasons he was quite comfortable, but still that suited him.

KH: He loved it out there obviously.

WH: In some of those Mines Department reports in the mid 30s, a bit after Elaine had quitened down a bit, there's reports of Bob having worked over the Nine Mile, worked through a lot of old ground, got gold out of there. He must have been working in Elaine the same time he was working out at Nine Mile was he?

BH: My father, Bob and myself worked at the Nine Mile before we started at the Elaine. It was on new ground there and it wasn't alluvial it was believed it was a reef.

WH: Where would that be roughly, in relation to ...

BH: It was over on Nine Mile Creek, roughly about north-west from there.

You'd see the work done in a sort of softish yellow type of rock.

WH: Rock or clay?

BH: Clay you might call it.

WH: Because that is near that other hut - maps call Gold Hut. There's some deep furrows there in the ground - alluvial but they may not have been.

BH: People have always been looking for reefs at Kiandra, but actually the gold there, in my opinion, came out of leaders, small reefs. Reefs are not to be found. They had one down behind the old post office, found a reef there. It was outstanding, otherwise there was hardly any reef gold found around Kiandra. They were barking up the wrong stump altogether looking for reefs. It came out of these leaders.

WH: Were the Chinese as thrifty and painstaking in their workings there as they were in other parts?

BH: They always went through - they made their living after others had given it away.

WH: There's no good working through a gully that the Chinese had been through because you'd never ever make anything, unless you came along 50 years later - they'd got it all.

BH: I had experience with them in other places - Pine Creek and Northern Territory - they were up there, they'd worked a lot of the ground - small shafts, round holes - they never put square holes, they always put round.

KH: It's safer of course ...

BH: It's safer and they didn't shift one spade full of dirt, more than what they'd fit. They were very very economical in their work.

KH: While we are on Chinamen, do you remember Harry Burgess?

BH: I remember Burgess, I can't think of the Harry part of it.

KH: The guy that used to work for you!

BH: Harry Burgess - no. I remember He therington and Cook.

KH: Harry Burgess is a cleaner at work in Canberra. He worked at the Elaine in the 30s. I haven't pinned him down to exactly which year, but it was pretty-well towards the end of the Elaine mine.

BH: I wasn't there at that time, it was about '33 or so that I left there. He might have been there then.

KH: Yes, he does mention '34 and '35. As far as he remembers that is when he was there. He was there for quite some time and he mentions these names that you've just mentioned - Richard Gavin Cook.

BH: Cook was one of those curiosities. He was a man you could write a book about - the things that he did and said - strange fellow.

KH: How old was he then?

BH: He was in his 50s - he died many years ago.

KH: Would there be any descendants?

BH: No he was a single man.

KH: Typical diggings character was he?

BH: He was a real cousin Jack. When he stood erect, his hands hung down below his knees - he was like a gorilla. They talk about people able to put their hands on the ground and stand erect - he could put his elbows without bending his knees - he was a funny man - it was just natural for him. He wasn't very tall, or a very big chap, but when it came to using tools, he could use them every which way. He had no trouble working in any position.

KH: He worked at the Elaine for quite a while did he?

BH: Yes, He therington was there quite a while too.

KH: Cecil He therington, yes. I was just interested in how these people got there. What would Gavin Cook have done before ...

BH: Cook had been mining all his life, spent a lot of time around Lobbs Hole. A very good miner, very capable man.

KH: Would he have had any brothers or sisters who ...

BH: He had brothers, they were older than himself, I don't think any of them would be alive today.

WH: When Elaine started, they went and rounded up any of the miners that they knew and could find, put them to work I suppose.

BH: Yes, we had a crowd there. Barnett had some men working for him from Sydney, building. Instead of putting these men off he took them up and gave them a job on the mine. I've forgotten their names. It takes me a while to think of them. Watson was one chap, old Dan was another - I forget his name - I have visions of Dan trying to ski. He came down a hill and got one leg each side of a tree.

KH: I've got a Tom Watson.

BH: Yes, Tom Watson was there.

KH: I've got a reference of Tom Watson from the Lorna Doone.

BH: Yes, I think he'd have been there for a little while probably.

KH: He worked at the Elaine as well?

BH: Yes.

KH: Bill was saying the other day, they took material from the Lorna Doone, they were always taking material for Nine Mile, they combed the field, to build up Nine Mile - Elaine rather, the last one going, so it's always good mining practice to go and see what you can scrounge. It's been done ever since mining was first started.

KH: And then Bob in turn probably scrounged the Elaine to build his hut at the Four Mile.

WH: Yes, it must have. That's the hut that Bill - I've shown him the slide

of it - he's never seen it. He doesn't know of any hut on that side. Of course, the toilet for it was built right in one of the race lines.

KH: This Richard Gavin Cook - what sort of wages ... I imagine in those days he wouldn't get ahead very much through his earnings. He would have to work fairly hard all his life.

BH: He was getting the award rates at that time. He had no interest in the mine. He and He<sup>u</sup>therington would only be on the award, whatever it was.

KH: Cook was already an older chap when he worked for you?

BH: Yes, Cook and He<sup>u</sup>therington were both good miners, especially Cook. Some of these other chaps like Dan and Watson, a few of the others that were there, didn't know anything about mining, they were just builders labourers, carpenters and that sort of thing.

WH: Cook might have been one of those fellows I've heard about that could swing the old hammer and tap...'

BH: Yes, different saying is three men striking on the same drill 'pretty work boy, pretty work'. One man would be turning the drill and hitting it and there's two others with a big hammer. They reckon that was pretty work. It just has a chisel type bit on it and each time it has to be turned slightly.

KH: To make a hole to put powder in?

BH: If you could see the bottom of the hole, it would be just taking a slice off all the way round, just turned about the same amount each time.

KH: How do you empty it? How do you get the stuff out?

BH: They generally use water, and splashed out. A piece of leather over the top to keep it from splashing everywhere. The ground is so fine that it would get away and the water would fill the hole ...

WH: I've gone into the shafts and struck the quartz in there with a hammer, taken a gap out of the hammer. When you'd dealing with a steel chisel you don't make much impression on that stuff for a single head.

KH: At the Elaine for instance, your face would have been vertical wouldn't it? Would it be a vertical face that you'd have to knock ...

BH: Yes.

WH: Except when you are digging out the floor, you could get ahead a bit and then carve a bit out of the floor I suppose. You start off vertically Bill, into the side, cut your way down into the floor?

BH: No, take it from the bottom first, it falls on top you see.

WH: What do they call that, felling down on top of yourself, it's an old mining practice.

BH: When we were there, we were just taking cuts out.

KH: You'd cut holes in at ground level - would you blow up a section of the face - would you dynamite the section?

BH: Yes, and the idea was generally to keep going in at ground level, low level to keep the rails as far in as possible, so as to make it easier and get the stuff out. The stuff falling down from the top was easier to handle. They use flat sheets of course - sheets of ... for the stuff to fall on and make it easier ... take the bottom out first. Using the jack hammers, which we did, we used to put in about 20 holes at a time I suppose and fire the bottom ones first - no, the centre one first I should say, then the bottom ones, the shoulder holes, the top holes last. There was quite an art in doing it.

KH: Those jack hammers - you didn't have those earlier on though?

BH: No, it was hand drilling. With those of course we only had a very limited number of holes in and they used to fire them every time we'd drill, every day, at least once a day. Leave it overnight, let the dust settle and smog get away and be ready for the next day.

WH: Very warm work I suppose in a tunnel - with a pneumatic drill it would be hot.

BH: With a pneumatic drill it is cool enough while the drills are working because you've got the compressed air but as soon as the drills stop, its hot.

WH: Even in mid winter it would be hot down there wouldn't it.

BH: It would be about the same temperature I think, summer and winter underground.

KH: You say you had hoses right in from the compressor for the jack hammer 500-600 feet long?

BH: Yes. A pipe line of course.

WH: Yes, that's what that water pipe line - there's a water pipe line running in there - couldn't work out what it was for.

BH: Carried the air in by pipeline.

KH: Like water pipe - there is a lot of it lying at the Four Mile. There's a great pile of wood at the Four Mile.

BH: Not only air going in but water - use water on the hammers to keep the dust down - so there were two lines going in - water and air.

WH: Where did you get the water from Bill?

BH: I've forgotten now to tell you truth, it was reticulation.

WH: One of the race line above you reckon.

KH: When you were at the Elaine, do you remember the sluicing holes - the header dam above that, with all the rocks packed nicely, about 10' high - was the valve still in when you ... was the dam still intact?

BH: No, it was broken away, the valve was taken out.

KH: Do you know anything about that - about the valve being removed?

BH: No, I don't think ... in those days they didn't use a brass valve or a normal type of valve, it was more or less a box.

WH: There's still remains of that at the Empress dam, if you look down on the edge of the dam, there is still bits of wood and so on - part of the gate.

BH: Yes.

WH: Bill explained the other day, they nearly all worked after that fashion, a gate with a lever principle. Very, very simple ...

BH: ... of course the ends out, the gate would lift up and down on the end.

WH: In other words, a wooden tunnel through the wall ...

BH: Yes, pretty massive timber you know. It would last. The gate was arranged so that it could be lifted with a lever.

KH: And the gate was actually at the face wall of the dam? The dam would be here - the water would be here right up against ...

WH: The water was up against the gate was it?

BH: Yes, hard up against the gate and the cleats on each side here, on the inside of course, and on the bottom. This top board - top slab would end 1½" away from the end of it - the gate would rest on that.

KH: It wouldn't make a very good seal would it?

BH: With a few shovel full of earth thrown in around it, it would immediately suck into it and then they used to put bagging and that sort of thing around it.

KH: Around the whole box?

BH: Just around the gate.

KH: It would be difficult to seal off the walls of the box and the rest of the dam wall wouldn't it.

BH: All this was filled in - that would be the only part that was open to the water.

KH: Yes, I understand, I was always under the impression that they were metal.

BH: They wouldn't use metal at all.

BILL HUGHES

CASSETTE 2, SIDE 3

WH: Round at Moulds hut there is one of the sluicing nozzles that's come from somewhere - the actual mouth is about 1½" across. I'd imagine they would have much bigger ones at Empress.

BH: They had about 4" - the largest. They really called them monitor nozzles.

WH: You can only run it on a minimum of 75' pressure and I think they ran better at 120, but you could run them on 75 in the Shoalhaven country. You had to have the dam at least 75' above the actual spray.

BH: That's for lifting the stuff from the bottom of the ... I now what you mean ... to lift the wash and everything up into the boxes.

WH: To throw the water pressure with such a big nozzle, had to have a high dam, whereas the little nozzles were only - the dam could be fairly close to the top of the workings.

BH: The 2" nozzle was used for cutting and the larger nozzles for sluicing the stuff away. A 2" nozzle you could practically rip the wall of a brick house down - it's big pressure.

KH: How did they channel the water out of this box valve into pipes? They had to have pipes didn't they ...

WH: You could use a flange, a bit of galvanised iron for a start.

BH: Actually in most of the small workings there are no pipes used or no ... it was just simply ground sluicing.

KH: I'm thinking ... we are talking about 2" nozzle and 6" nozzle, like the big sluicing out at South Bloomfield or at the Empress ...

BH: They'd use it to some extent there but not to any great extent. They'd use it more at the Nine Mile because ... that's the Empress mine because they had more fall there, but when it came to the small workings, the less they used.

WH: The principle of using the nozzle is to undermine the face where it falls down, then you'd use a bigger nozzle, to wash all the loose dirt out, and run up through your boxes, pick up the gold.

KH: How would they have done it in South Bloomfield, they would have just let the water out of the header dam whenever they required it - for what washing gold?

BH: For washing the stuff away, they probably pick it down, let it go down into the trench and then they had a big mound of dirt there - wash dirt - they keep the water over to it with sandbags - run it along the edges.

WH: It's more or less just ground sluicing.

BH: It wasn't like hosing it down - not practical.

KH: You don't think they hosed that hole?

BH: Not a lot.

KH: Mostly brought down with a pick into the boxes ...

BH: I don't think they had much pressure there to be worth their while. I've had quite a bit of experience in this because I went to New Guinea and worked on the hydraulic mines up there. There they really had high pressure, they had as many as seven nozzles operating at a time. They were about 1½" or 2" to 4" or 5".

WH: The cutting nozzle to undermine ...

BH: That was a different story, because they had the long pipe line and they had the pressure.

KH: So the box valve would have rotted and collapsed. Would this have caused the big breach in the dam wall?

BH: Well the water coming through ...

KH: The water would then overflow so that it would all sink - or there would be a hole anyway - that would get bigger and slump, and slump and fall.

BH: It would be cone like a v-shape.

KH: We have been trying to explain why many of the dam walls are breached - Broken Dam is breached, the South Bloomfield is breached - Nine Mile is not.

WH: It's only a very small dam and the water supply has long since ceased to run into it.

KH: There must still be a hole through there somewhere.

WH: There's a little bit of wooden framing on the inside of the dam and the other thing is there is a spillway on one side and that might cope with the overflow. If the gate goes, then it's going to tear through there.

BH: Getting away from there, you know going into Kiandra after you cross the Eucumbene, you go up to the town, down on your left there is what they call Iles(?) Flat and has - I think there is a road leading down there through a camping ground or picnic ground ...

Just after you cross the bridge?

BH: Yes, and down on the Flat there are 2 or 3 big water holes ...

WH: Where the dredges were?

BH: No, they weren't hydraulic - I'm just coming to this. The pipe line from the Three Mile Dam comes right around well up near the top of One Tree Hill - its the hill behind Hospital Hill in Kiandra - that pipe line was about the longest that they ever used in the Kiandra area, it was from the top of One Tree Hill down to those holes on Iles(?) Flat. It started off fairly big at the top - might have been 3'-4' pipes - it was narrowed down to about 10" down at the bottom. They used that partly for the hose or the nozzle I should say and partly for the elevator. Another system that they used in those elevators - the pipe goes up on an angle up into the boxes and at the bottom of the pipe there is a hole. It's up to about 8" or 9" according to what size rock.

KH: The water sucks the earth in does it?

BH: Yes. The water is like a nozzle and it's going up at a terrific pressure - up into the boxes. You use a separate nozzle for forcing the dirt into this.

WH: Would you lose a bit of gold that way Bill?

BH: No they'd catch it in the boxes.

WH: I mean on the lifting part of it.

BH: We were lifting it 80<sup>feet</sup> at Sunshine in New Guinea. A terrific pressure. I think the boxes were 4<sup>feet</sup> wide at the top. I think that's the longest pipeline ever used in the Kiandra area.

(Looking at old map to locate Hospital Hill).

WH: One thing I did notice, there weren't too many stumps appearing around Kiandra. I thought the trees would all be chopped down and they would be just stumps.

BH: They use them for firewood.

WH: Stumps and all did they?

BH: When the stumps are well rotted they make good backlogs. That was in the later years. I remember once bringing a log and putting it on the fire and after it had been on there for a while, a snake crawled out the end of it. It cleared the room straight away. Have you seen any black snakes up there now? There was at one time a lot of snakes.

KH: I've heard of a black snake at Broken Dam Hut.

WH: We did see a snake last summer up there, there are not many.

BH: When they turn the water into these long line pipes like that, there are a lot of small holes. The pipes had been shifted from one place to the other so often you could see water spurting out the full length of the line. Old rivett holes and that sort of thing, they lost a lot of water between the dam at the head and the nozzle.

KH: Would that have been piped all the way from the valve to the face?

BH: All pipes right down.

KH: So there they would have needed a different kind of valve wouldn't they?

BH: They must have had a valve at the end of the line too, naturally.

KH: At the dam end?

BH: Yes.

KH: It would have had to have been more than a box ...

BH: In that case they would have a pretty substantial metal valve.

WH: I'm just thinking Bill, from that valve at Three Mile, they would carry it by canal around to One Tree Hill wouldn't they, then put it into the pipe.

BH: That race came down from the Three Mile across onto the back - round near what they call the Little Dam - Bullock Head Creek - high up.

BH: Came right around the back of Township Hill, around past the township up into Pollocks Gully, across there, half way between Dunns Hill and town, across there and then lead right down the Spur - Hospital Hill and One Tree Hill.

KH: While we are on Bullocks Head Creek where that race line comes from, one of those gullys is called Pig Gully isn't it? Do you remember a guy called Fred Bernhardt.

BH: Strangely, I've been talking about him quite a lot lately. There's a chap who lives up the street here, he was born at Adaminaby. I happened to meet him by chance one day and he'd been up there mining since I was there. They had a mine not far from Three Mile. They had this mine at Mineral Hill. There's a creek that runs from Three Mile Dam - this chap had Fred Bernhardt working for him and Fred used to tell him he had a hut at Pig Gully and how he had put an extension on it - it was burnt.

During the 1914-18 war, of course you wouldn't remember those days, but they were afraid of being interned - the Bernhardts - and this chap up here, his name is Schaeffer - he was another German migrant - things were rather drastic in those days.

KH: Schaeffer?

BH: Schaeffer - his father had the copper mine - its covered by the dam water now.

KH: Where else did this Schaeffers - how long is it since they've come back?

BH: They were working on Mineral Hill, somewhere about 1936-37 I think.

KH: Was there a family, brothers?

BH: They were around Adaminaby.

WH: Mineral Hill is on that hill I suspect. There were various batteries up from Three Mile.

KH: It must be one that you or someone else told me about - I've heard of that battery.

WH: There's a battery up at the back of Three Mile.

KH: Schaeffer's battery - I've got reference to it - I was going to ask you about - off the Kings Cross Road. I must have read about in the Mines Dept. Report.

WH: Someone stole a battery from up there not long ago.

BH: There is a chance that there is a battery still up at the Lorna Doone.

WH: I remember that, we are not quite sure where the thing is - I've got some detailed maps.

KH: I want to know where Lorna Doone is.

WH: Do you know anything else about Fred Bernhardt?

BH: He was there for many years, he worked at the New Chum Hill tunnel,

he did a little bit of work at the Nine Mile - working on the leaders there. He got a little patch of gold.

KH: Do you know what happened to him?

BH: No, I don't know, the last time I heard of him was from this chap up here.

KH: You left in '33?

BH: Somewhere thereabouts. I wouldn't be sure of that but I know I was up in Pine Creek in the Territory in 1934.

KH: You didn't go back for a long time?

BH: Excepting for going through Kiandra I haven't been back there since. I haven't been to the Elaine since then.

KH: Since 1932. That's amazing because all this stuff is still there - its amazing you never went back.

BH: I've been all over Australia and New Guinea.

WH: You've never made the big strike - you must have had the gold fever.

BH: No, my business in mining was generally developing mines. I often went along to a mine to report on it and tell them whether it was payable and how they should work it, things of that sort.

KH: Did you work for the Mines Department.

BH: No, for a private company. I was with Sunshine Gold in New Guinea, Bald Hill Limited at Orange. I was about 4-5 years there.

KH: What were they mining?

BH: Gold.

KH: Which direction from Orange?

BH: Where we went it was out to Eukarena.. We turned off there and went nearly onto the Macquarie River.

KH: It was Cadia.

BH: No, I know Cadia - that's copper and gold. I brought some plans from Cadia to use at Bald Hill.

KH: This Schaeffer guy - he's now an older man I suppose.

BH: A year or so younger than myself I think.

KH: He has a good memory?

BH: Yes. He didn't go up there mining until those years.

KH: From Adaminaby?

BH: Yes. It was on account of the Depression that he went there.

WH: Just speaking of the Depression - they'd go to a job up there because there was no work down here - how did they all get on together up there. Sometimes when blokes live in close proximity like that, in the mining ...

BH: There was no trouble, everybody seemed to get on very well.

WH: You're looking at one another's pockets in the mine shaft and accommodation

is pretty close, I suppose they didn't have much time to go to town and get full very often.

KH: Did the miners from Elaine go into Kiandra very much?

BH: Not a great deal. Some of them went bushwalking at the weekend. Sometimes fossicking.

KH: Did they have horses?

BH: Most of them didn't. My brother and I had a few horses - they were taken away from there during the winter months, down to Lobbs Hole as a rule. It was the closest place where there was no snow.

WH: You would have ridden down the old mining track?

BH: Yes, I've been down Wallaces creek, I think about 20 crossings in the creek into Lobbs Hole. You can go about 4 miles out from Kiandra and you come to what they call the top of the hill and you can look right down into Lobbs Hole, although its about 14 miles away.

WH: That's the old gold mining track.

BH: They got a lot of copper down there.

KH: So you used to have a few horses - you wouldn't have built any race lines would you?

BH: No.

KH: I was just going to get on to whether or not they used horses.

BH: They used a horse and a scoop at times but that was only on some of the bigger shows. Nearly all pick and shovel.

WH: Did the Chinese do much of this?

BH: Not a great deal. A Chinese gang worked on the Three Mile Dam - about 70 of them there I understand. They were using horses and carts.

KH: In general miners didn't use horses very much - they preferred to walk.

BH: Yes.

WH: When they were cutting the race, did they have to have a surveyor or did they survey it themselves?

BH: They surveyed it themselves. They used what they call a triangle. It's just a triangle with a weighted plumb bob suspended in the middle of the top of it. All they needed was 1" in about 6', as long as the water would run.

KH: Were you telling me about some other devices.

WH: I've got an idea the Chinese had some ingenious device of their own.

BH: Very simple and very effective.

WH: Laying out the race initially though, how would they, for argument sake, if they wanted to get water from Broken Dam around to South Bloomfield, they would have to know the height of the saddles on the way and what the country was like.

BH: In the bigger jobs I think they had some surveying instruments - small places they just went by the sight of the eye.

I had one thing pointed out to me that was interesting at the Grey Mare at Bogong. They put a race in there and they didn't lay it properly. It was cut in summer time when there was no water and when they turned the water in and tried to use it they couldn't get the water through. It just wouldn't run. They were asking it to run up hill.

WH: They had a number of races down the creek - you can see them running steeply up the hill. I don't know what they were doing with them - sluicing the creek I suppose.

BH: They put a tremendous number of races in. I don't know how they found water to use them. Sometimes what appear to be races down the hillsides are brought about by wagons coming down there - they'd cut a track down and the water would get into it and cut it out. The result would be a trench down the hill. Sometimes there would be more weight on one side than the other. I remember hills in different places, 5 or 6 different tracks up the hill. I knew them as tracks but anyone could easily take them for races. A bullock wagon would come down and it would dig in a bit, well the next time it would come down, it would be a bit further over and then a bit further over again. The result was 5 or 6 different races.

KH: Do you remember how they brought the steam engine in to the Elaine?

BH: By bullock wagon. An old chap named Dan French from Tumut, he had it brought in by bullocks. I remember it quite well, it was lying on the ground at ....

BH: .... just pulled it through and dropped it underneath.  
 WH: Not too heavy for the wagon.  
 BH: No, it took it alright.  
 KH: Was it a wooden wheel wagon?  
 BH: Yes, a four wheel wagon. He took it up the steepest part of Dunn's Hill. He didn't go around the side, he went almost straight up because he thought he could do it better that way than what he could to go around the side. He was a funny chap, he used to duck underneath the bullocks and come up on the other side. He was everywhere at the same time with his whip going, the bullocks must have thought there were 2 or 3 drivers. There were 14 bullocks - that seems to be the general team.  
 KH: When did they take the engine out there?  
 BH: I couldn't tell you the date - before 1926. My job was stopping the wagon, so that if it started to roll back it would hold.  
 KH: How long did it take you to bring that engine in from Kiandra?  
 BH: I don't know, probably in a day - I'd say a day.  
 KH: If the track from Elaine went up to the Milkman's Flat, you must have had a very steep pinch, down into the Elaine.  
 BH: He'd come down, not straight over the hill into Elaine, he'd come back down and around ...  
 KH: Go right up to Milkman's Flat, come back down to Glennies ...  
 WH: No, he's only turning a right angle there, he's practically going due east from there. He's only going very slightly back on his track to get down that Spur.  
 KH: He wouldn't go right up to Milkman's Flat?  
 WH: Virtually, because that's where the road went.  
 BH: He had to, to get around the Four Mile workings.  
 KH: Then you are a long way up above the Elaine - 300-400<sup>feet</sup> ...  
 WH: In height about 400<sup>feet</sup> ...  
 BH: You know the little dam in the gully there, just on the road as you go around to the Elaine.  
 WH: The little dam is where it crosses the creek, after it leaves the big open cut at Four Mile, that open cut nearly cuts the ridge in half, you pick up the road there. I presume one goes straight up the ridge, just around the side of the ridge and the other one that goes to Elaine drops down - you can't miss that cutting and the little dam there - is that the one you meant Bill?  
 BH: Yes, well he'd go around from there - he'd come down the ridge from Milkman's Creek and go round from there.  
 KH: How did he get across the creeks - he had it filled up with logs, did he?

BH: It would have to be built up then, probably washed out since.  
 KH: He didn't get bogged?  
 BH: No.  
 KH: What about the last steep pinch into the Elaine?  
 BH: No trouble, the bullocks could handle it alright.  
 KH: The bullocks could break - like the steam engine on its wagon would push them down hill wouldn't it?  
 BH: He had brakes on his wagon of course.  
 KH: He didn't have to tie a tree to the back of it.  
 WH: I was talking to old Alf Davis up at Burrigran and he used to help his father when he was about 10 years with the bullocks. He reckons he's seen bullocks pull on their knees, it was that steep and rough they were down on their knees and they were still pulling - he said he never would have believed it. A horse would never do it.  
 KH: Harry Burgess, who used to work at the Elaine, remembers a white truck - a flat top truck that went out to the Elaine. Would there have been some other machinery that they would have taken in after you left?  
 BH: I don't know really what happened. There was a family of Burgess' that lived in Kiandra in the early days. I don't know whether he would be one of those.  
 KH: The Burgess' are from Kiandra. He's got a sister over at Talbingo or Tumut whom he goes to see. They knew the Patericks well and he speaks very well of Fred Bernardt. He and Harry had a tunnel - they worked the New Chum hill at one stage - and Fred apparently.  
 BH: I can't remember Harry. I remember Burgess. It's just one of those blanks.  
 KH: You'd probably remember him if you saw him. He mainly remembers your brother Bob. I haven't specifically asked him if he remembers you, but he certainly talks about Bob and I think he was also very well aware of the Four Mile hut that your brother lived in - the present Four Mile hut. I suppose Harry may have known you - just in Kiandra as an acquaintance or something.  
 BH: This is long before his time, there was a family of Burgess who lived in Kiandra for many years. They were there probably in the 1900 even before then. They had a house near where my people used to live - I think they would be the closest house near Dunns Hill.  
 WH: The homestead furthest up the gully?  
 BH: That's - Pattinson had one there, that's getting round the 40s and 50s. No, this was further down. My people lived right in the centre there, about 300 or 400 yards from where Pattinsons were living and then Burgess' were a little bit further down just over a little bit of a rise. They were there many many years ago. I know Bill Burgess, I can't think of any others - Tassej Burgess,

- I remember Tass. I remember a sports meeting they had - my brother Bob was in the championship race, racing against Burgess. They had three races - beside the township - three dead heats. It was rather a record. It's probably mentioned in the Ski Year Book. A chap made a piece of poetry up about it - I remember the last of it "third and last time Hughes was best and Burgess won the cup".

KH: Who would have that poem?

BH: Stewart Jamieson I think put it in one of the Year Books - I supplied him with it. One of the very earliest Year Books. It was rather interesting in that three times they came down that mountain and it was a dead heat, and then of course there was a controversy over it. The people put in a few shillings each and they bought my brother a cup similar to what was given to Burgess.

KH: I haven't asked Harry the names of his brothers or sisters but it sounded that from what Harry was saying, he'd knocked around that country for a long time. He then went to Broken Hill to do some more mining and then came back to Canberra.

BH: His people were evidently there very early in the piece.

KH: Jim Pattinson - they remember you, the Pattinsons. They are in Canberra.

BH: They live there now do they?

KH: Yes.

BH: That's interesting. I'd like to see them.

KH: I can give you their address, they don't have a phone. Jim's almost at retiring age I think - he's about 63 or 64 I suppose.

BH: What's he doing now - what does he work at?

KH: He's sort of working as an assistant at some kind of high school.

BH: He was with the Snowy Mountains Scheme for some years, Park ranger or something.

KH: I don't know about Jim.

WH: He was Australian downhill champion in '48. He trained at Whites River for a whole winter one season.

KH: They went in there at times, yes.

Jim's wife's memory is very good. He tells the story and she comes in with the details. One of the things that she talked about was these graves between the Nine Mile and the Lorna Doone and she talks about - I think it was her who mentioned a Mrs Robertson who used to go out there and look after the graves.

BH: I don't remember that name - wasn't Mrs Sutherland?

KH: Yes, sorry.

WH: Sutherlands are mixed up in mining shows out there aren't they?

BH: Three Mile Dam - reef mines - a great deal of water coming in from the dam - keep them out. They poisoned all the fish in the dam too.

KH: The mineralized ore?

BH: The reason I mention that is she had sent the wreath out there when we buried him - one of those glass covered wreaths and it was put on the grave.

WH: This was an Englishman who you found out there.

BH: Yes, Hewitt. I found him there.

KH: There was only one grave was it?

BH: That's only one there, yes.

KH: That was on the way out to Lorna Doone?

BH: Yes.

KH: How far out towards the Lorna Doone would it be?

WH: It's not hard because I've picked the dam up on studying the photos. There's a dam in the head of a creek out there which I'd missed in previous photos. Did you know the name of the gully Ernie Hewitt was working in?

BH: I think it was called the Springs.

WH: There must have been a reasonable amount of water up there because the dam hasn't got much catch in it.

BH: It was right high up on a ridge so there wasn't very much water - they called the place the Springs.

WH: You just went out there one day ...?

BH: I went out to Lorna Doone to have a look at the place I used to ride down, just to check up on things now and again and going back home I went around by his workings to see if he was there - naturally you always called on anybody like that - I went to his hut, I could see there had been no fire for a few days. I went down to the mine - he had a cutting in like a trench into a softish bit of ground, his clothes that he'd take off and put his gum boots on and working togs on - were lying on the bank. There was a big fall in that side of it - he was underneath it, it was obvious where he was. I came into Kiandra and told the local police and he rang up the coroner I think, I stayed there overnight and the next day I took the coroner out and the doctor and the policeman. When we got out there my brother and father had later uncovered his arm - they hadn't uncovered the body - there was too much of a smell about it so they just asked the coroner, doctor and policeman to inspect it. We had the job then of digging him out, making a coffin on the spot ...

WH: What did you make it out of?

BH: His old sluicing box that he had - it was about 4" thick because it was split timber.

? What sort of marker did you leave on top?

BH: There was nothing left there then but it was some days later Mrs Sutherland sent the wreath out to be put on.

KH: She didn't come out herself?

BH: No. At that time there was an old chap named Connolly - I was naturally

there at the burial because I was taking these bliters back into Kiandra again.

WH: Who would have been at the burial?

BH: There was an old chap named Connolly there, he worked on the telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin and he read the burial service.

WH: That was put in 100 years ago.

BH: Yes, we used to call him Oodnadatta Bill.

KH: He was the parson?

BH: No, he was only reading the burial service and he couldn't help swearing. He brought a few oaths into the service as he went along.

KH: What was his name?

BH: Connolly.

WH: Was he in Kiandra or was he working up there somewhere?

BH: He had a little hut, about half way between Milkman's Flat and the Nine Mile. He had a little mine there.

WH: Is this the fellow you told us got half full ...?

BH: Yes. He had a job to read the service - he wasn't an educated man.

WH: So he was just buried out there near his hut?

BH: Yes, he had a very small hut, he was an Englishman. One of his nephews had a very good position with the airways company in England and I wrote to him and told him the story about Ernie - explained how he'd died and so on. He wrote back and said that he had no idea that Ernie was in such circumstances, that he could have been sending him something - a few bob. On the other hand, Ernie was sending him presents, making out that he was fairly well to do, that he had a gold mine in Australia.

KH: And really he was just about starving?

BH: Yes, on the bread line. He was a typical little English chap, he had no experience in the Australian bush, he didn't know anything about mining, every thing was very difficult for him. He wouldn't take any notice of other people - he'd do things his own way

WH: He wouldn't take any advice?

BH: No, in fact it did more good than harm in trying to advise. I remember telling him that, where he was working, that I didn't see any prospects in it and he'd told some other people that I had tried to run him off the place so that I could get it myself. It was really a hopeless place where he was working.

KH: Did he get any gold do you know?

BH: I don't think so. It was quite a hopeless proposition.

WH: How did he live - did he get some gold or did he just work for other people?

BH: I don't know, he must have - I don't know whether there was any pension in those days.

WH: What date would he have died roughly?

BH: Might be able to work it out - couldn't tell you.

WH: After Elaine was going?

BH: No, long before that - round about 1917/18 or something.

KH: You were still fairly young then weren't you?

BH: Yes. The reason why I remember that is my brother, father and myself were working on the leaders at the Nine Mile, that was well before we started on the Elaine.

WH: In the Year Books there is mention of someone being killed by a fall of earth in the depression times. It didn't say who it was.

BH: A chap named Doran - Billy Doran who used to do a bit of skiing.

WH: Patty Doran's brother.

BH: George Doran's brother. He was prospecting and he burrowed under a very big boulder and it came down on him.

WH: Where would that have been?

BH: That was on the Eucumbene River just below Kiandra. Down below the gorge. Have you seen the holes bored out there in the solid rock?

WH: No, I've only looked at it on the photos - I've walked in and looked over the side but I haven't been through it. Did they bore holes in the side of the rock?

BH: Well these holes were shaped like castles - 10', 15', 20' in the solid hard rock. It's rather a feature about that part of the river.

WH: Do you think they are old swirl holes from an old river bed?

BH: No, they're just - there's been a big boulder settled in the river bed and the sand and everything swirled around it. It's cut it down and lowered it. It's very smooth on the inside, absolutely solid. I got a few ounces of gold ...

WH: How did you get the water out to get into it or was it dry?

BH: It was practically dry and the reason why it was there was a big boulder being left on top of the rock and miners had been all round it and missed it. I rolled the boulder to one side and it was underneath. It was only as big as an ordinary beer cask but it had about 5 or 6 ounces of gold in it. It was concentrated - instead of passing over during the centuries - all the heavy stuff had settled down into it.

WH: That would be a good find - 5 or 6 ounces?

BH: It was very useful at that time.

KH: Where would you have taken your gold to?

BH: Mostly to the mint here in Sydney.

KH: Did you take it to Sydney yourself?

BH: Sometimes. I remember once bringing 300 ounces down and I was only young at the time - about 22 I suppose - I was coming down with another chap

and I didn't mention anything to him about having this gold. I had a money belt - I brought it down and took it to the mint and handed it in and got a receipt for it and I was very pleased to see it there.

KH: There's no records of you in the Mines Department in the Annual Reports. There are records of your brother Bob and how much gold he got at Kiandra and how much he was paid for it, but there's none for Bill Hughes.

BH: I don't know in that case - part of this gold was his you see and whether it was put in his name. He was older than I was and in those days, if there were 3 or 4 in the party - the one with the eldest name. I think probably that was the position.

WH: Another thing too, you wouldn't always want to tell the Mines Department if you were on a good thing somewhere. You'd sell it quietly in town to the storekeepers like they're still doing. They still buy gold over the counter.

KH: Do they?

WH: Yes, when I was up there about 10 years ago the bloke showed me a little pile of gold that he'd bought from the fossickers, it was fairly chunky stuff, he showed it to me. He said, 'I cashed this because the mint - I quite happy to pay them 99% of the going rate, I do them a favour, but I buy all their supplies'.

BH: We worked together. That 300 ounces we split up between the three of us.

WH: That \$100 ounces each. That would have been about £3 an ounce in those days?

BH: Near £4 an ounce. That was cut from the leaders.

WH: Probably a year's work or something or did you just ...

BH: It wasn't many weeks work actually, but over a period of a year because we only got water during certain times of the year. Luckily we got 3 or 4 months water.

KH: This would be in the spring and autumn would it?

BH: In the spring. The rest of the year we just had to wait for the water to put our stuff through.

KH: What did you do?

BH: We put a certain amount of things together for the mine - dry work, sometimes looked after cattle or sheep - took a job during the summer month - not cattle so much as sheep.

WH: Someone said that you and your brother had a palamino stud around Talbingo somewhere after the war - you weren't there after the war were you?

BH: No. We had some very nice ponies - Arab. They were a palamino type.

WH: Maybe they're confusing the story with your brother.

BH: I don't think so. It might have been some that he'd sold.

KH: Have you been to see - I'd imagine there are still some sisters or brothers alive at Talbingo?

BH: I haven't got any relations at all around that area. I've got nephews, but no brothers or sisters.

KH: I think Harry mentioned some nephews of yours - at Talbingo or Tumut?

BH: My brother's boy - a shop at Adelong, another boy has a garage there. They are Jack's sons.

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CASSETTE THREE - SIDE 5

WH: How do you spell it?

BH: Ah Doo. they had a house on the Nine Mile Creek - they lived there when I was just a nipper, I can just about remember them - I was 6 or 7 years of age. I think there is probably two or three of them buried there.

WH: That have lived in the house?

BH: Yes, I've seen the house, I remember the house well. The house was still there in 1917/18.

WH: Was it down below the workings a bit or was it up from the creek a bit on the northern side.

BH: Up on the northern side.

WH: There seems to be a bit of the remains of a dam wall up in there, up in the snow grass part in the north western corner of Nine Mile. A little bit of a wall there that's just below the track going out to Lorna Doone.

BH: I think that's probably where we were working.

WH: There's not much catchment for this dam because it's up near the top of the ridge and the road ...

BH: The water was brought in there from the head of the Nine Mile Creek.

WH: Did you work the old Empress races and so on while you around there to get water or ...

BH: No, I've never had anything to do with them.

WH: You had your own race lines?

BH: Yes, it wasn't such a dreadful job cutting a race. After all it was only soft ground - I've cut a good many yards of race in my day. That's with ordinary pick and shovel. A lot of those races were only surface races to catch the melting snow.

WH: Is that why they were shallow.

There could be about three Chinese graves out there, so you'd have to

know where to look for those I suppose wouldn't you?

BH: Yes, you'd have to know. They're just a little way over from their old house. This chap Smith - Sanko Smith, he found the house there at that time - 1917/18 - it was falling down, he wasn't doing anything to keep it in order. It was full of all sorts of relics that I'd like to have now.

KH: You mean your old family home?

BH: No, this is the house this Chinaman lived in. I remember seeing a double barrel nozzle loading shotgun and a single barrel nozzle loading shotgun. There was all sorts of relics that these Chinamen had.

Sanko bought the house with all the stuff in it did he.

BH: They collected, they have lived in it for years. They were mining around there for ages. Sanko Smith was just the squatter that owned the lease holds around there.

KH: It was the Chinamen who were there a long time?

BH: Yes.

There must be some sign of that house left there?

BH: There would be. The iron on the roof was that good old English iron. Not the original iron, that heavy stuff?

BH: Yes. There should be a bit of that left. I went to this old house at different time, just poking around it, I remember when you stepped onto the door step to go in, one of these old eight day alarm clocks would start to strike. They reckon it was a spooky sort of a house. The floor was all shaky.

KH: Where do you put your house - the house where you were born in relation to the big sluicing hole?

BH: The north side of the old Empress under the hill - in the timber. Were there many other houses in the timber there?

BH: I can't remember that, the earliest I can remember anything about Nine Mile would be when I was about six years of age - 1909. I was taken away from there then. I didn't go back for quite a few years - living in Kiandra. The family moved.

KH: How long had they been living at Nine Mile?

BH: I couldn't tell you that - they went up there from Adaminaby. It would be a few years - before the turn of the century. My father was the mailman. Dad went up there when he was about 9 years of age, he told me, to the gold fields. He was born here in Parramatta. His father, or family went up - different ones in the family - horseback and side-saddle and all this sort of thing. Must have been a real procession.

KH: Would this trip have been at the time of the big rush in 1860?

BH: It wouldn't be then - it wasn't long after.

BH: My grandfather had the contract of running mail from Cooma to Kiandra. At another stage from Tumut to Kiandra - pack horse and then he had a coach. My father was only about 9, he told me, he used to travel with him. Once or twice the old man got drunk he took the mail through himself. My grandfather died, I don't know where or when, when he died my father took the contract over and ran it for some time.

KH: When did your father die?

BH: In Adelong.

KH: He'd be buried in the cemetery, would he. Would the head stone still be there?

BH: Yes, because that's not so terribly long ago. He died in about '46. He saw a lot of doings in the 1870s and 1880s - from 9 years of age you see.

KH: Did he write any of it down?

BH: No, he wasn't able to read and write until he was about 21 - no schooling in those days, it was pretty rough and tumble.

KH: I was interested in your schooling.

BH: I just learnt through practical experience.

KH: Did you go to school in Kiandra?

BH: I went there for a few years. I left Nine Mile when I was 6 and I didn't go back there until I was almost 14 or 15.

KH: If you lived in Kiandra at that time, you must have gone to school a bit I suppose?

BH: I went to the highest school in Australia. We had some pretty rough teachers looking back on it. They should have been using a bullock whip. I remember I had an elder brother - he went to school there. The teacher ordered him to do something and he just punched him in the eye - he was stronger and more capable than the teacher. They were rough kids you know, there's no doubt about it.

KH: When would you have learnt to read and write?

BH: About 6 or 7.

KH: Did you do any more after - you would have done a few years until you were 12 or 13 I suppose.

BH: The school closed down. I think I must have been about 14. The records of old Kiandra would show that.

KH: Then you wandered back up to Nine Mile did you?

BH: Yes.

WH: Was this when your father bought out the remains of the Empress?

BH: Well actually it was Chester Foy that took over the Empress. We were just working with him.

WH: Was he a miner?

BH: Chester Foy was the son of Mark Foy. He had a business at Canberra at one time. I've been trying to think what that area is known as. It's over towards Red Hill - the shopping centre - East Lakes.

KH: It could have been called East Lakes I suppose.

BH: There's a firm that's been there for many years - you'd know them.

WH: What sort of firm - what were they selling?

BH: General goods. But anyhow Chester Foy opened up a shop there mainly stationery. I wasn't doing anything at the time - I knew him pretty well - he asked me to work there.

WH: This would be in the 20s?

BH: Somewhere about '26 or '27. I think it was from there that I went on a trip to Kosciusko - in the winter months. Chester Foy died at the Hydro Majestic up here on the mountains.

KH: The history of the Foy family would be fairly well written up I'd imagine.

WH: They lost a son up there at Mt York - isn't there a Mark Foy memorial up there at on the Mt. York road. One of the sons disappeared over the side and never found him.

BH: That was Marcus Clark. The Hydro-Majestic has been in the Foy family for many years - old Mark Foy had it and then one of the sons had it.

WH: There was a very amusing incident. Foys were being run down by Anthony Hordens at one stage - reckoned it was owned by a Chinaman - Foy was doing fairly well and they weren't. They put it around the town that the real owner was John Ease. There was some fellow masquerading he was an Irishman. Apparently he came out on St Patricks Day and gave away thousands of big green balloons saying to anyone who walked past, 'Foy, he's no Chinaman'.

BH: He had a house built up at Red Hill. He had it built to his own specifications - it was very much the shape of a church. They were all strange the Foys you know - they all did strange things. They had the toilet door and the front door on the house almost together. It was a common thing there for people to come along and knock on the toilet.

WH: Was he interested in mining?

BH: He was interested in mining - he started the Lorna Doone mine up and he called it Lorna Doone because he'd read the book, 'Lorna Doone'.

KH: Apparently Barnett was involved in Lorna Doone?

BH: Ernie Barnett, he was a friend of Foys. I don't know how he came there but he was. It was Barnett and Foy and myself who started the Elaine company.

WH: Is Foy mentioned in the prospectus?

BH: He died you see and that really upset things a bit.

WH: He would be supplying some of the backing?

BH: Yes, we took over the ... brought the stuff for Nine Mile from his estate I think it was - took up where he left off.

WH: Did he do much at Nine Mile?

BH: He didn't do much work there at all, he died rather suddenly. He'd been in the 1914-18 war and he had some lung trouble, he wasn't a strong man.

WH: So virtually at the time he held the huts at Nine Mile he would have been working Lorna Doone would he?

BH: Yes, he was working there about that time.

KH: Harry mentioned a Chinaman dying in an earth fall at Nine Mile. You were talking about the graves of three Chinamen - could one of those have died in an earth fall?

BH: It's possible - I don't know anything about them much - I was so young at the time. I can just remember the names and that's about all.

WH: Is it possible that Harry got the story wrong, that we're dealing with our old mate Ernie Hewitt who died in the earth fall.

KH: It could be but Harry gave me the story - it may have been told to him, of this Chinaman who died in an earth fall and then they had to be buried for 10 years before the bones could be sent back to China which the Chinese then did.

BH: A lot of the old miners went to live in huts after the mining petered out and they died there from suicide and fire and all sorts of ways. They had these huts in different places - lived on their own and they were often found - died from different reasons.

KH: Well you found Glennie?

BH: Yes, Glennie was at Four Mile hut, he went to live in Kiandra - he had a place there. He fell in the fire and his head was burnt off. I was only a very little nipper at that time. I used to take him milk each morning - there he was lying with his head in the fireplace.

KH: This happened at Kiandra?

BH: Yes.

WH: I heard that story from a chap named Hall. He'd been down to the Snowy a few times before the war and he must have been talking to people, because he told me the story of a fellow falling and either knocking himself out or having a heart attack and having his head burnt in a fire-he couldn't remember when, where or who it was. This was only about 3 years ago.

BH: Talking about that sort of thing, I don't know if you have read any records on the Shanley - Mick Shanley perishing in the snow.

WH: Is that the fellow who was lost in Wallaces Creek?

BH: Yes, at the head of Wallaces Creek we found him.

WH: Was it exposure that killed him, or heart attack?

BH: No, he'd taken stock down into Lobbs Hole for the winter and he was

living in Delaneys hut - just over from Kiandra - he tried to get back there from Wallaces Creek, from somewhere down below Cabramurra there, he went down that way through Cabramurra. He started back and he got into deep snow, heavy weather and like an old fool he kept on going. It was several days before we found out that he was lost. I don't know how it came about that they realised he was lost - so we started out looking for him - quite a crowd of us.

Eventually we went down past the Three Mile Dam there, we down 100 yards or so, we found tracks in the snow that were pretty well filled in. Someone had noticed what they thought was a wallaby in the snow, when we brushed the snow off it was old Mick's beard and then when we looked around we could see his hat was lying not far away and the horse had gone. We dug him out and took him up to the top - there must have been 4 or 5 of us there at the time. We got a stick - put it through his belt, tied his head and feet up to it - we got him up to the top of Three Mile and took him from there out to Alpine Creek. We had the hearse coming up there. They'd rang through to Adaminaby and the hearse came out and met us there and took the body down. Rather a traumatic experience taking a body on skis - toboggan.

WH: You've had a few occasions for digging people out like that haven't you?

BH: Yes, some funny experiences.

WH: You started with the fellow who was burnt when you were only very young, and you found Ernie Hewitt and had a share in Mick Shanley, how many more did you find in your travels?

BH: There were quite a few others too.

We went over Sawyers Hill, we didn't follow the road around naturally, been deep snow the only way was over the big gap - the old road. We started off down to the rest hut and he was too fast for us - he got away - we were trying to hold him back - went down through those trees about 60 mph. Some of the boys were saying 'I bet old Mick never travelled so fast in his life!

KH: What a lot of trouble you went to to bury him!

BH: None of us wanted to be paid or anything we were just doing it out of common decency - we'd put in days and days looking for him and it was just by chance we found him - it was just one of those things. You can imagine the amount of snow there was up around that area - 1000s of acres.

KH: Were you on skis?

BH: Yes.

KH: Was he on skis?

BH: No, horseback. When we worked it out, we realised what had happened. He'd been going down this steep slope - making back down into Wallaces Creek. He'd had enough of it. Whether it was during the night or during the day in

heavy fog we don't know, he evidently hit his head on this limb that was sticking out - knocked him off the saddle and probably knocked him out. He never came around again. It appeared pretty obvious to us what had happened. He was dressed bushman style - two overcoats - he was really rugged up.

KH: Was he very old?

BH: He was in his 50s. It was a silly thing for him to do. I suppose we all do that sort of thing.

WH: You can only afford to do it once under those conditions.

BH: A lot of people had said they wouldn't have thought old Mick would have done anything like that because he knew the bush and the snow.

WH: Perhaps he was anxious to get back - pushing his luck.

BH: His relatives - they decided that they'd present us with something for searching - they took up a collection and gave each of us a medal - presented us with a gold medal.

WH: What did you do with the gold medal?

BH: I think it went in with the gold. I never needed a medal. They thought we risked our lives in the blizzard looking for him but we didn't look at it that way because when you're used to the blizzards and used to the snow it's nothing.

KH: Have you got any old photographs ...

BH: No, I haven't got a thing. I've travelled around a little bit - I've lost everything.

KH: Would you know of anybody else who came out to the Nine Mile or worked at Elaine who might have taken photographs?

BH: Barnett's son might have something. I'll have to give him a ring one of these days.

KH: I'm very interested in the old photographs.

BH: There's a chap named Roy Wilson, he's the son of the old hotel keeper in Kiandra - he's living in Tumut.

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CASSETTE 3 - SIDE 6

WH: .... killed or drowned?

BH: I found one in New Guinea but that's getting far away.

WH: Some of the early records I've seen of newspaper accounts talk a lot about blokes dying of lightning strikes around there - in the very early days of the rush and exposure - they must have gone down like flies.

BH: I don't know of that happening. My old dad found a chap hanged down there, just near Kiandra - in Pollocks Gully - there's a tree just up there.

He was getting his horses one morning to put them in the harness to go for trip and he found this chap hanging there. Then there was another chap found just below the Four Mile main lead - blown the top of his head off with a shotgun.

KH: Got too much for him did it?

BH: Yes, took his boot off and used his big toe to pull the trigger - the rats had eaten half of him away. There are lots of cases around Kiandra where people were burnt in their huts and things like this.

WH: There was no actual cemetery at Nine Mile was there?

BH: No.

KH: How many people were living there when you were a child?

BH: I don't know, there must have been quite a lot down there then - probably 100 or more. Going by the number of old huts that were there, when you look around the place you'll find a lot of old chimneys.

KH: I haven't found many.

BH: They're scattered round at different places where they were working.

WH: Down at Milkman's Creek - well the next creek back this side - Clear Creek is it - then Milkman's. The next gully over from Nine Mile to the north - what would you call that, they did a bit of working down there.

BH: Right down at the river - Lorna Doone is the first and the next one would be Temperance Creek - I think it is and then the Fifteen Mile.

WH: That's further round, the next gully down would be Lorna Doone gully if you're going down the river from Nine Mile. That's Sugar Loaf - from what you were saying it's this longish gully here up near the top.

BH: Lorna Doone is just over from Nine Mile Creek - there's only one ridge between Nine Mile and Lorna Doone.

KH: That's where you reckon the Lorna Doone would be?

BH: Yes. Down in the gully because the ridge too is known as Lorna Doone.

KH: This old map - 1933 - Nine Mile is there where the junction of those creeks are, Kiandra is up here. The junction here must be where Nine Mile is now - they've got a track going right out that Spur, past the Sugar Loaf and then they've got Lorna Doone down in the bottom of that valley.

BH: When you're trying to remember back many years, some things are as clear as crystal and other things have just gone out of your mind altogether.

KH: We were very interested in just what route you took in 1927, on that first ski trip?

BH: I find that my first and second trip across there, run together a lot. I think that things that I did on one trip, I'm transferring over onto the other. We got very low down there - got on to a lot of dry ground as we called it.

KH: This is a map of the National Library.

WH: It's very similar to the other one which only covers the southern end.

BH: I dare say Sir Herbert - had quite a library of different things. I don't know whether Lady Schlink would still have them or not.

KH: I'm not sure whether she's still alive.

BH: She is alive. She is still at ... in fact I had a direct lead to her just recently. My nephew's wife has been under a doctor, under Lady Schlink ...

WH: I think she is a hospital matron.

BH: ... She was out here one day and I was talking to her. She asked me if I had anything of the trip that I could give her. Dr. said Lady Schlink had been enquiring about it.

WH: She didn't have much?

BH: It seemed rather strange - she wanted something regarding myself. She asked me - my nephew's wife - asked me if I could get on to anything to let her have it. She was much younger than he was.

WH: He got married when he was about 60 or something.

BH: It's a strange thing to say, another point is this - there is some people I know over at Woronga, the Melvins, they are also from Dora Creek. They had a place up there - Daphne and Dulcie Melvin. I don't know whether you knew anything of them at all. Daphne was a school girl friend of Lady Schlink's. I know them quite well. I mentioned this trip and Daphne told me about Lady Schlink.

KH: Did she get married again?

BH: No.

KH: I was under the impression that she was in charge of something - Crown Street Women's Hospital.

BH: She's a Doctor - Obstetrics I think at King George V.

WH: Schlink of course was a Gynaecologist.

BH: I don't know how you would contact her. I suppose she wouldn't be in the telephone directory.

KH: She would be quite well known in hospital circles. If the worst came to worst we could find out from your nephew.

BH: There's Lorimer Dodds - I think he's got beyond that sort of thing now. Lorimer Dodds, the Hospital for Children at Camperdown. He used to be up around there. Sir Lorimer Dodds is well known. His wife was more a friend of mine than what he is.

....

WH: Skis were kept wide, but parallel. It was the same method at Kiandra. It was well before the days of parallel turns anywhere else.

KH: My father used to do parallel turns, but legs apart - the modern style is knees together.

BH: I don't really see anything difficult about the slalom, I mean it's only a very simple movement. We always used to have one aim and that was run from the top of a mountain to the bottom in the fastest possible speed - in a direct line. Everybody used to look to go straight wherever they went.

WH: They didn't do much turning?

BH: No, that was not the thing - chickening out sort of thing.

WH: You'd be moving coming straight down from the top of a hill!

BH: We used to measure out a furlong and have a chap standing with a watch, when we came into that area, then take our time when we came out the other end of it. That furlong was the fastest part of the run. It's what we used to call the second landing at Kiandra - down near the bottom. You came onto it at a high speed and then maintain that speed right through. I think, from what I can remember, it was something like 60 mph for that furlong - 220 yards. We never carried poles because we considered they were dangerous.

WH: Did the Chinese runners carry poles or not?

BH: Just cross country, but not down hill.

WH: So that cartoon that shows the Chinese runners hitting one another on the head with poles in a race is a figment of the imagination. Tom Mitchell, in his book called 'Ski Hale' he's got a cartoon - its just drawn from supposition.

BH: What's happened to Tom?

KH: He's going very strong. We went to see him and his wife Elyne last March. Tom has just retired from politics.

BH: I knew him well - I skied with him a bit. Tom was a ... Tom was over in China or Japan skiing just before I saw him last I think.

KH: When did you see him last?

BH: It was a long time back.

KH: He wasn't too taken with Schlink's navigation. You navigated didn't you ...?

BH: I was reading an article some time ago about Dr Schlink - 'The Intrepid Dr Schlink'.

WH: Wasn't it Tom Mitchell who said about Schlink - 'Schlink, he was led all around the mountains, I had to do it myself - how did he come into it, I had to find my own way, he was led by the hand'.

BH: We used to call him the honourable Bertie.

WH: You called him that before he was knighted?

BH: Yes - the honourable Bertie.

WH: I imagine he must have been a little bit pompous, was he?

BH: He wasn't a bad chap to travel with, he was alright. We used to have to put him in line now and again. Fisher was the best hand in pulling him into line - he wouldn't take any cheek from him.

KH: Have you heard anything about him?

BH: I knew him quite well at the time.

KH: But you haven't heard anything about him since, or Laidley.

BH: I think Laidley died a few year ago.

One time, some of the patients who went to the Macquarie Street specialists must have wondered why they were kept waiting for so long. I used to go down there and see Schlink and Laidley, I often called into their rooms and we'd be discussing the Perisher or Kiandra, while the patients were just kept waiting.

KH: Was this back in the 20s or later?

BH: In the 20s. They must have wondered what the devil was going on.

KH: Had a skiing sickness.

BH: It was a bit of a who's who business you know. All the knobs in Australia got there. They booked at the end of July or the first weeks of August - made sure that they were all getting there at the same time.

WH: Wasn't it Sir Frank Packer, who when he was as full as a tick, drove a ski down the main stairs at the hotel - I'd heard a rumour that it was him!

KH: Did you ever ski with Tom Mitchell?

BH: A little bit over at the Chalet, not very much.

WH: Someone, when they wrote up your visit, you and your brother turned up at the Chalet - this was after the Kiandra/Kosciusko-Chalet - apparently you came ... someone said in effect, here are two relics from the past, they didn't comment on your skiing ability though, they weren't game to, obviously.

BH: You know, we had a few fellow there, one chap I remember well was Alistair Stevens - he was an absolute snob. He was connected with the Prince Alfred Hospital for quite a few years. He went to England - always went to visit the Queen - made a point of it. He never advertised himself in the books or papers or anything, everything was just as though he knew them all.

WH: Someone told me Bill, that you set off to go up to the Summit on one of these occasions when you were at the Chalet and you got to Séanans hut, then turned to come back because you'd left your gloves at home. Do you remember going up without your gloves?

BH: I went right through to the Summit on one of the record breaking trips. Everybody was talking about that Summit record. We wanted to go up there and the weather was bad - some of the people around were making a joke of it. They said, they're always turning this Summit record on - they thought we weren't game to go, so this day we decided to go. Gordon was with me and he wanted to go. We started off, didn't go too far, up around Betts Camp and he fell on a rock and split his knee open, so that was the end of that - carried him back to the hotel. The next day four or five of us started off on this record

breaking trip and we got up there and a blizzard came on - they all turned back but I went on.

WH: That's right you pressed on - I think they said you didn't have your gloves with you or something!

BH: No, I didn't have gloves, I went on. It was a wicked trip that one.

KH: JimPattinson's wife remembers that because - is it possible that she or Jim's mother looked after your frostbitten fingers when you got back to Kiandra?

BH: Yes, that right. Jim's mother made me a couple of arrangements like boxing gloves out of cloth, with a lining in them and I hung these on my belt. I couldn't have anything on my hands - you couldn't undo the fly of your trousers or anything else - they were absolutely frozen - they turned black as if they had been dipped into boiling water.

WH: You were lucky you didn't loose any fingers!

BH: All my finger nails came off and as they came off I saved them.

KH: Jim's mother spoke of a special kind of ointment that she used to rub...

BH: I don't remember ... I was talking about Lady Dodds a while ago - she was at the old hotel when I came back and the Drs were all talking about what they should do for frostbite. Everyone wanted to have a look at them to see what frostbite looked like - they couldn't arrive at anything - there was nothing they could do. Lady Dodd's put some vaseline or ointment on them and bandaged them up for me. That's about the only treatment I got. I tell you what, it's damned awkward having both hands bandaged. I couldn't use them for anything.

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CASSETTE 4 - SIDE 7

BH: ... There was one expert there, George Aalberg, a Norwegian, he was the instructor. Outside that there weren't any real good skiers at all.

WH: Did you absorb any of Aalberg's technique or did you have your own?

BH: The technique he was using was the same as what we were using. Coming down a hill he would keep his feet together and one ski slightly down and crouched on them. It was a natural stance to adopt. Kiandra skiers learnt that really early.

WH: They might have had their feet a bit wider apart or not?

BH: Well not if they were really any good at it.

WH: It was only the new ... big wide stance.

BH: It wasn't the practice for those who were experienced.

WH: The really fast fellows kept their skis together I suppose?

BH: The idea here in Kiandra is to keep moving the ski as if they're running.

KH: Did you use any waxes?

BH: Yes, the Moko wax we made ourselves was really the best.

KH: I found this wax at Four Mile, so your brother must have used it.

BH: Yes, he probably had it there.

WH: Schlink probably gave it to him.

BH: It could have been there a long time.

KH: Even on the '27 trip you used some that you made yourself?

BH: We had some that we had made up in a stick or a ball, rubbed it on, but we didn't go much on that kind of thing really. All we were thinking of was the speed. Climbing up hill we found that we could make a wax that would stick skiS down and then sort of rubbed out when we went forward. It was according to the amount of oil we used in the Moko.

WH: The development of Moko, which I assume is a downhill wax only and that's how it originally started out, as a speed wax. They use this in America, even before skiing arrived here. In the development of Kiandra, the climbing type Moko, developed long before his time, it is a development of Kiandra that might well have proceeded to develop in Scandinavia because in 1860 the two equal length boards were still a bit uncommon in Scandinavia. They were using the shorter board with fur on it, it was still common in Europe. It could have been at Kiandra where you actually developed the first climbing wax. Peter Osbey took out a patent in 1914 - there had been people before him - Osbey developed a klister that would actually climb, in Europe. That was the first patented formula for climbing, where as Bill said, it had been developed well before the turn of the century in Kiandra.

KH: Where did you read about Osbey?

WH: It's common knowledge - he's still alive, he's in his 80s.

...

KH: You haven't been here long?

BH: Nearly 18 months now.

KH: Where were you before then?

BH: I was at Warraqamba for a little while, then Woronga for about 3 or 4 years.

WH: How long have you been back in Australia Bill, would you know off hand?

BH: About 3 years now.

WH: From New Guinea?

BH: No, from overseas, Europe. I was in the army of course when I was in New Guinea - I came back in 42 - it got too tough up there.

KH: What have you been up to since then?

BH: I went to the small arms factory at Orange for a while.

KH: I lived at Orange. My parents lived there for about 18 years - I was there for 10 years.

BH: I spent a few years in the small arms factory and then came over to the mountains.

WH: What part of the mountains?

BH: Wentworth Falls - owned a property up there.

WH: You were getting closer and closer to Sydney of course.

BH: When I came back down here I started to buy places and keep them for a few years and then sell them at a good profit.

KH: What were you doing at Wentworth falls - investing your money?

BH: That was the main thing - I had a sort of accommodation house there. It's a good racket you know - buying places around Sydney and selling them again. I've put this place up for sale again - no takers.

WH: Do you want to move on again?

BH: I want to go overseas. The trouble here is, this corner is about the best unit in the building. All those on the other side are cold in winter and hot in summer.

WH: At Balmain we had a unit like this on the first floor, it faced north, on a corner like this, so I know how comfortable they are.

BH: This one is really ideal because it gets the sun here. What it means is that I have to ask a few thousand more.

WH: Here's your formula Bill, that you gave to the Ski Year Book in '31. 4 ozs. resin; 1 oz bees wax and comb; 2 ozs of Mobil cc oil or boiled oil; melt together. I have a note I've put in since - Moko was not a climbing wax only a running wax - by adding additional oil, it would climb.

BH: You don't have to stick to those quantities - a little bit of one or the other creates a different wax.

WH: On your '27 trip you got some climb out of it didn't you?

BH: Oh yes. Climbing never seemed to be a great worry

When you were climbing a hill would you zig-zag up to minimise the grade like we do today, not herringboning ...?

BH: Generally, it was a case of cross country skiing. A lot depended on how you picked your grades.

WH: Your grades are very important.

BH: Had to be very canny. In a case of necessity or in a race, well you just aim to go almost straight up.

WH: Because you had poles in the '27 Kiandra trip!

BH: I never used poles in downhill running or slalom or anything like that.

WH: For cross country you used to ... and they were very short.

BH: The long poles are useful in cross-country because you throw a pole out in front of you and drag yourself.

WH: When I saw Paddy Pallin cross-country skiing, this was a few years ago when he was making that film - making the second half of it - it was made in two halves - he made the actual ... he retired at Rolling Grounds and went back to Guthega and a few weeks later he was down again from Guthega and skied up to Spencers Creek. I don't think they did any filming. We were staying at Ibis hut when he went past and I said to a friend of mine 'who's that hunch back over there on skis. Someone said it was Paddy Pallin. I skied over and introduced myself and he invited us to his lodge. I had a good look at his gear and he was using downhill sticks.

BH: It was funny how I got in touch with Paddy. I was watching TV one night and his trip came on the TV - it was about midnight too I think.

I went into his shop and left a message with a young chap. A week or ten days afterwards he rang and asked me to go in and have a talk with him.

WH: I suppose he said 'are you the real Bill Hughes'. He read up about all the earlier journeys before he did his journey. He hasn't got a set of Year Books but he borrowed a set from Tom Moppet. He's up at Blackheath now by the way. A fellow in the Nordic Ski Club, he's only done a little bit of cross country, he's in his late forties. He was invited to a friends garage and found a carton full of books - old year books going back to '28. Some distant relative gave him the box.

KH: What was his name?

WH: His name's Jerry Armstrong.

KH: A bound volume?

WH: A complete set - I don't know up to what date.

KH: I'd love to have a set for the KHA.

WH: I've got a 1936 which I had to go through the hoops to get hold of. Even the post-war set is pretty shaky - I've got virtually nothing. Another thing, the KAC - Kosciusko Alpine Club - have some early volumes of their journal available at Mitchell. It goes back to about 1917 but its not altogether full of good stuff. In my notes ... Kosciusko Alpine Club Year Book, No. 1 - 1919 and it trickled on intermittently - there was one issue in 1919, one in 1920, No. 3 in '21 and No.4 in '23. I took a little note of a couple of them, No.5 in '26, then it petered out. That is a rare treasure they have at Mitchell.

Percy Hunter was there the other day - talked about the early ascent of Kosie in here. Kerry's first ascent is written up in No.1 in more detail than any of the latest things I saw on the subject. Kiandra trip by Percy Hunter, winter 1906 ... 'Glorious Kosciusko' by Joe Pearson. He's the cyclist fellow that you were talking about. Pearson said 'Gains for the cyclists used a pony

to get his bike to the summit of Kosciusko. After one unsuccessful attempt, Joe Pearson and George Corkhill reached the top on cycles, up the old bridle track and got onto the roof of Wragge's hut. They shinned up the roof of the hut and held the bikes over the edge on the roof of the hut and claimed they were the highest cyclists in Australia.

What do you know about Joe Pearson, Bill?

BH: Pearson had a shop in King Street and I used to get stuff there at times. He started off doing bicycle trips all around Australia I think, at least NSW - drawing up maps.

WH: He was a crafty old devil. He had a mortal fear of people stealing his information. When he drew his map, he didn't want anyone else to pinch his stuff. He used to put in these fictitious towns. There's towns on the River, there has never been a house - he put a road in - all over the place you would find these fictitious towns. Robinsons got into business with him and they, in their first street directory of NSW, there were people threatening to take them to court for all these fictitious towns on the map. They passed the buck by saying it was Pearson's work. Pearson was dead by then. He must have been a fascinating character.

BH: I said to him once - there was some clothing - told him I wanted something or other. He sent me a big parcel of stuff to Kiandra and told me to pick out what I want and send the rest back. I selected a pullover and one or two things and sent the rest back to him. I never paid a penny, I often wondered what it was all about.

WH: Had you given him some information?

BH: I just told him I wanted something or other.

WH: He never charged you?

BH: I wrote to him and told him I wanted certain things and that's what I got. I thought it was rather peculiar.

WH: Percy Pearson was his son, wasn't he?

BH: Yes.

WH: Joe put Speedwell cycles on the map - he rode for Bennett and Wood - everywhere you went you'd see a picture of Joe Pearson on his Speedwell cycle.

BH: Something that might be of interest to you. There's a Sargeant Cook, a policeman in Kiandra, probably moved to Canberra. He was in charge of the police there for some time. This would be around 1926-27.

KH: Not related to these other Cooks?

BH: No.

KH: Richard Gavin Cook apparently had a brother called Tom Cook. He also used to work in the mines.

BH: This chap used to make skis in his spare time at Kiandra. In the

police station, he had very little to do - he couldn't ski. He was a very good wood worker and he made skis for quite a few people. He made me a pair and wouldn't accept payment from me - just made them for the fun of it. He shifted to Canberra. I remember once coming to Canberra and had a pair of skis over my shoulder - another chap spotted me getting off the train and asked me to go round to his place - took my skis around and he measured every which way, length, width, depth etc., took full particulars of them - he was starting to make some more them. That was about 1927.

WH: He wasn't the policeman who rushed out after Schlink and yourself ...

BH: No, I think that was Schumaker.

KH: I've heard of a policeman in Canberra who may have some information on Kiandra. It was the Pattinson's I think, who may have mentioned him. There are quite a few more leads that I haven't followed up yet.

BH: Cook was there when I was working in the shop with Foy. I had my skis there on my way up to the snow fields or back - they weren't very well known in those days, skis you know.

WH: Joe Pearson's place was really the only place you could buy walking gear in the very early days. A fellow I know, he was only a young clerk around at Tooths' brewery at the time, later became secretary of Tooth's brewery, he's now retired - he was telling me in his walking days he imported some Bergen packs from England. He told me he got a pack in for Dr Schlink, apparently he'd done a little bit of importing. I thought he may have used that in his '27 traverse but he said he thought he may have used one of his other packs. He apparently had a link with Schlink - someone had ordered packs through him for Schlink. This is apart from Pearson's place. Pearson used to supply the old Warragamba Club with maps, rucksacks, of a primitive sort. That sort of gear was really hard to pick up until Paddy Pallin opened.

KH: Did you use packs?

BH: I forget which pack I used on that trip. I think it was just an ordinary type of thing.

WH: A military rucksack of some sort. You had a big blanket roll ... Did you get that from Schlink?

BH: Can't remember.

## CASSETTE 4 - SIDE 8

BH: ... quiet chap, had very little to say.

WH: I notice Schlink, in one of his articles, raves and rants about how good a tennis hat is in the snow. He'd be the only fellow I've met who thought a tennis hat was much good in the snow - a floppy bit of canvas - it would be useless in a blizzard.

BH: I found a felt hat was quite a good thing - it seemed to work out all right.

WH: I felt a hat would keep your head warm, whereas a sail cloth one would get wet in no time.

KH: I noticed both you and Bill Gordon are wearing - have got very tight - you're wearing leggings or jodhpurs. The three doctors have got real bulky pants and you two look like you're wearing riding gear.

WH: The two lads from the bush look like they know what they're doing - the doctors look like its their first time out on the boards.

KH: We found Bill Gordon you know, he lives at Nimmitabel.

BH: I'd like to see Bill.

KH: We might be able to arrange that. We'd like to take both of you up into the hills, this summer.

BH: He's a funny old stick Bill you know. He never had much to say.

KH: He's pretty quiet, he talked quite a bit though.

WH: I still want to know why Schlink took two bushmen along with him. He wasn't taking any chances.

BH: A funny incidence about Dr Schlink. We were crossing the river - he calls it Temperance - he took his boots off and came across - I think he took the whole boot off. Crossing the streams - if you take your boot off, take your sock off, put the boot back on again and just cross smartly, you can empty the water out of your boot and away you go off. There's no danger of getting your feet cut. I think it's a pretty sound idea. Schlink takes his boots off and comes across in bare feet, well behind us all. We asked him what held him up. He said he had to do a job for himself, "the worst of it was I had to use my silk scarf - it cost me half a guinea."

WH: We're still arguing how you got across to Temperance Creek. We want to do that trip next year and we want to try and stick to the route as much as we can. It's hard after 50 years.

BH: Some things I can remember as clear as a bell, other things I've forgotten. I haven't given any thought to skiing for donkey's years.

WH: All your friends thought you'd passed on, otherwise we would have tracked you down.

BH: I should have been dead years ago really.

KH: When I was talking to Wilf on the phone he mentioned that you had recently met somebody else who was also born at Nine Mile. Do you remember who was that?

BH: Schaeffer was born at Adaminaby but I was in Tumut some years ago and another chap was pointed out to me - I didn't speak to him - I think his name was Bradley. I found out that he was born at Nine Mile. I think Bradley was the name.

KH: Your mother - she wouldn't have had a doctor or anything.

BH: I sometimes think about those days - it must have been pretty rough. They'd have the usual little miner's house I take it. Nothing else there. May be a board floor, might have been a dirt floor. I was born in March. It must have been pretty rough.

KH: Did she live longer than your father?

BH: She died when I was about 12 I think. You can imagine in those days - it was built on the wrong side of the mountain to begin with - on the shady side - then there was only just a track for a bullock dray into Kiandra. There was no chance of keeping a cow in the winter, or eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables were nearly impossible.

KH: She lived out there several winters?

BH: Yes. You can just imagine what sort of a life they had. It must have been terrible.

KH: What sort of food did they eat?

BH: They used to get a supply in in the autumn to last them for the winter - so many bags of flour, bags of potatoes - they'd buy a beast and kill it - I've done the same myself. In my early days there we used to get a bullock. Kill it in March and April, hang a quarter of it up in a fly proof room and salt the rest down and then when it was in the salt for a certain time, took it out and hung it up in the chimney to smoke. They'd turn black from having them up in the chimney, but they were none the worse for that. They used to call them black diamonds. It was really good beef. The quarter that we kept you could cut and cut again for months - in the cold weather it would get frozen right through. When you wanted steak for breakfast, you just cut off what you wanted.

WH: How did you get on for rats around your bags of flour in the store?

BH: I don't remember having much trouble with them, but we'd take precautions.

KH: Your brother Bob had a 44 gallon drum at Four Mile, which is still there and we found all his old flour bags in the bottom of it. You wouldn't have had metal 44 gallon drums at the turn of the century.

BH: I think we just watched them and set traps for mice.

WH: You often see in old country huts, the bag of flour suspended from a rope from the roof.

BH: I did that with a mattress and the mice just went up the wall and got in and ripped the mattress to pieces.

WH: I was going to ask you to tell that incident again because that reflects on your ....

BH: When I come to think things over I think that was the - there was the two ways that we went, probably on the first trip we did go to the hut there, we didn't stay there.

WH: So you went to the hut at Nine Mile ...

BH: Yes, we must have all gone through there I think.

WH: Did you tell Connolly there was half a bottle of whiskey or something - which hut would that have been in?

BH: That's the Nine Mile of course. That was the hut we were staying in at the time. We'd just left it for the winter.

WH: In Schlink's or Laidley's photos at Nine Mile, there are two huts shown. I'm not sure whether that photo is reversed but the first one appears to be ...

BH: This would be the hut, but the second one you can see there is not really a hut, it is the mine shed. There's a hut on the opposite side of the creek up on the hill.

WH: That would be the collapsed one. I haven't seen the spot that that one is on.

BH: This one is definitely the old Nine Mile hut.

WH: There is a bar of rock down there isn't there, the collapsed hut is near that. That's probably been worked at at a later date. There would be timber up here now where this other hut would have been ..

BH: Yes, but on the opposite side. This is on the eastern side of the creek. It was on the opposite side here.

WH: Just across the gully. That's the collapsed one, near a big bar of rock.

BH: It was the one that was sold to Sanko Smith - the one that stopped there.

KH: This Nine Mile hut you took away?

BH: Yes.

WH: Did you cart away the other shed as well.

BH: No. I don't know what happened to that.

WH: It took me years to work out where that was taken from. I assumed it was taken with a funny lens or something. I recognise that part of the gully and behind that other hut there is a side of a hut up above the rocky bar, there

is a little bit of flat ground, and there's been another hut there at some time. It wasn't burnt because there's no ash. Seemed to be a fireplace at each end. Might have had two little rooms in it. I thought for a while that was this, but this is on the left side of the creek, these are on the east side.

BH: There's that hut - that is the one that my father, brother and myself occupied and the one on the other side is the one that was sold to Sanko Smith. Then there were two other huts back towards the Kiandra side.

WH: We found the site of one of them.

BH: Those two huts were pulled down together with this one and taken to the Elaine.

WH: That figures because there's no ash on the first site. We couldn't work out what had happened.

BH: Huts were built up off the ground and we were pulling this hut down and I was looking through and saw a little jar half full of gold. There had been a bit of pilfering going on with the mine and somebody had got this gold, and they didn't want to have it around them so they'd put it under the house and put it behind one of these piers.

BH: You can't tell very much from pictures, but actually this is more steep than what it looks. It looks fairly level there but it isn't by a long shot. Snow seems to level things out.

WH: I've noticed that in a blizzard - I can't work out which way the ground is running. I find I'm going uphill when I'm supposed to be going downhill.

BH: Have you ever tried skiing in the moonlight - that tricks you.

WH: That's good fun providing you're on a well made track.

KH: Have you got any old photographs at all of yourself?

BH: No I haven't got anything at all. I lost everything travelling around. Nowadays I don't bother collecting a lot of stuff because ... I've got stuff here - next thing I'll be giving it to somebody.

KH: Would your nephews?

BH: I don't think so, they were never interested in it at all. The only one who might have anything is my brother's wife at Adelong. When my brother Bob died, a lot of gear was taken down to Adelong. They already had quite a collection of stuff, she might have it there now.

KH: Whereabouts in Adelong?

BH: Jerry has a store in Adelong, about a mile down on the Adelong creek where Kit lives - that's Jack's wife. She only has one chap with her now - one of their sons - a big farm house on their own. I'm afraid she's hard to get on with.

KH: Who would I write to if I wrote to her?

BH: Mrs J. Hughes. Probably if you sent a letter to Jerry Hughes, the storekeeper, Adelong, that would be as good a way as any because I don't know

what condition she is in at the present time. It is a few years since I've seen her.

KH: How long ago?

BH: It's a good while since I've been up there and she's aged of course. I don't know whether she'd be up to a lot of things. Some of these country people you know are rather funny about things, they have a thing and you ask them about it, it's of no value until you ask about it, then it suddenly becomes valuable.

KH: What I would like to do is to get some of these photographs, the originals if it was possible, or originals of some of these people, like this lady has of you or other members of the family or your house in Kiandra, which I could borrow and rephotograph and make my own prints and use it in a publication.

BH: I think one of your best bets is Ray Wilson in Tumut because his father, Roy, the ex-school teacher. His father was the hotel keeper and he took a lot of photos and not only that he collected photos. I think he would be rather a good man to contact.

KH: Has Roy Wilson written anything?

BH: No.

KH: Do you know anything else about him.

BH: He retired. He has daughters in shops in Tumut I believe.

WH: Had he done any skiing with his father in the old days, in the 30s?

BH: No, very little. He left Kiandra quite a long time ago. He and I used to be great mates. I can't remember skiing with him. I remember fishing and things like that in the summer time but I can't remember any skiing.

I was up in Tumut a year or two ago and thought I'd try and find out if there was anyone in Tumut that I knew. There was a fellow in the street - I walked over to him and said, 'do you happen to know a chap named Wilson - Roy Wilson'. 'Yes', he said, 'I know Roy well'. I said, 'my name is Hughes' and gave him my full name. He said 'I think he said we ought to be cousins'. His name was Thomas, they're cousins of mine. The first man I picked in the street.

KH: What's the best way of getting to your sister-in-law - write care of Jerry Hughes? It would be best to write first?

BH: Yes, it would be better to write.

KH: She may very well have old documents and things which are very significant for historical purposes.

BH: To tell you the truth, she's the kind of a person who is hard to get on with. They'd have a thing that is of no utter use to them, put away in a shed or something and immediately you ask about it, it becomes valuable. Whatever you offer them for it, they'd say they want more. She has a lot of

old stuff there, like 'His Master's Voice' gramophones - the old type - old mining gear and all sorts of things. It will be there until she dies, until the place falls to pieces.

KH: It's an old homestead is it?

BH: Yes.

KH: It could well have stuff that is 50 or 60 years old then?

BH: Yes, stuff that's been brought there.

KH: From your father even?

BH: Yes. My brother would have had a lot of stuff no doubt - collected over the years. I'll tell you an instance about ... this is a funny thing. I was there one day, quite a few years ago, and she told me about money boxes - she had 8 children - she had the usual money box for each, sometimes it was only a soup tin with a hole in it - she had never ever given this to the kids. These money boxes had just been collected. We were talking about the value of the 1936 penny - well there might be some in boxes there. It was a wet Sunday afternoon and we got these boxes out, opened them all out ....

.....

CASSETTE 5, SIDE 9

BH: ... some of the photos may have turned out alright. One thing I know that she had was a cup - a foot ball cup.

She really got his personal effects when he passed on.

KH: That's what happened apparently, stuff was brought from Kiandra when Bob died.

Do you know of a Jack Morrissey of McGregor's diggings or McGregors huts near Crook's Race Course? He was also active at Grey Mare I think. Jim Pattinson knew him - this was later in the 30s when he was at McGregors I think.

BH: I can't remember him - I remember a man named McGregor and his daughter - big fat chap. He used to follow racing a bit.

WH: Did he know anything about the races held at the Race Course, that is shown on the early maps at Kiandra - Racecourse Creek.

BH: They had race courses in several different places - they had one race they used to hold around Hospital Hill, around the side of the hill. I went to races there once - out on Racecourse Creek and it was just a straight race along the fence, I think it would only be 20' wide if that.

WH: Was it fenced on each side?

BH: ... rocks on the other, right down. You know the Six Mile Plain out behind the road - this was just over from the road - a fence went through there. McGregor was a bookmaker there then.

WH: It might be a different McGregor.

BH: There was a Chinaman there named Yan, one of the old hands around Kiandra - they had an argument with McGregor and of course the little Chinaman didn't come up much higher than his waist ...

KH: What about the name R. McMahon which is cut in the wall of the Broken Dam hut. According to Wilf you don't know much about a Broken Dam hut - this name is cut on the outside, it looks real authentic.

BH: I know a McMahon - he was one of the stockman there that took stuff up from Adaminaby onto the mountains. I knew him quite well. He was with the Shanley's and the other hut at Rocky Plains - Delaneys. I think he worked for Delaneys.

KH: The name could be cut with a chisel or something - cut into the wood on the outside - it's one of those authentic names, looking in that hut. There is a guy called Rudd who comes up and brings groups up from Adaminaby now, in the summer time. Does that name ring a bell?

BH: No. I remember the hut there of course you know - at Broken Dam. They used it to keep salt and sheep dip and that sort of stuff in during

BH:

the winter months. They would take the stock out in the autumn and they stored stuff in there until the following year.

KH: Was it a slab hut - can you remember anything about construction or ...?

BH: No I don't. I actually camped right beside it there for a few months one time.

KH: Do you remember the Broken Dam?

BH: Yes.

KH: Was it above the Broken Dam?

BH: You'd call it above - it wasn't far from Broken Dam, I know the location of it.

KH: This hut now is a sawn hut - by and large it has been very precisely made and cut.

BH: I don't know who built it but when I was there, it was summer time, I was with Stanbridge and Waugh - sheep men from Clare - down near the Riverina. They took sheep up there for the summer and seeing there was no grass on the Riverina they kept them there in May and in May there was a terrific snow storm, they were snowed in. I was, with my brother again, shepherding them, or trying to collect them, but the snow froze over on top after a while, the sheep got out on top of it and they went everywhere - they went for miles. Out of the thousands of sheep they had there, we only succeeded in getting 200 out, the rest perished. We took them out to the snow line and then passed them on. The hut was there then - we didn't camp in it, we camped with our tents. The stores were in the hut.

KH: You don't remember anything about the construction. I feel Broken Dam hut is not very old - the dates that are drawn on the beams and so on and bits of newspaper in the hut suggest the 30s - late 30s. I reckon that's how old that hut is under those conditions.

BH: The hut I can remember ... I used to go up there sometimes in the winter just to have a look to see if this gear and stuff ... I was more or less in charge of it.

KH: Was it a very big hut?

BH: No, not a very big hut. I remember them having sheep dip and that sort of thing there.

KH: Did it have a dirt floor, do you remember?

BH: It would be a board floor. There's no doubt about that, I used to go and have a look at it - we were in the tents - you don't forget these things in a hurry you know - the snow - we used to get up several times during the night and punch the snow off and of course it formed up all around the walls. It was quite warm, it wasn't cold because everything was snowed in - really snowed in.

WH: Did you have sleeping bags or blankets?

BH: Just blankets then. I remember having a bed ... four sticks for the corners and bags - two cross pieces - one at each end.

WH: Do you know anything about Bill Paterick? He only died a few years ago.

BH: Bill was a very strong skier. I raced against him at different times. I don't think you would find a stronger runner than Bill.

KH: Harry Burgess spoke very favourably of Paterick.

BH: In those days, instead of having a jump tapered off so that you could jump out and just keep a few feet above the ground and land down hill, the idea then was to put the jump on the brow of the hill and when you went off it you had the world below you. Believe it or not I remember Bill jumping on that hill and we had the jump up on what they call the second landing, the brow of the hill and the jumper came out over it ... be above the ground 30 or 40 feet. Bill was very good at it - easily the best amongst us. I've seen him come down the slam there beside Kiandra, one ski. He runs as straight as a dye - not a tremor - no sign of falling or anything - he was really tough.

KH: What about Charles Kerry - did you have anything to do with him?

BH: No. Bill Paterick's mother got very ill in Kiandra once and we put her on a toboggan and took her out to the top of Lobb's Hole. There was a crowd of us - men and women, kids - I remember dragging the old lady on this toboggan to the top of Lobb's Hole. They had horses, they then took her on horseback down to Lobb's Hole to the doctor. What an experience - I mean to ride a horse down that Wallace's Creek - first of all you have to go down about 2000 feet I think - this creek you cross about a dozen times in a few miles and for a sick woman - dragging her four or five miles. Bill was a tower of strength.

KH: Do you know anything about the fence that goes all the way from Selwyn to Tabletop - along the divide - who built it?

BH: I know a bit about it - I don't know who built it. This Stanbridge and Waugh that I was talking about a while ago, they had sheep on one side of it at one time. I helped keep the fence in order.

KH: Which side did they have the sheep on?

BH: I think on the eastern side.

KH: So they would have had the grazing lease probably.

BH: Yes, that's when they had Broken Dam. You know right on top there the fence is on Basalt and there are places there when fencing where we had to cut a mor<sup>t</sup>ise out in half a post and stand the post in it because you couldn't see. Its so solid.

WH: There's a few gates along that fence in odd places too.

BH: We used some steel wire there one time - it was a failure absolutely because when you tighten it up on a fairly warm day it was alright, but it

froze at night.

KH: So these two guys who had this grazing lease, how far north would it have gone? As far as the Elaine?

BH: That went right down onto the Eucumbene River.

KH: How far towards Kiandra, along the ridge would that have gone - back to Four Mile or ...?

BH: It went past the Four Mile, then common boundary just south of Kiandra.

KH: That far north? and back down to Tabletop I suppose?

BH: Yes. I think they had 17,000 acres.

KH: That was one snow lease?

BH: Yes, I might be wrong on that.

WH: On the way down to Tabletop, there's obviously seen to be brush fence ...  
... (tape distorted)

When you went on your '27 trip, Bill, with Dr Schlink, you think you called in at Nine Mile on your way through ... and you told that fellow where that whisky was - that was in another hut - that was in the spare hut was it?

BH: I don't think we made any use for stores that were there at all, we went straight on you see.

KH: You went and had a nip of something ...?

BH: That was when we were crossing the river just before we got to the hut at night.

KH: In 1929 ... when I went to see Bill Gordon earlier in the year, he said - I'm not sure if I'm confusing the trips - I thought it was the '27 trip. He said on the '27 trip when you were going out to Tabletop, when you came in the vicinity of Nine Mile, you went down to see some mates at the huts and you didn't feel too good when you came back and it took you a while to get over it. That's what Bill said - now whether he's confusing it after you got to Doubtful or whether it was another year I don't know. He said you definitely didn't feel too good.

WH: The result of that may have been the unusual navigation to Bolton's Hill.

BH: See not having thought of it for so long its very hard to ...

KH: Bill was sure about this, this was one of the highlights of his story.

WH: I'm not sure at all of where they went from Nine Mile. Bill caught them up at Tabletop, or just before Tabletop - did you follow a race line around on the western side of Tabletop Bill?

BH: I don't remember. I don't think we'd be so high up. I wouldn't be sure about that.

WH: Because I was just wondering if you were trying to follow a creek down across the thing they call Temperance Creek, down a gully or ...?

BH: Pretty obviously we would follow a track that I'd gone earlier in the year. I was out there earlier and stored stuff in the huts at Pine Ridge ...

WH: Which is the one you call Pine Ridge?

BH: They have another name for it - just up from the river.

KH: South of the Happy Jacks River?

BH: Yes, that's right - Farm Ridge. Definitely when we crossed the Doubtful - our skis were all mixed up and it was dark and we had to get up to this hut. I was the only one that knew ... I'd been out there in the autumn, put stocks in that hut - I went out on horseback. I took a supply of stuff out and hid it there somewhere.

WH: Do you remember any tracks on the western side of Tabletop?

BH: There's no tracks there.

KH: There's a race line.

BH: Yes, but what I was thinking, when I went through there on this trip to put the stock in the hut and I suppose I checked up on the area, thinking I would be going there later on and I probably picked out a track through there which I followed on the trip. I think that's what would have happened.

WH: So it's got to be a place where you could get a horse through.

BH: Yes. We must have got pretty low down because we hadn't much snow, we cut out a lot from what we would have had to travel if we'd gone round to the east of Tabletop.

WH: There was really less snow than expected I suppose.

BH: Yes. A lot of people don't realise, that if you are travelling like this, it's no further round the hill to that point than up over the top. You gain by going around - you travel the same distance if you go up above it, everything else being equal of course.

WH: I'm just trying to work out where you might have gone across you know. You think you followed the path that you used with your horse to go in and put some supplies in at Farm Ridge, you probably ...

BH: Probably followed the ridge down there.

WH: You don't think you were actually on the lower slopes at Tabletop, because there is sign of a track round there, above the water race and going out on a long spur - its not a big drop - there's either a fence line or a track there from that point on that goes up onto that ridge. If you went down there and up the other side, there is not that much of a climb. It's only about 300 feet. There seems to be a track there running along up under Bolton's Ridge.

BH: Generally, you know the stock pick out the best tracks and these places.

WH: Do you remember if it was the same year you did the trip. When did you write it up, what year?

BH: I don't know, it said here, the four day ride across in the summer of 1927.

WH: It was actually Easter time - with that guide - the fellow you couldn't remember his name - the bloke who was getting lost all the time.

BH: I think his name was Harris, but I wouldn't be sure of that.

KH: While we are on the crossing from Kossie to Kiandra, a short while ago I saw an article in the Sun. There was an article in the Adelong Times from the Sun that talked about a guy called McAlister who apparently had done a winter crossing from Kiandra to Kossie before the turn of the century. As far as you are aware - was yours the first crossing on skis.

BH: We never heard of anyone else going across. I think we would have heard if there had been anyone across.

KH: Did you check who wrote that article?

WH: No.  
(Looking at photos).

BH: We crossed the river at night. Just after we crossed, Fisher pulled a flask of brandy or whisky out of his pocket and gave us each a swig of it. We were dog tired you know, nearly out to it on our feet - nearly the death of the lot of us you might say - we had a hell of a job getting to the hut.

WH: There's many a good man died in the snow from having a nip of brandy and falling asleep.

BH: Two of them started to argue about their skis. They took any and decided to sort it out in the morning.

WH: You must have been pretty weary by the time you got there. All the way to Kiandra.

BH: I was the only one who knew where the hut was you know, but in the dark ... I had my doubts. If we hadn't have found it, it would have been a serious business.

WH: You'd gone past Boobee hut hadn't you?

BH: Yes. In those days I was confident - too confident perhaps.

WH: What did Schlink do to reward you after guiding him all around the place. All his friends reckon he was reasonably generous, but I wouldn't know.

BH: No, Schlink was really one of those tight-wads.

WH: He got the honour and glory and you did most of the walking. Did Bill Gordon help with the navigation at all?

KH: Bill acknowledged that he was very much a novice, when we talked to him. He said he was just a member of the party ...

BH: Did Bill ever study medicine do you know, did he ever mention that?

WH: We didn't ask him.

BH: I have an idea he might have studied medicine. We used to make a joke ...

KH: ... he might have flunked it or something ...  
Going back to snow leases - do you remember the people who had the

snow lease on the western side of that fence?

BH: Sanko Smith had leases there.

KH: The same guy who owned the Empress Mine.

BH: And McMahon - I think Jack - I forget now. There was McMahon, Delaney .. a few others too.

KH: What about further south towards the Happy Jack Plain, down from Tabletop - who would have ... do you remember ...?

BH: I remember one group - I can't think of their names.

WH: The original name for Happysis Mulliganssometimes. Montague was the other fellows name - Montague's hut.

BH: All that country was used during the summer you know - sheep everywhere.

KH: Do you remember the Tabletop hut?

BH: Yes, I've been there.

KH: What do you know about it?

BH: Nothing very much excepting the last time I was there I had to get in by going down the chimney - it was snowed over - just the chimney sticking up. It was a stockman's hut - there was no mining around there. They might have had it for cutting the race. They were just camping while they were cutting the race.

WH: It's a very windy spot for a stockman's hut there - it faces south and west. A nice view.

KH: It's too substantial if it was just for somebody when they were cutting a race.

BH: There was no mining done over on that side. There might have been just a little.

WH: To maintain the race, they would have to keep people wandering up and down a bit.

BH: A great deal of that mining was just done by people searching for gold, they'd put a shaft down, get nothing and go and try somewhere else. They did that everywhere.

WH: They wouldn't bother much with the hut - they'd just have a tent somewhere I suppose. I'm not sure, but in view of the age of that hut, as you said it was a very old hut when you came, and the pattern is almost identical to Dicky Cooper, except the chimney is up the other end and Dicky Cooper had a boarded chimney on the outside - had weatherboards on it and as the photos of the 30s indicate, the one up there had a metal chimney. Ken May was the first bloke that suggested that that hut, in view of its proximity to the race, may have been used by the men cutting the race line. It's only speculation.

KH: There's also a stockyard in behind.

WH: Subsequently used by the stockman. In '37 there was all sheep skins and everything in it. It was used by stockmen later on, but initially ... we can't

be dead sure of this.

KH: Do you remember where the timber for the Elaine tunnel came from?

BH: You go up to Milkman's Flat, that's going by road from Kiandra, you go up there, then come back down to that little dam we were talking about - you cross a creek, the Four Mile creek actually, another branch of it. It's running from the west ...

WH: Into Bloomfield creek, I think.

BH: It actually runs into the Four Mile workings from the south-west. Just up over the hill from the head of that creek is the slope-off down into the ... Tumut - there's a patch of mountain ash - that's where the timber came from.

WH: In other words, from the Four Mile on the other side of the main dividing range, the saddle, somewhere over that side there, wooded country there.

BH: There's a stand of mountain ash there, not far from Clear Creek and dips away towards Tumut there.

WH: It would really be down Milkman's Creek a bit ...

BH: Yes, probably west of Milkman's Creek.

WH: There's a spur runs out just north of Milkman's Creek, the main ridge goes past Four Mile but there is another spur going west down that spur somewhere would it?

BH: That is the general area but it was handy - better to bring from there because there wasn't much of a climb to get it up to Milkman's Flat and around and down.

KH: So it was the closest stand of alpine ash.

BH: Actually lathe - lathe is just like a big thick paling.

KH: Do you know where your brother is buried?

BH: Yes, in Rookwood in Sydney. I didn't know he was down there. He had been down there previously and had gone back again. I didn't know he was in hospital at all until I got a letter saying that he had passed away - it was rather sudden.

KH: Pattinson said that he came to Sydney in the 40s for treatment on his face or something.

BH: Yes, he had some skin growths on his face, but I don't know what the truth of it was, probably had cancer or something.

KH: It was in the 60s, about '64 he died.

BH: Yes.

KH: Is there a headstone?

BH: No.

KH: But your father's there would be.

BH: Yes, there would be there at Adelong.

BH: Bob, you know - I didn't know he had a hut out there, I thought he had given it all away long ago and it seems to me from what you have told me that he must have found some good prospects of gold somewhere. He'd go out there and stay a few days and then he'd be back into Kiandra again. It had to be the old school teacher's cottage - a government built job. He built right in under the hill where he'd get a good drift of snow.

KH: It was quite substantial and it's still quite substantial, he went to a lot of trouble to put strips of tin onto all the cracks. Every cracked slab on the outside is covered with strips leading to that to that - tins cut up and he's gone to the trouble of making - the nails are not just straight into the tin. Each nail has got a little leather washer - its beautiful. It had a wood floor which is rotten now but it's a very solid little hut.

BH: It's worthwhile preserving.

(Tape distorted)

WH: The chimney of course could have been borrowed from anywhere. It might not be the original frame work on that chimney.

KH: That's true. I'm not sure that they are those ... he might have just picked the best one.

BH: He must have worked that with the idea that he would be back there in the near future because there is so much ...

KH: ... as if he'd just packed a few belongings and left and we came across it 25 years later or something.

WH: Probably 10 years later if he died '64.

BILL HUGHES

CASSETTE 5 - SIDE 10

BH: It appears to me that he must have got some gold from there and decided that he put a hut near it.

WH: I think I had better dig up the floor and dig up the bearers and see what I can find.

BH: The best place to look is in the fireplace - there would be no use looking in a hut like that, but the favourite hiding place for old miners was under the fire. Another thing that interests me about fires like that - fireplaces, is that in the olden days when they were treating a bit of gold, they would have some papers spread out on the table or something, weighing it out - afterwards they would just pick the paper up and throw it in the fire. Well you'd be surprised what you would find in some of the old huts. You'd find coins and all sorts of things.

KH: Jacob Wilson - have we talked about him today?

BH: Roy Wilson's brother.

KH: Where did I get Jacob Wilson from - he's the father of Roy.

I'll get some more on the Wilsons - they sound like a good one to follow up.

BH: Roy's wife was Chinese ... very hard working woman. She didn't die very long ago, as a matter of fact, I don't know whether I've got it somewhere or other but I might have the obituary when she died.

KH: Bill Paterick was 84 I think.

BH: One of the Dorans, Jack Doran - the other one died ... on the Eucumbene just below Kiandra - came to Sydney here and I was told that he was around Liverpool somewhere, he was interested in racing.

KH: Is George Doran still alive?

BH: Well its possible.

WH: He'd be a bit long in the tooth for racing a mini bike.

BH: He was always interested in that kind of thing - cars and machinery and stuff. He owned a garage in Tumut at one time. I was told he was there in Sydney somewhere. It's possible he might be still alive.

KH: What about a fellow - now this again is in connection with McGregor diggings - a fellow by the name of Jack Spring?

BH: Yes, I remember Jack Spring.

KH: Who might have had another name of David Collinson - would that be right?

BH: Yes, he was a funny character. He often used to talk about being a funny fellow with the circus. He did a bit of mining. Springhill Jack we used to call him. Strange to say there was a Springhill Jack in London many years ago who committed quite a few murders wasn't there - a notorious

character. He copped the name of Springhill Jack.

KH: Where was he active as Jack Spring when you saw him.

BH: He was around the Eight-mile area, around Kiandra.

KH: Can you remember anything else about him - was he married, did he have any children?

BH: No, well they told me that he was married, but he was living apart from his wife. He had two names, one named Colli<sup>u</sup>son I think it was - that was his true name.

KH: Were you ever married?

BH: Yes, my wife died a few years ago. But Jack was a funny man. He had bullocks at one time too.

KH: Jack Spring was a bullocky!

BH: Yes, he had bullocks: He was telling me once that he had a black fellow with him - helped him with the bullocks - he could always tell at a glance which bullocks were away and which were there. He was really clever.

WH: All the bullocks had names. He knew the name of every bullock.

BH: Jack used to tell the story about how he was mining and how they'd have screens in certain mining work. Anyhow he found a nugget of gold that got through three different screens. He always wondered how it got through these screens - they would have been a lot more than got through too. This was just a story he was telling us all.

WH: He just found it on top of one of the screens did he?

BH: Yes.

KH: I think Harry Burgess mentioned Jack Spring in connection with this Jack Morrissey fellow at MacGregor's diggings. That it was those two who were working - no sorry, it was Jim Pattinson who said this.

BH: Morrissey - the name seems to ring a bell, not very loudly though.

KH: They were both digging at MacGregor's in 1937-38 in the Depression.

WH: They might have done a bit around Boobee too.

BH: I wasn't there around that time.

WH: There seems to be a lot of old mining machinery around Boobee. When you go down, there is a big hole - a big crater down the old gravels, they've done with a sluice. The water from that comes up from Tibeau's Creek about 2 miles. You can still see old bits of pipe there, bit of rivetted iron still floating round in the hole - see bits of timber. If you could dredge out the hole, it would be hard with the water in it, it looks like a lot of the gear fell in there. But the original Boobee hut, not the present one was like a little cottage with a little verandah and that's where you spent the night when you were out looking for Seaman and Hayes with your brother Bob.

You made a note that it was a pretty long night because there were no windows and no blankets. That's an incident that you would remember for a long time because you had to go way up onto Happy Jack's Plain to get across the flooded streams.

BH: I've forgotten now - I wrote it down at the time - once I wrote it down I forgot it you know. Can't remember much of it now.

WH: It was a pretty tough trip after that when you got up towards Tin Hut and you ran into a blizzard, in your article, and you only just made it to Tin and you had to turn back.

BH: I remember coming back from that trip. We were coming within a few miles of Elaine, it was downhill fortunately, I was ahead, and I got rather a bad fall and when I got up, instead of going on towards Elaine I turned, I was going towards the Tumut River. The fall - I was that tired, it knocked the wind out of me, so Bob called out to me 'where the hell are you going'. I didn't say much - I swore that he was going the wrong way. If I had been on my own I would have been down the Tumut River somewhere. You get very tired.

WH: I think in your article on that search for Seaman and Hayes, you mention that you struck the 1928 parties Jargungal tracks out there a few weeks before. That was in the same article.

BH: If there was any tracks, we would probably run across them because we were on the lookout for anything unusual.

KH: Do you know anything about Cesjack's hut?

BH: No.

WH: I'm sure that is a post-war hut myself. It's on the stock route there. There used to be some granite bowls for a fireplace up there where the ridge comes up from the Bull's Peaks River, but you went up there on a '29 trip. Instead of going up through Farm Ridge you went through up the Doubtful. It's probably near Jacky's Lookout somewhere.

BH: Jacky Cooper's Lookout! Dicky Cooper. I think I mentioned Dicky Cooper was getting away from the police. You know in the early days of Kiandra there was a great many of the early miners went under two names. They were actually getting away from - they'd jump ship in the different harbours and all that sort of thing.

WH: Fled out to the diggings to make some money I suppose.

BH: Of course, hardly anybody knew anything about mining because they hadn't had the chance for any experience and with ground sluicing and all that sort of thing there was no school where they could get any knowledge of it. With all the mining that was done there weren't many expert miners among them.

That's why a number perished by exposure and all this sort of thing, because Kiandra must have been a pretty wild town in the boom days with all the people - hangers-on, around gold fields, confidence men and the miners come to cash their gold, the ladies of ill-fame would be there trying to pry their money out of them and all this type of thing. Typical wild-west town I suppose.

BH: It must have been a lively place. The ground there, mostly alluvial, it was right from grass roots to a few feet deep. A great deal of it was no more than 3 or 4 feet deep and men could peg out a claim 12' x 12', and could work it out in a couple of days. They were getting gold very freely for a while. As time went on, that all ran out. I'm convinced that the gold was coming out of the leaders in the bedrock. There might have been 100s and 100s of feet of that bedrock eroded away to deposit that gold. It's pretty certain because of the age of everything up around there - millions of years lapsed. In working the leaders at the Nine-mile, we found seams there no more than an 1/8" wide, and they'd go 3 ounces to the dish. It's not the size of the reef that counts, it's the quality of it.

WH: It must have been quite a boom town for a couple of years. I think you were saying too, the Chinese used to play up at times, because they far outnumbered the whites in the 80s I suppose.

BH: I think there was a battle between Chinese factions there one time.

WH: I remember reading it in the Perkins' Papers to find out who was in the wrong and you were saying this too, they would have fights amongst themselves and no one would talk - gang warfare and these things.

BH: Oh yes, they had their - what do they call them in China - gangs? They had a couple of Chinese stores in Kiandra that I can remember. There was one old Chinaman had a place, he sold confectionery and had a bakers oven and cooked bread.

WH: You were saying about the children and the Chinese, you can remember them throwing stones at the Chinese at one stage?

BH: Yes, they weren't satisfied with making snowballs, they bought some stones up from the river where they were working.

WH: And threw them at the children did they?

BH: Yes, they killed one.

The Chinese liked the children.

WH: They were good to the children were they?

BH: I used to go to their feasts at their cemetery. They always used to put a feast on every so often. They'd take the food over and they'd show us how to pray - good subject.

WH: Was that in the present cemetery there, some were buried in there were they?

BH: Yes. We were talking a while ago about them taking the bones back to China. There were two Chinese graves there, just outside the cemetery and one time there, there was a couple of Chinese came along and they dug the bones out of the two graves and took them away.

WH: This is at Kiandra?

BH: I remember that well. One fellow down in the hole getting the bones, wiped them carefully with a silk handkerchief and putting them on oneside. They counted them all. They had to know that they had the lot. They must have known how many bones there should be.

WH: I wonder if they got the ones at Nine-mile or if they are still out there.

BH: They would be still there I think.

KH: Harry talked about this, he remembers this and the fact that they had to wait 10 years. It was stipulated that the bodies had to be buried for ten years before the Chinamen could dig them up and send them home.

WH: The English share this sort of death wish with the Chinese, that the Englishman always wants to go home to England to die and they say the Chinaman is prepared to wait 10 years after he dies and then he wants to go home too.

BH: Tommy Yan, he was a Chinaman you know. They buried him in the English cemetery because he was considered to be more English than Chinese. Jack Wilson knows his daughter. We had a real league of nations. Tommy's wife was German. He was Chinese, she was German and then the children married - Jake Wilson was a Syrian, so I don't know what the children would be.

WH: I think most of the hotels in Kiandra were burnt down in the late 30s and the present hotel was open, as far as I can find out, in about 43 as a Chalet. I think it was Downy's Hotel at Kiandra that Schlink wrote about and there's a couple of hotels. Actually the photo in that Sun article showed three hotels, two on one side of the road next to the store, or the Tumut side of the store and then one opposite, looked like possibly another hotel. The Rules Point Hotel that you wrote about in the Year Book is still standing around near Mt. Fife.

BH: ... there was Mrs Cook ... but anyway that's were Dicky Cook comes in. Dicky used to do a lot of drinking and he was drinking at this hotel and they told him that he would ... it would be a good idea if he married

Mrs Cook because he could do all the drinking that he wanted then, so he proposed to her. He said, 'you know Mrs Cook, you and me should get married, you wouldn't even have to change your name'.

KH: What did she say to that?

BH: 'Go away Dick' - he was drunk.

KH: Where they related?

BH: No, they were widows ...  
(tape distorted)

WH: Fancy calling it Long Plain Hut. It was advertised in the Year Book in '43 or '44 as a Chalet. Some goose gets up and calls it Long Plain Hut. Don't ask me where they got ... it's on Long Plain but .... What was its real name, do you know offhand Bill?

BH: Rules Point Hotel. The plain leading out from there was known as Long Plain.

WH: There was another hotel closer to the road, that one was under Mt. Fickey, but where the bend in the road is up there, at Rules Point ...

BH: It would be a long time back I think.

WH: The locals from Tumut must have skied up there a bit did they, in the 30s, when they wanted to come up skiing for the day - the road wouldn't have been clear would it?

BH: That's skiing from Rules Point?

WH: Yes, when they came up - they came up as far as they could I suppose.

BH: ... they had to ski the last few miles.

WH: As I was saying earlier the Chinese seemed to have done more skiing at Kiandra than any other place in the world. Just now they are taking up skiing as a national fitness past time but in the past Chinese skiers would have been unheard of.

BH: The Chinese used to ski from the Nine-mile into Kiandra.

WH: Did they?

BH: Yes, carried their stuff out. This crowd that lived in this old house I was telling you about, they lived there for quite a few years. I'm just going by hearsay, but I know it's right. I just about remember them. In Kiandra, Tommy Yan had a shop there, there was Ping-kee, he had a shop there. There was quite a bit of opium.

I suppose they got their opium direct from China.

BH: Yes. Jimmy AhDoo(?) in latter years he used to work Wilson's Hotel - any odd jobs around the place. Somebody gave him a box of hats, the hard head kind. Jimmy wouldn't wear anything else.

KH: It must be strange to see a Chinaman on skis, wearing a hard hat.

BH: The story goes, he nearly had two ears cut off once. Somebody hit him over the head and the hat caught on his ears. Jimmy came to a bad end. I was telling you he was burnt when the place was burnt down - smoking opium. Old Tom Yan, his shop was burnt down because he was next door, he wasn't very happy about it at all. He was very down on Jimmy.

WH: What about Ahh Fat who won a race way back in about 1901 - some Chinese fellow?

BH: I can remember the name, but it must have been before my time.

WH: He must have been a crack runner by the sounds of him.

BH: I heard one of the half-casts up there, he was called Ahh Fat very often.

WH: It's a most peculiar name.

BH: If you're up there some time or other, you might find it interesting to have a look at the old cemetery. The headstones in there go back quite a time.

WH: The National Parks people took photos of these and what I found out - I didn't have time to look through them - but asked what the chance was of getting another copy of these for the Geological Society. It's very unlikely that anyone has transcribed the lettering off the graves, but even if they had human error being such as it is - these photos would be ideal to keep in their records. I would have liked to have gone through the headstones and have a good look.

KH: I have a list of the people who are buried there.

BH: The majority in there would be buried without headstones.

KH: There are ones that are still there, people like James Preston, John McEwen ...

BH: McEwen was one of the earliest.

KH: ... accidentally killed 1894, aged 33. Thomas Samuel Ball, aged 11; Mary-Anne and John Goddard, that was back in 1863; William Joshua Sutherland died 1875; Adam Sutherland who died at 15 years; Oliver Amersley Harris aged 15 years; Robert Harris aged 33 years; and a James Pattinson aged 70, died 1905 and there's a woman called Katherine Johanna Wortz born in Germany, 1913 she died and a little girl called Kathleen Johanna Sarah - that's about it I think.

WH: Does anyone have the complete register of the burials there? Normally with a grave yard, with a church nearby, they will have a register - places without headstones - who's lying where roughly. When you get off the cemetery ? when you go to these places - the registers long since gone.

KH: I don't know about Kiandra.

KH: They are just the one's who are still there - there are not many.

BH: Harris and Wortz, I remember them. McEwen was one I do remember. But there would be Wilsons and Yans I should imagine - no headstones - no record.

KH: It's just that I heard somebody was saying what a great place Kiandra must be to live, all you have to do is look at the number of graves in the cemetery.

WH: That's on Schink's trip - Schlink wrote that - he said: 'The licensee of the Kiandra Hotel is a great boost to Kiandra - any town that can exist for sixty years and have only 16 in the cemetery is worth a visit'.

KH: There's about a dozen headstones still there.

It was beautiful the other day when we went there and everything was covered with snow and the snow was still coming down and all that was there was just these iron grills and the headstones sticking out of this barren slope - it was really way out.

WH: Schlink says here, that he followed down a spur to Temperance Creek, gives a description of the trip - doesn't say where the spur was, had lunch and up Bolton's Hill, across Mulligan's Creek and across Happy Jack's River. He doesn't actually say that it was Bolton's Ridge rather Bolton's Hill. You would remember off hand?

BH: I can't remember now.

WH: It would be a pretty deep descent if you went directly from Nine-mile to Bolton's Hill. You would have to go down about 500<sup>feet</sup>.

BH: I would imagine, when I was through there earlier in the year I would probably pick out a track. In those days I knew the locality.

WH: You've got a little note here in the '34 Year Book that Bullock's Hill was named after a shanty keeper in the early days. Your father probably mentioned that to you. It's good to know that because you'd think Bullock's Hill would be named after a bullock. There was plenty of bullocks around in those days.

WH: ... Rules Point Hotel stands within a few hundred yards of, faces Mount Ficey. 1944 advertisement in the Year Book shows a Chalet. Built to serve in summer the requirement of stock owner mustering sheep from wild country and being a base for tourists fishing on the rivers nearby. It even had carpet on the floor when they wrote out the description.

BH: Rules Point Hotel was built by a chap named Joyce. He put guttering around it - the first fall of snow came and took the lot off. That's how much he knew about building in the snow country.

WH: Any other huts you can think of Bill? You said there was ruins around Nine-mile when you were there ...

BH: No I can't think of any.

WH: You're not sure if the Broken Dam had a name when you were there.

BH: No, just the Broken Dam hut.

WH: You used to call it Broken Dam?

BH: Yes.

WH: Broken Dam is a name on the parish map.

BH: It may not be the same hut as when I was there. It could have been burnt down and another one built. When I was there they said they used to store stuff in it during the winter months. They'd take the stock and leave blow-fly ointment in it and that would stop there until next spring and they'd come along again.

I think you were saying in the 20s it was a relatively new hut you saw.

BH: Yes, this would be around '25 or '26 - when we working at the Elaine we used to go up there at times. Sometimes we'd take a gun and go shooting - hares or foxes - up around that way.

WH: You didn't try use the race from Broken Dam for washing or anything?

BH: No. We hadn't reached the stage where we needed to wash anything. With Elaine, like a lot of other mining there's a lot of silly business went on. I could never see eye-to-eye with things that were done. It's incredible what people do.

KH: What sort of things?

BH: Well, you know how the bedrock - it's all in the bedrock and the bedrocks goes up the hill at an angle and then it dips evidently into the leader. We were putting a tunnel in there underneath with the idea of getting in to that deep lead. We have driven so far, about 800' or something and the others decided that they'd put a rise up to see if they were under the deep lead. Well I went up on the surface. I knew very well what was said of course - I went up on the surface and down through the loam - the surface rubbish and stuff and I found that we were still on the bedrock - we weren't under any lead. There was bedrock right from the end of the tunnel right to the surface - obvious. Yet they insisted on putting this rise ...

WH: I remember reading this in a Mine's Department Report - they decided they'd run a few rises and so on but it was obviously much too early at that stage.

BH: The rise was put up about 60' or something, but it was very very hard rock. But the reason for doing it - I couldn't see eye-to-eye with them on that - I couldn't get it into their head they were doing it the wrong way.

WH: This was Barnett's idea was it?

BH: One would agree with the other sort of thing, I couldn't understand it. Another point I disagreed with them on, another bedrock running at an

angle, roughly north and south - we're driving the tunnel and we're driving a manual. I was always arguing that we should drive straight across because it would be much easier. Driving at this angle made it very difficult in drilling and then blasting the stuff out and everything else. To my way of thinking it stood to reason that we'd get under the deep lead faster by going across because the deep lead would run into softish rocks, the whole river bed would cut its way through the softer strata.

WH: They were running at an angle to deep lead instead of going straight across.

BH: Yes, my idea was they should go straight across. I couldn't talk sense into them.

KH: That was the end of it then wasn't it?

BH: ... I thought to myself they were only wasting time and money, there's no sense to it whatsoever, but I didn't seem to be able to get it into their heads just the same. I thought now, after all is said and done neither of them knew anything about geology.

KH: Who chose the original position of the Elaine mine - where to start putting the tunnel?

BH: Between my brother and myself. The position of the tunnel was quite satisfactory but it was going at the wrong end - that was my opinion - it should have been going across. I agreed with them and let them go on, just to be agreeable.

KH: It wouldn't have been any better if you'd been closer to South Bloomfield would it Bill, on that same level?

BH: No, it wouldn't really. We had a geologist up there at one time. He gave us a report on it and he agreed with me, but the others wouldn't cotton on to that.

KH: What was his name?

BH: Gibson. He was a very well trained man. He'd been inspecting mines all over the country. He was a well trained geologist, I was only a young chap about 23 and of course why they should think I'd influenced him ...

END