

TOM CROSSE

Interviewed by Hazel Riseborough

At Taradale, 9.3.04 – end of Catherine's tape 3, and really the beginning of Tom's story

I'll just have a little bit to say. Catherine has covered the people part of it as far as the farm's concerned Patoka Station was part of Col Whitmore's purchases and at one stage he owned land in different blocks from the Ahuriri Lagoon to the top of the Kawekas [up behind Puketitiri], not all one after the other, but touching in different relationships and he was responsible with the aid of his constabulary for forming up the road which is a very good road in as much as it is usually on a watershed and therefore is fairly free of slips because there are not big cuttings to collapse on it. He just took up land and it was part of R.D.D? McLean's purchases from the Maori and he purchased a lot of H Bay and in that context I think it is fairly secure. He never lived there I don't think – he was obviously engaged with the army people and there's a Mount McNeil, McNeil being one of his adjutants. And there's another mount something named after another of his leading soldiers – they're in various areas in part of the different blocks which he had. Patoka Stn was just part of one of the blocks he had. Interesting in as much as the Castle name has been in the district since 1874 – and the Castles are v gd animal husbandrymen, and they are still around. He was then managing the Pakatutu? block across the Mohaka river for the Nelson family which had Tomoana freezing works. They were settled mostly in Puketitiri and then after the war there were rehab settlements of... down the Henley rd at Patoka. Col Whitmore I think we thank for having brought gorse into the district because he liked the idea of having gorse hedges. I suspect he also brought the rabbits too so he could chase them with hounds or some ssuch. He's not really loved by me much in those contexts. Rhodes from the Sth Island owned the Patoka area, purchased I think from Whitmore, probably abt 1868 and I've seen a diary? where the Patoka Stn woolbrand was first started in 1868, and the bales still go down the road with Patoka on them. It was a pretty scruffy little woolshed which used to be an implement shed or a haybarn until about 15 yrs ago, and the present woolshed was built in 1896 and did one season with 16 blade shearers and in 1897 they brought a traction engine in and two drives 16 Wolsely overhead gear ??? It had a board down each side of the main wool area where the woolhandling was done and went out to the wool pressing area and the engine was at one end of the shed the belts came down underneath the shed and up again to drive the next /8? – stands on the other side of the main partition. That wasn't required for very long. I think they were grazing a lot of acres down to Te Pohue in those days. ??? McCormick has connections from the Hardings who bought Patoka Stn which at that stage was somewhere abt 10,000 acres, just when there was a peak in land prices, for £8/acre shortly after the freezing industry came to pass and everybody thought land was wonderful. It's interesting to note the Hardings went bust and it came back to the Rhodes and it was from the Rhodes that my grandfather bought it in 1902. I'm not sure what price he paid for it – at a guess about a couple of pounds an acre.... (ends)

At Pukawa, 3 Feb 2005

Tape 1 (of 4) side 1

Catherine is the one who understands the family and is most reliable about where we started from my grandfather's 1855 start. Perhaps we'll take from what little I know from 1902 when grandfather bought Patoka from Rhodes family from Canterbury. I think they'd acquired it in about 1868 – the Patoka wool brand dates back to 1868 – then he'd sold it in the mid '80s to Mr Harding [Hardy?] at the princely sum of £8/acre which was precipitated by the meat export potentials, but then of course prices collapsed and Mr Harding had to sell it back of get out and it came back to Mr Rhodes. He didn't want to stay there and it was at that stage that it came to my grandfather, or into our family. I have no idea of the price – but I guess I could find it if I researched it. Just to be out totally of step I would record that subsequently in 1948 Father sold 3,000 acres of reverted scrub and what have you to the Crown – L & S – at £1/acre.

- Reverted from pasture?

- It had never been made into pasture – just the natural condition. It wasn't bush country – fern and scrub country with some of the more fertile areas on danthonia and browntop in the wetter areas. Native grasses – the natural cover for the areas that were fertile enough to be a jump ahead of scrub and fern. They were only

small areas and then the fern would be burned and sown in the ash. That was the manner in which things proceeded until Father realized that we had to do better than that and introduced the plough and superphosphate and English grasses in the later '20s and early '30s.

- But when did your dad take over from your grandad?

- Grandfather never lived there – brought a manager from Kumeroa – Woodville area – Harry ^{Royal} ^{Roil}. He stayed and Mother and Father came up in 1924. Father had been managing a small farm in Bay View that belonged to my grandmother – the Barker side of the family.

I think I will start the fuller exercise from 1928 when I first saw the light of day. I was the youngest of the family – Catherine was born before they came to Patoka – they came with her as a babe in arms. She was born in 1923, Susan was born in 1925 when they were at Patoka.

Before we go into the faming thing I would like to record that both Father and Uncle Grant who was older than Father, served in the First War, both distinguished enough to have been awarded Military Crosses and Mentioned in Despatches. And Jane's father, although 10 years older, was in the First War as General Andrew Russell's aide-de-camp, and both father and Willie Wood ended up in the Occupation Force in Berlin with Andrew Russell. So the family contacts with Jane started in the First World War. And Mother and Gwen, Mrs Wood, were both very connected with interest in stage and books and all those things, so it gave this dangerous occupation of matrimony quite a good start.

So to get back to more sensible things – Father bought the first tractor, a Caterpillar 15, I think, and proceeded to break in the land – 1929, I think. I'm sure it was before 1930. Prior to that there had been a ploughman with a team of horses, who used to plough the ground and grow a crop of oats to feed the horses to plough the ground to grow a crop, etc, etc. It made no progress in improvement – it was just really trying to subsist – though I expect it came out of oats into grass, but the land was so weak that you do that twice – and there were only a few areas where you could grow oats and harvest them, that it killed the thing. One of our paddocks has always been known as the Desert because it became so infertile it wouldn't even grow grass ultimately. So that was the grounding for Father to realize there had to be a more positive and productive approach to farming the place, to make anything of it.

- Is it a notoriously poor district?

- Yes, because of the pumice. But because the pumice is free draining it's the most magnificent-placed land for sheep, to grow healthy stock. They always have a dry place to bed down at night and now that you can feed it superphosphate and establish clovers it is of course the hub of the universe now. Some of the scrub areas has big enough scrub and small kanuka bushes that they had to be pulled out by the roots with a chain behind the tractor which even at my stage after the Second World War was being done to a limited extent. It was too big to turn in. Some of the lighter, whippier scrub, with the aid of a chain from one of the beams – you help to ?? and bury the scrub as the moleboard turned it over. I'm not sure what areas Father was doing – probably only 30 acres or so at a time.

- When he began – what acreage did your grandfather begin with – then your father, then you?

- I think Grandfather bought 7,000 acres and a further 1,000 acres Mr Rhodes sold or made available to his shepherd and another 300 acres at the time was handed over to the cowman gardner, whose forte was not with animal farming so he planted it in cherries to serve the Napier/Hastings market and Mr Dunnage, so that was lopped off from the 10,000 acres Mr Rhodes sold at the time, of which we acquired 7,000. That I think included 100 acres of Educational Reserve which we didn't stay with, but that's rather by the way.

- Were the cherrie trees a going concern?

- Oh, very much so – but there are no cherry trees today. Some wretch chopped them out in about 1960, or something. There might be the odd cherry tree there, but Mr Dunnage used to take them to town in a car – it took him rather a long time because he was rather nervous of on-coming traffic, so round the big corners he'd stop and get out to see if anyone was coming – which was his undoing, because in one particular place there was a truck round the next corner he couldn't see around so he drove around on the wrong side of the road. So there have been a few characters around...

Then of course the Slump came, so having just established the way to go he must have changed the Caterpillar 15 for a Caterpillar 22 – both still petrol. He was making progress, so there was some future in the farm which there obviously wasn't when they were just using the Bryant and May operation. I think in 1936 things were beginning to improve – though it's always said, isn't it, that the war saved the government

of the day because they were so broke NZ could have hardly kept going. It was the Commandeer period of NZ's produce where they were guaranteed a price per pound – Joint Wool? – JWO, and a price for their meat, so there was a sort of a peg put in the sand. But Father could see that war was going to come and that petrol would be difficult, so he somehow persuaded the bank manager to let him buy an RD4 Caterpillar – that was the smallest diesel Caterpillar at that stage, and that was on the property when he went to the Second War in 1940 – probably early 1940, I think. One of the neighbours who had a small farm and an older son, came and managed the property through the war for us and his son kept on his own small farm. But unfortunately the govt commandeered the D4 because they decided quite rightly the war effort was more important, and overcame Father's vision of needing a diesel tractor. We were able to find a very clapped-out D2 which had come onto the market – that's the size smaller and really quite adequate at that stage. So through the war things were kept ticking along, but only just. December 1940

I may just cast back to the First War, Second War to a minor extent – I think people need to remember the immense blow to Aust and NZ in those wars when so many of the men with youth and vitality and strength went overseas, and so many of them didn't come back. I think it's a credit to these two young countries that in spite of that blow to their potential driving force in all areas, not just agricultural, we still have risen up. It does seem rather odd to mention but I feel very strongly about it.

- What sort of proportion of men went to both wars, First and Second, do you think?

- No I don't know what proportion. Father was still at school when war started, so he was really young to go the First War, and then he wasn't in the front line obviously – he was Assistant Adjutant General at that level, serving in the Second War. Another friend of his who was a year or so older, as a doctor he went, and then again enlisted for the Second War, but – no, I don't know how many.

Do I ramble on about things unrelated to farming?

- Of course – anything you like to get down...

- It does bother me because so many young people – my optician notably! – just cannot understand why anyone would want to go to the war, and therefore when I told him Father had been to both wars, he really looked as though he had the son of an imbecile in his chair, which I rather resent. Father is certainly not the imbecile – we'll waive aside all about the son. They had the driving force for peace and opposition to countries being overrun by tyranny and I think that has/was? left, but that was the driving force, I'm sure, why Father went to two, and those who could did. And what drove the young people to go. It was the other side of the world, but it was the concept of the free world being overwhelmed by a despot that rose to make them to take the sacrifice. [What do you think Hazel?

- I've never understood why anyone would go to war – but it's too late not to. You feel that if more effort had been put in, if the idealism had surfaced earlier, could the world have been arranged differently so that war didn't come, never had to happen, or is this – ah, everthing's ticking along and suddenly you have something terrible in place... I mean what could you do about the likes of Hitler from this side of the world? – or even be very aware of it... You haven't the communications... you're presented with a fait accompli, aren't you...]

There is a reluctance to become involved with another nation's politics, such as Hitler, and in some respects they were in a desperate, the German nation, and although the way he drove his ship was disastrous, and totally inhumane as far as the Jews were concerned. I've read books where he was providing them with some light at the end of the tunnel, economically. Isn't that right?

- Yes, they'd been left very badly after the First World War, as if they didn't matter. And the people have to go on, the nation has to survive and he's going to show them a way to do it I suppose. Perhaps they learned from that and after the Second World War they divided things up better – Germany resurfaced, Japan resurfaced, and hopefully having learned their lesson..

- I think that was the reason for the Marshall Plan and the rebuilding of Germany and so on.

- Yes, or otherwise you're just going to leave them in the same position as they were after the First War.

- And we may have suffered from the Great Depression on 1928-31, but that was nothing compared to what the German people were suffering, to be specific to Germany – or Europe in general, I guess.

- Well I don't know – parts of NZ I think suffered as badly as parts of Europe. The whole country might not have, but ...

- Probably never had any spending money, but most people could get a feed. And there were food kitchens and those sorts of thing, weren't there.
 - Mmm, not the best things... I can understand the idealism of people who will not fight, who will not take other lives...
 - Oh yes, sure, ..
 - just as strongly as those who think feel that they've got to fight...
 - Yes, anyway, that's a bit by the way, but..
 - It's interesting though because today a young fellow, an optician or whatever, has never...doesn't know anybody who went to war.
 - No, that's why, if this does ever get to paper, I would like to feel that I could have some input to try and explain what to these younger people, seems quite inexplicable.
 - If this ever does this will be a transcript which you have then as a basis, something to work on, to expand these ideas... having sown these seeds... something to work on later. A tape isn't... a book. Oral material is not written material, but it's the basis of the writing.
 - Yes, it's the groundwork from which you might get something..
 - Getting your ideas down and starting you on a train of thought that you can develop later in print. So it's a good thing to mention the things that are on your mind, that looking forward you want to stress.
 - Yes, that's a good way of looking at it.
 - So there he was, away for how long in the Second World War?
 - About 4 years I think.
 - And the farm's ticking along with the neighbour man managing it.
- Yes, and very limited resources of good labour and what always seemed to me an extraordinary situation. The govt were paying people to come and cut scrub on Patoka because of unemployment problems, and the good people were going over to get their heads blown off in the war. But that's how politics or running the country works. I just thought I'd draw attention to that – and there were large areas of scrub cut particularly out at the back of the farm – the area which was subsequently sold at £1 acre – the Dome – cut by these contracts, and somebody would have to come and have a look at them, and often they were slow coming so you didn't know whether to keep the gang there cutting the block before it was agreed to or not.
- Then having cut the scrub was the land developed – or the means weren't there then – the super and giant discs and so on?
 - When it was cut it was just burned and hand-sown, but there was no means of throwing super at it, no aeroplanes, so the real turning point in Patoka was the arrival of techniques and machinery of aerial topdressing and giant discing – giant discing first to crush the scrub, then you burned it and sowed it with rollers which were designed to trundle over those sticks which hadn't burned and the stumps and so forth. There was ash or sticks and rubbish there as a shelter for the seed. It wasn't like a bare clean paddock. But then you could throw some grass seed out with the roller and the super with this box on the roller, but then you had the aeroplane to continue with the six-monthly topdressing to raise the phosphate level. The seed wasn't sown by air at first, but later on people were moreskillful in their flying skills and confident that they could have a cover.
 - How much of your territory was drivable?
 - With the right machinery there would be – say, 80%, but there were some steep faces that were totally ungetatable.
 - Which were just left in scrub?
 - No, but because they were so steep, the ash which had blown over didn't stick there and so the natural fertility was high enough with the aid of aerial topdressing to keep them up and keep them in English grass or certainly keep them so that you could run enough stock to stop the scrub from regenerating.
- That sort of jumped us into 1951 when the Korean war provided the money in the wool – wool was 144d/lb, having been abt 28 or 30, 40d, so that was the third point [giant discs, aerial topdressing and wool prices]. That was probably the most vital thing to record in that period, but when Father came back in 1945, we then had the worst drought I can remember – 1945-46 when the rain was almost negligible, and the rabbits arrived. There was always a rabbit around, but the plague which really produced them in gigantic numbers was in that period and to give an example of how they proliferated, Father used to catch the odd

doe in a rabbit trap at the stop, more to keep them away from the garden than out on the farm, and this memorable occasion when he said he caught 23 rabbits in the one trap because he caught the doe and when he opened her up, very pregnant, she had 11 little ones inside her, and when he dug the stop out there were another 11 in the stop. So I think this exemplifies the catastrophe of their reproduction for some peculiar reason that made the plague so catastrophic, again coupled with such a dry year there was no natural rain to kill them in those stops. Very often the spring rains would drown them. - The rabbit digs its burrow and the stop is not the warren, but the little burrow where they breed, where they have their little ones. He and I often used to find a stop. Father always walked around with a stick and we'd poke the stick down the hole and when you pulled it out and there was a bit of down, or whatever rabbits have - soft fur they line their stop with, pulled from their fronts, and then you'd measure that with the stick along the top of the things and dig down with a pocket knife [?] to get the little ones. Obviously we didn't kill hundreds like that, but it was some sort of satisfaction to think we'd got those bastards, know what I mean?

- And you had a station rabbit, or a Hawkes Bay Rabbit Board rabbit who came?

- No, there was a station rabbit in those days. It wasn't until this plague reignited the need for a Rabbit Board and there always had been a HB Rabbit Board which didn't do very much except go round and see if there were any rabbits. And Father was the first Chairman of the Northern HB Rabbit Bd, which was appropriate because my grandfather was the first Chairman of the HB Rabbit Bd and he was a vital part - driving force for building the rabbit-proof fence between the Wairarapa and Southern HB - 1868. Wilfred Poulton ? has written a very good book covering this period. It started out in the Castelpoint area and thru the bush where they cut a track and buried this netting 18" into the ground and 18" up the fence, and that came thru to the Manawatu Gorge and there was a rabbit-proof gate on the Gorge to complement it - they were relying on the Gorge as a watershed for the rabbits. There was not a rabbit-proof fence I think it the Mohaka, but even I remember the rabbit gate on the Mohaka bridge going up to Wairoa. It was interesting that my grandfather was in the vanguard of the rabbit battles in the 1800s. I think they were already in large numbers in the Wairarapa - but it was a hopeless task really, like a good many of my grandfather's ideas - but still he went battling on and I think he was on the HB County Council for 50 yrs or something and Chairman for far too long. I don't think his contribution could have been as good as it should be - but that shouldn't be said!

- Gentlemen of the time did their 'civic duty'. You didn't get paid... Parliamentarians didn't get paid till the 1880s...

- Yes, it is quite interesting and I find it quite intriguing that eldest son William becomes the President of the Grape Growers' Assn of NZ, so perhaps it is a bit genetical. I was the president of various minor activities - Chairman of school boards and that kind of thing. - We won't worry about that.

So to come back to the near disaster for Patoka Station as far as the Crosses are concerned, things were so bad following the drought and the rabbits, and although Father had learned in the '30s how to make a future for the district, the elements and the finances were so bad that he showed me a letter he had written to his uncle - Uncle Jack Barker, who owned Roy's Hill which is now surrounded by grapes and really is mostly just a river bed, whether he could have first option because he thought the prospects at Patoka were so bad he would have to move out. I have said that in other company and I'm angered that people don't believe that Patoka was in that state in that period because they can't envisage how devastating it was and again in that period before the three vital factors arrived in 1951 and I think my children need to remember when we see what a wonderful place Patoka has grown into just how close it was to the family moving off after 50 yrs. For about 4 yrs it was so denuded by lack of moisture, lack of fertilizer, lack of manpower - until this vital trio arrived - money, scrub-cutting, aerial topdressing. 1951 was the waterfront strike, so they had to stop the wool sales at the height of the boom, and by the time we came back to wool sales, being later hearing than some, we were lucky to get 80 pence. We sold some of the hogget wool at 144, and when we got round to selling the ewe wool it was back down to 80. Everything shut down, the wool sales stopped, and the Korean demand ceased to be there. It's a hairy industry - but that's what makes it so great.

Left school in 1946 and had two years at home, learned to drive a tractor and plough a paddock and those sort of things. I was lucky to have two years before I went to Massey on two scores - it gave me a much fuller understanding of the farming cycle and experience so that I was much better able to absorb valuable information.

- Like those swingletrees and things I couldn't understand...
- Yes, all those sort of things. Ralph Beamish for instance, came after only one year, and he managed easily obviously, and it was only a mistake that I wasn't there after one year but I've always regarded it as a stroke of luck. The other stroke of real luck was the course I happened to land in. Nearly all of them were prepared to work and get some value out of the lectures. Certainly there were enough of us prepared to that, and I won't mention all the bright sparks that made us work harder than we would have liked to, but at the same time those who wanted to play were well able to play out of lectures, but the critical thing was there were enough of us who wanted to get something out of the lectures. You take the course after us, they got nothing out of it.
- There are a few key people in a year who change the year from a good bunch to a bad bunch – who set the scene.
- It is – you'd have seen that plenty of times now.... Those were two little factors...
- What about the year ahead, that you might have got to?
- They weren't bad – but they weren't as good as ours. We had a good year...
- And even those who really wanted to play – Bird and Webber and co – they were bright enough, they did enough work, as well as play. In fact, I can't think of anyone who crashed because they played. There might have been some who just weren't bright enough to quite make the grade...
- Do you remember the chemistry exam we had?! The first and probably only time I'll ever know a scale of marks that varied – it was very very simple chemistry, and it included some dairy course people, one of which was not very bright and he got nought, and the brightest one in our course got 100 – Derek probably.
- Derek Turnbull? – possibly. I think you and Ralph and Derek and me, managed to top things in turn, but I certainly wasn't up there in chemistry.
- I think it was Derek – I only got 90 or something. But I can see them..
- They were up on the board! – anyone could come along and read them.
- You wouldn't believe it – 0 to 100! I can't remember that poor thick fellow's name.
- I remember things like farm engineering – I didn't understand anything about anything, but someone – Derek I think – explained how a combustion engine worked and things, and I learned it, and learned the diagrams and produced those and did very well thank you, but if someone had lifted up the bonnet of the car I wouldn't have known where the engine was never mind its parts....
- Then after we finished at Massey we really did get busy with a plough and in three consecutive years I turned over 200 acres and worked it up and sowed it into grass. I think Father was doing the stockwork then – oh old Rod Breech was there to help a little bit. He was the shepherd whose wife was the most valuable part because she taught the kids at school. Mrs Breech was a lot younger than her husband. Our school wasn't open then but she taught at one of the neighbours' houses.
- That was perhaps the most rewarding part of my life on the farm, because of the ability to turn over all this ground – the Annergis?? and most of what I did had been turned over before, though some of it was...

Side 2

I think the Patoka school started before the turn of the 20th century, but we have established that we celebrated the centenary of the Patoka School as from 1902, but then it petered out after the mills closed – the saw mills down at the end of Henley? road. There were some magnificent native trees – a lot of totara which was being split into posts in the 1890s, and some of them were floated down the Mangaone river but mostly it was rimu and white pine. It finally closed down after the 1931 earthquake because I think the mill was shaken to pieces. But there was still a lot of milling – there were five mills in the Puketitiri area. The school wasn't going when we – the Crosse kids – were meant to go to school. It was just trying to start, but Mother taught us by correspondence, very well indeed. Then I went to prep school in 1938 as an under 10 – to Hereworth, in Havelock. I had 4 years there which was pretty hard yakka because I had never stayed away from home. I became so homesick that I finished up in the san and was rejuvenated by our friend Wilfred Poulton who quoted reams of Banjo Patterson to me. – That became a vital part of my life! Wilfred was just a year older than I was and he was there for some proper reason, and I was only there because I'd cried myself sick. And of course no parents were told or anything in those days. It is interesting – I'm just totally dedicated to that school because of what I've seen it to for so many young boys, and the time I've spent round the Board table with it and helping other boys get there who perhaps couldn't have otherwise.

And then bumping into them later on and knowing what it has done for them. And bumping into parents who I don't know from Adam at airports, chemist shops saying Oh you're Mr Crosse, I'd just like to say how much good Hereworth did for our So and So. The greatest rewards in this life. And my two sisters went to Nga Tawa to secondary education, straight from Mother's teaching of the English correspondence system. Then I went to Wanganui for – it might have been 5 years I think, being a slow learner. I have a lot of time for the independent education, not because I think all the state schools are lacking by any means, because there are some really first rate ones, but I think the education opportunities of a boarding school make for closer and long knitted friendships and for wider horizons that can be acted on in the boarding school and independent school situation and if they didn't contribute something wider than the state system they wouldn't and shouldn't expect to be supported. And so presently I am again on an independent school at Woodford, which my grandfather was a founder of, and having been on the Woodford board while Sarah our daughter was there – since they integrated they were looking for one or two people who were perhaps older or had a wider interest in what the school was doing, its vision in the long term, rather than so often parents go on the school board while their child is there but after that they don't focus on the next generation. And since grandfather was a founder I feel it is perhaps a way I can contribute to furtherance of his vision.

- There's your civic duty coming through again.

- I can't deny it, can I. It is there in the genes I guess. In that context we have just appointed an outstanding girl – 31, just 32 now – to be headmistress at Woodford. And working with her, seeing what her vision is, the clarity of her thinking and how to cope with the big and considerable problems – not all problems, but there is a big field to cover with a boarding school and the state system. It was easier before integration because you were totally independent and paddled your own canoe. And parents expectations are very high, which they have every right to be. If you charge fees to deliver you've got to deliver we've got to deliver, we've got a responsibility.

- Do the girls respond?

- They seem to, though she's only been there two terms. Had a couple of rather rocky patches, which makes my interest even greater to see how this new woman will go. So... wonderful life, Hazel. I've had such a full life. All sorts of things... my friends have asked me to serve on Federated Farmers boards, whatever. Richmond's meat company, and it's given me opportunities which if they hadn't asked me to do I would probably have stayed looking after the farm.

- And playing golf!

- I had to flag that away! – I did most of that at Massey. In that context I've been so lucky with the friends and support I've had and the things they've asked me to do... And what are you in the world for if it's not to help your fellow man, if you have a contribution to make. But the rewards are monumental. You don't get everything right, but it's great satisfaction.

Where are we going?

- We just did this diversion on education out of farming because we'd jumped from the Slump and rabbits and things to go to Massey... So through the war you were home with mother, or...

- Mother was Matron at Wanganui. She couldn't sit around while Father was away... We were in a different place every holiday. The girls were at school – I'm not sure when Katherine left – she went to university during the war I suppose. Susan may have too. But basically for the holidays we would find a house to live in somewhere, either in Napier – I remember we had two May holidays in Christchurch – Susan was at Canterbury then.

- Oh, while your father was away at the war you were at boarding school so your mother was free to go and do her thing at Wanganui, and you met up in the holidays...

- The fact that I wasn't on the farm during the war was a disadvantage to my keeping up with what farming was all about, and I do want to place it on record gratitude to Father who took me out to a present/pleasant knob away from the homestead to quizz me on whether I was really sure I wanted to go farming – this is a year or two after he came back from the war, because no way was he just going to assume I was going to go farming. And I think so many farmers finished up farming which they should have never done because it was assumed they would. Father was an outstanding man, from every point of view and in this small concept it was an example of the breadth of his vision and understanding. At the time I think I said I enjoy it

it, and the only other thing I think I might like to do is joining the Merchant Navy. I think that surprised him a bit and I don't really know quite why that was in the back of my mind except that in the last 15 years I seem to have so much wanderlust to go and see other parts of the world it might be related.

- Have you travelled on a cargo ship?

- No, I haven't.

- I would still do that I think if I had the opportunity. That is the best way to travel. Flying – I hope I never see another aeroplane! But I might get on a ship, even though I get seasick for the first few days. It's wonderful – it's another life.

- It is funny – we have been on boats quite a lot though I used to be sick going down to Lyttelton in a rough sea. If I wasn't sick I'd spend most of the night on my elbow waiting to be sick! I'm not a good sailor at all, but we finished on a Soren Larsen cruise and we've cruised down the east coast of Stewart Island in a tiny little boat, and the Inside Passage in British Columbia, and heading off to Alaska this year. A fabulous trip on the Acheron in Fiordland, 12 days or something. But anyway...

- So he father said Don't go to sea, son; stay on the land!

- Yes – and what a great decision it was. Hard work obviously, and there were plenty of disappointments... But by the same token it's demanding, and you pit yourself to overcome the problems, whatever they are. And if you can send good animals down the road, and good produce, and walk round a paddock of good stock, it's just great.

- And you saw all this happen – just after you came back from Massey...

- Yes – the turn-around, just after that we started the ploughing and working the land and built it up to a big enough proportion so that after that we would maybe do 60 or 100 acres a year into chow as a winter crop – not out of scrub, because 1948 was the year we sold 3,000 acres at £1/acre, and L&S broke that in – partly because that was such a low point, and that gave us a bit of cash, and then it was augmented by the Korean war. I did the first area I did, some 60 or 70 acres I ploughed was a lovely fertile patch and we had to sell it to the government along with the 3000 acres because they were putting access out to the back of the Dome and this was tied in with the other block. I did regret that – it was young grass, and they paid us £13/acre for it. But it was logical really and it gave them a bit more easy ground for another settler to have a homestead and that.

- So '48 you sold the back, hard country, went to Massey, came back to the boom times, so called, and you stayed on the farm from then on. Your father doing less and less?

- No, while I was spending a lot of time in the '48, 49, 50 period of 200/acre^{ploughing} year. Yes, even in the Massey years. The first year I was there, after Induction, I rushed back for the weekend and sowed 100 acres, and I came back and old Mel Yates, or young Mel Yates said OK – what was your seed mixture? And fortunately I knew exactly what it was! The next summer we were on our summer practical, and one of the years – this is a bit out of step – 1953, when we got engaged, I did 100 acres for the neighbour, because that helped us bridge the gap from the time when Father gave Katherine 500 acres, so to try and cushion the stock loss we took over this 100 acres of scrub for the neighbour and I crushed that and turned it into grass and for 10 years we had to use of it without any rent, just for the crushing and the sowing and topdressing. It suited him – his children weren't old enough to help. Then we got contractors doing the more difficult country, the steeper country with a bigger machine, further down – in fact land which we have not sold because L&S only offered us 10/- an acre, so we kept it and it's probably now worth \$3,000. So I got some of the decisions right! Now that was more kanuka, steeper country, more fertile, slightly different climate and so forth, at the Napier end of the farm – not so much pumice in it. Bigger stuff, needed bigger machinery than we had. And also by then we had quite a lot of animals so my time was spent more with shepherding and helping Father there.

- Did you have a good team of dogs?

- Reasonable dogs. I never had a lot of time for dog trials because I had quite enough dog trials of my own in the ordinary course of events! They didn't have to be all that wonderful. I would walk around and look in all the corners of the paddock anyway, instead of relying on a heading dog to pick up the cast sheep and so on. And of course they get used to mustering such and such a paddock in such and such a way. In fact I think the best two – and I never realized how easy it was until I only had two dogs to worry about – a very

good heading dog and a marvellous old huntaway. After we went to Taradale I still had them and gosh, life was easy! They knew exactly what was going on.

-And what sort of size mobs were you working with?

- Not gigantic – the paddocks were getting chopped up pretty small – 50 acres. Topping ewes we only had 800 in a mob – say three mobs of 800. A sheep's worst enemy is another sheep. They don't like big mobs, and if you want the sheep to perform you've got to keep it content. We had quite big mobs – 1,500 hoggets on turnips and ...

Oh, breaking in this land from scrub I hadn't mentioned that was a permanent pasture mixture of about 33lbs altogether – abt 8lbs of short-rotation, what we used to know as H1, and abt 12 of perennial, and different lots of 4 or 5lbs of white clover and a couple of lbs of sub-clover, a little bit of red clover, some cocksfoot, and crested dogstail because on those really low-fertility places it's no good expecting the really high-fertility grass to survive, and the essential is to get cover, and if you can build it up then the rye grass will overtake. Rye grass and white clover are obviously the mainstay, but a little bit of variation... and I know the varieties have changed, and it's a totally different kettle of fish now, but that's what it was in those days. And we put in 3/4lb of turnips, usually a green-globe white one and a red-globe. They were very low-fertility demanding because you relied on the faeces to build up the fertility, so you piled on the hoggets to nip off the grass and eat the bulbs and pack it down because consolidation was so vital, and we'd have perhaps 1500 hoggets and we'd cut the paddocks up in those days with wire netting. In the early days I think we used to drive in blessed manuka stakes. That's what we had for docking. Just at the end of the war, before we had netting, or we'd graduated to netting, we had sheep nets to yard the sheep in for docking. Fishing nets – and you'd run a long thin rope along the top and put a couple of clove-hitches round each wooden peg. Every spring after lambing, before docking started, I'd have to go and find a nice patch of manuka with straight sticks and I'd cut them out and taper them, but by the time you'd hit them in through the docking period with a maul ... It's a dag when you come to remember it, isn't it!

Yes, 1951 was the time when, with the price of wool, the price of 2-ths went through the roof. The previous year we'd sold 2-ths in the ewe fair for not very much – 40/- or something – they didn't have enough wool on and there weren't a lot of them, so the next year Father and decided we'd shear them ourselves, only 2 or 300 I suppose, but quite a laborious task if you can't shear! – and we struck this very high sale where instead of a few shillings they were a few pounds, and I think the 40/- £2, sold for £8. Just a combination of the fact they were better fed, properly wintered, presented with the right amount of wool on, and the high wool prices. The top price that year was probably £12, or something – a lot of dollars. Shortly after that, probably about 1953 or 54, and I would think the Patoka station 2-ths have been in the top three every year, and in fact they would have topped the sale which they did this year, more often than not. I think it's a credit to our approach to properly feeding animals and presenting them, and thanks to David Hildreth and Co their fecundity has risen and their survivability and now from sort of 103% when we started after the war Ben has twice now exceeded 160% - proper Romneys, not fruit-salad things. That reflects in the demand that people are prepared to give them that extra attention to get the extra results. That in itself is very rewarding. Having learned how to select, and yes, things that don't rear a lamb go down the road, some of them won't have reared a lamb through misfortune, but that's just bad luck. I didn't believe if for a while although David Hildreth told me that you weren't allowed to put out anything that you had to help, we still do a lambing beat, minimal amount of work, but one of the last lambing beats it did I clearly remember finding two ewes cast lambing, and three live lambs struggling around at the other end, all of which would have been down the gurgler if I hadn't happened to be going round. As the country perhaps is a little lumpy and therefore the casting is excessive – again you see a ewe with two lambs parked up on the hill face and a lamb's through the fence and she's waiting for somebody to come and put the third lamb before she takes off with all three – don't they deserve a hand?! I think there's a difference between...

- Do you still go up?

- No, I haven't. I'm afraid Ben's got the ewes too big! When this [left shoulder] was knocked out of shape I was catching on the run with the right arm and that pulled this one out, so I had to get it repaired. I've had both done – one arm only goes part-way up, one goes all the way.

There's some very good farmers in the Patoka area and just like the Massey thing if there's competition everybody rises... But again, it's the climate. We usually get enough rain to balance for a breeding flock and a breeding herd. And this thing of having, even in a wet season, every paddock will have somewhere where a sheep can go to be dry at night, and I expect some readers will think I'm mad, but it is a fact in animal performance. And the better the animal performance, the better your life is – it has its rewards.

- So, when did you actually take over the property?

- Father again was great in as much as he let me make decisions and get on with it how I wanted to, really from before we were married I think – we were married in 1954. It just seemed to happen, in the early 1950s perhaps. He was always there, and supportive, but I was just so lucky that I was able to push my ideas along. There's a neighbour still going with the chequebook and his son is 52. It makes you squirm. I was very unfortunate inasmuch as Father died in 1962, so I then had the responsibility of everything whether I liked it or not. He didn't have a terribly long illness. It was cancer. He'd been gassed in the First War and it's possible that was a contributing factor. He was still doing a lambing beat, and died at the end of September, so I think he was just driving himself when it was as good as all over. Mother was lucky too. She died in 1971 in her bed at Patoka, and had been driving herself the day before up and down the road. And I do thank my lucky stars they didn't have a long term illness and suffering and so on. If I'm treated the same way I'll be more lucky than I deserve.

I suppose I was making the decisions, but it wasn't obvious. I wasn't telling him what to do; it just sort of happened. There weren't near the same pressures in the '50s and '60s like there are these days. All this paper work Ben has, and thank the Lord Ben came home about the time GST started. I was part of the boot-box brigade – put it all in a boot-box and take it down to Bill Denge?? To my shame I'd write out the accounts on Xmas eve because that was the first day things weren't happening, and some of them might have gone back two months, three months. Not good, but that's how it was, and I'd just write a cheque and scribble things on the monthly statement so the unfortunate accountant knew what column to put them in. But that's the way it was, and it was quite adequate in those days. I couldn't hack it these days.

Ben tags things if he gives them a tube of penicillin and that has to be monitored. The customer is always right and if that's what the level has to be, we've got to do that. As it is I think Ben's being very conscientious. I'm sure there are many that aren't. But – it was a godsend to the nation, because we could blossom. The prices weren't always good, but we could get on with it, without too much redtape.

In the '80s, climate-wise it was pretty hard yakka. The seasons were much more difficult. I said 1945-46 was the worst drought, '83 was another very bad drought and I'm not sure if it was then, we sent heifers away grazing and I think they went to three different places on the other coast. But we haven't sent things away grazing lately. We sent some down to the Wairarapa – three of us from Patoka sent cows down.

Always remember if you do that they are your animals, your responsibility to go and see what's happening, and if you don't and things go wrong, don't blame the other fellow really. They're your animals, your responsibility, and I labour that point because a small farm we bought, Newick?, at the end of the road, and I had a very good young fellow running it for us and we sent some cattle down to Porangahau from there for grazing and I kept on saying Have you seen your cattle? Oh, no, I think they're alright – and I blame myself a little bit that I kept on trying to get him to go – Oh, no, I'm just going to shear the hoggets this week, - and when he went down it was just not fair to the cattle. It was awful. He learned his lesson, sure, but it was not really at my expense, it was at the cows' expense, and that's not on. I should have pushed him harder. But what a lesson he learned. That was much worse than the Wairarapa thing.

The whole of the '80s was difficult. I think '83 was the worst, than the end of the '80s. But then in 1998 it wasn't good – there was a dry spell. They are around the corner every year. Sometimes it comes right, sometimes it doesn't. This last year we've just had Ben only got 42 1/2 inches and a helluva lot of wind all through the spring and our average used to be 58" of rain, and with those dry seasons in the '80s it came down to 54", but to only get 43" in 2004, with a lot of wind – but its distribution is so vital. In December there was damn all, but had an inch at a critical point, then 10mls, 5mls every here and there that just kept it alive. And by the same token one of our difficult drought years we had 62 inches of rain because we had three bloody great dollops and nothing else. Sixtytwo inches is not as useful as 45-50 well spread. And again 62" and it blew like hell. On at least two occasions we have recorded 10" in 24 hrs. One year we recorded just 100" and there've been other years of 70, 66, and so on. A really dry year which unfortunately

we haven't a record for because the manager didn't bother to keep the rain guage going, so thru the war there's a bit of a gap there which isn't good, and I think in the '45-46 period there was probably only 35-38" of rain. In that drought year the hoggets-2ths were so small Father didn't put them to the ram, waited till they were 4ths and I remember him coming home and they were so undeveloped that he was black and blue up his arm where he'd been trying to help them lamb. It was desperate and I think we came down to 35 cattle – and these days we are wintering about 780. A combination of the drought and rabbits and the fact that the country had become so impoverished without proper farming and fertilizer... That was bad, but then again if you start at the bottom and keep working up it's rewards all the time, with obviously the odd year when it's pretty testing. [end Tape 1]

Tape 2 (of 4) Pukawa, 4 Feb 2005

(side 1) –

We were married in 1954, Sarah turned up in March of 1956, William in August '57, Ben June '59, Christopher Feb '61. So there was a brief period when Jane was semi-occupied with four under five! We didn't get electricity till – we had a year in the cottage without electricity. That arrived in 1955. But that we did have an extension from a diesel lighting plant in the homestead, which gave us light, and if Jane made sure Mother wasn't ironing, she could use an iron. But keeping the milk cool without a refrigerator was a bit testing and the old fashioned system of putting it in a tub with a bit of muzlin over the top was remarkably good. Mother had a kerosene refrigerator and every now and then it would pack a sad and I would come into the kitchen in the morning and it had smoked all night and there were festoons of black cobwebs from the ceiling. And of course in the old days the washing was done with a copper in an awful backyard – really appalling. And a big sump where the waste water lived, and a couple of tubs and a wooden washing board. Hand wringer – really basic, and considering Mother had come from the London stage, she was marvellous. The first refrigerator, or the washing machine, I'm not sure which, we were selling some store lambs, and Father was rash enough to say if they made 25/- he would get her a washing machine. They made 25/-6! I think it was the washing machine – an iron-horse petrol motor underneath the bowl of the washing machine, kick-start motor – so that kept Mother fit. Interesting because the iron-horse did pretty good service, but finally packed a sad and we replaced it with a Biggs and Stratton? and once the bowl got hot and the motor got hot it would cough, so the damn thing was a bit of a disaster. Took us a while to realize that the iron-horse had a cooling system which could handle it and the Biggs and Stratton couldn't. And of course the lighting plant, was 24 volts, I think and a Delco starting – little generator running on petrol and that would charge up the batteries. It would do about an hour every, hour and a half in the winter, and that would give enough light to do the house. Before then it was the dear old Millar? – kerosene lamp – not very good for doing the darning with. The light was pretty poor.

Nineteen fiftyone was the year of the waterfront strike and we had this Start-a-matic diesel lighting plant on a ship and of course it was held up in Nelson for 6 months or stgh. Father sent some quite good telegrams – one of them, maybe about Xmas time was to the agents, Levins, to a friend of his I think in Wgtn, I suppose he'd been in the war with him, and he was organizing this lighting plant, and of course nothing was happening, so Father sends a rather short telegram So-and-So, Levin and Co – Have you seen the light? And since it was Xmas time it was quite appropriate. And the other one was when he was kicking off the Hawkes Bay Rabbit Board. Before it was established in Napier it was started in Feilding, I don't know why, – the secretary, whose name was Little, wanted to see him over there to talk over some business, so a telegram came over – Hugh, could you come over on a certain day - etc, and Father's rather abrupt answer was Little, Feilding. Yes, Crosse. Perfectly adequate, but not very verbose.

Catherine might have mentioned the time when I was not very large, and Mother was away long enough for him to write a letter, and I was a little incontinent at that stage and she was given a run-down on how the kids were getting along and he told Mother he thought I was an up-and-coming Channel swimmer. I don't know if that ought to go on the tape – but it might give Hazel a laugh. [It did] The realm gem was from Mother – telegrams were the means of urgent messages, and we had dear Mrs Whittle at the post office and she was very much part of every family and she'd know what was happening – not maliciously, just totally interested and devoted to the family and Mother would give the message and always sign it Love, Mother. Again Mother was away, but quite a rarity, and Father was sending a message to one of the girls and you

would hear Mrs Whittle mumbling as she was writing it out, and Father sent his message quite properly but just signed Father, didn't add the love, and there was a long pause and heavy breathing and Mrs Whittle finally said Mr Crosse, Mrs Crosse always signs off Love Mother, so Father got the cue and said – Yes, do that please, Mrs Whittle. I do want to emphasize the fact that she was just so interested in Mother and Father and the children and other things around the place, she was really part of the family.

I think some time in that period my friend Peter Hunt was one of the first party to overwinter in Antarctica, and he endeavoured to ring us up from Antarctica, and Mrs Whittle was so excited that a call should come from Antarctica to Patoka, and the line was so bad you could hardly hear the message, so she did a proper job of transmitting what Peter was saying to me, and the answers – she could hear, but it wouldn't go through to the farm. I think ultimately we arranged that he would ring back to one of my friends down on the end of a proper telephone line. The other occasion when a friend of ours was ringing from friends of hers in California and Mrs Whittle was just beside herself. She was a dear. It's quite fun to me at the present minute, Shona Whittle, their only child is now organizing two large chunks of Oamaru stone being sculpted into a memorial for those people 100 years ago and before and up to the present time who have been responsible for the developing of the district. At first we were thinking of a sheep, then it developed to the people, because in fact it is the mothers and fathers and shepherds and shearers and dogs – the people who make it all happen. They are the driving force, and the sheep of course are vital. This sculptor, a delightful fellow to work with, carved out of a ton and a quarter of Oamaru stone the bust of a man of the times, in fact 1894, who was the first postmaster of Patoka. It is not depicting him in person but it is his style of hair, large moustache, collar, coat – and this week Marting is sculpting a mother of the times, with a child who is of some significance, in fact to H. Bay – the family – but again it is not that in particular.

Shona and I are trying to record the sort of people who have made it all happen from the pioneering stage. There will be a pair of hand shears, and if we had another block of stone I would like to get either a shepherd or a shearer, because Christopher is very adamant it should not be only the people who owned the land, but the ones who worked it. I tried to point out to him that when the owner's back was to the wall, after the war and so forth, and even his own father did a little bit of work to make it all happen, but I see the point that he is making, which is very valid. He is a very good thinker. I think that's by the way a bit. Mrs Whittle and Shona, but they are very much part of the district.

Then we come back to the family. Catherine will have recorded that Mother's dedication to family life in very adverse circumstances from a background of the stage in London, but I think when you consider Jane starting without any electricity and with four under five, and very limited facilities in a cottage you wouldn't put a shepherd in these days, the women have always been carrying quite a heavy can. Just as my great-grandmother was walking down the coast, I think they were carrying the first child and she was carrying the second in utero, and had my grandfather in Maori pa. – I think I've covered that somewhere...

Anyway, the children – we were lucky to have the old schoolhouse brought out from Henley? in about 1948 or '49 and opened up on the corner which Father gave the land for. – Not a house for the teacher – a school building, and it is still there, and it was the school building in the '20s [what?]. It rose to 4 rooms, the 4th being a pre-fab, but is now back to two. It comes and goes a bit with the number of children. The old original building is there and they have an administrative building as well. And they did build a school house about 1948 – 50, a very nice school house which for quite a long time was the residence of the school master, but for the last 17 years the school teachers have been driving up from Taradale, and Bob Sheldrake? had been there for 17 years now. And he's had some good ones and some ordinary ones; presently he has an outstanding infant teacher who I'm so delighted at because she has been introducing our grandchildren and I hope the third grandchild next year to the education system. She is just first-rate and Bob certainly, in his peculiar fashion, prepares them for secondary school pretty well indeed, even though there are some who think there are some hiccups on the way. Always will be. Our kids went there – Sarah until she went at the intermediate stage, to Woodford, for 6 years – probably a bit long at one school. The boys all went to Hereworth at 10 or just under, for 4 years, then on to Wanganui, some of whom tell me it was the worst criminal thing I could have ever done for them. William on the other hand, being more gregarious, thrived on it. Christopher got a complimentary certificate for concientious work, practically every month, and was bitterly disappointed when he asked if he could learn revolver shooting as an extra because they turned him down. And just lately he told a friend of mine he was sitting beside at our 50th wedding anniversary that he

thought his only claim to fame was reading more hunting books than ever anybody else had at Wanganui while he was there. I think probably boarding school, or Wanganui, was not his favourite time of life, but I think it contributed to turning him into a very interesting young man with a tremendously high sense of what is right and wrong.

But just to hark back to when he [Christopher] was small enough to get through the lavatory window to his grandmother's house because Jane had forgotten the key, his sense of right and wrong at the age of 2 or sthgt like that was already so inbred that Jane had to persuade him very hard to do this because he didn't think he should be breaking into his grandmother's house. And if Jane went and borrowed a pound of butter from Mother, the next day – Have you returned that pound of butter yet? Aged 3 or 4, you know. This is ridiculous talking like this, but I do find – well, just as he thinks that you must record in this memorial the men who did the work. And it stems back before any impact we could have on him, just what is right and wrong.

William went to university and did agricultural engineering, and then was employed by the Ministry of Works in Nelson for a while and by chance – I think he thought he might go apple farming at some stage – he had a girlfriend whose father was a land agent in Blenheim, and he was over seeing the girlfriend and the father-in-law took him round a couple of vineyards and he rang up that night and said Dad will you buy me a vineyard?! Life's full of surprises! And of course he's just thrived on it. No – he didn't marry the girl! Could well have – she was a very nice girl. I think one of his friends married her! It was just the luck of the draw. He hadn't thought of vineyards or anything, but it just so suits his style and his involvement with people and so on.

Sarah really should have gone on the stage, and we tried to get Dame Sybil Thorndike to organize a position in one of the drama schools in England for her, but she married a bit untimely and never got there. So Sarah went to Teachers' Training College in Chch, having had a very useful year in a first-rate bookshop in Napier – literature is her first love – and she is a very good teacher, primary, and went to England on her OE in 1981 and apart from brief holidays, has been there ever since, which is a bit of a bind. She married – he's a mixture of Welsh and Irish, but he certainly lives in the United Kingdom! She's living in a lovely village – the largest village or smallest town in England, in Buckinghamshire, and teaches there. I think she is very good, I think particularly with children who have special needs. Prestwood, near Great Missenden?, near High Wycombe? She was out here with all her family for 12 months, and she has been out five or six times with the family – two children – Chloe, who is 17 and Daniel is about 12.

And William's children – young Tom and Oliver – are at Wanganui, Tom for his second year – he's 14 – and Hugo, who is rather a special character, is about 5 years behind so he's 8 or 9. He's in Blenheim – good country school. He'll go on to Wanganui – 4th generation I think – Father and Uncle Grant were there.

Ben had a year at home, then a year or so in Australia, then to Lincoln where he was top student of his B.Ag.Com year and was invited to stay and be an assistant lecturer or sthg, but instead went to a Rural Bank posting in Te Kuiti and had a period seconded to Hakataramea area – Otago. They were having a very bad time with rabbits and drought. The point relevant to this is he has always been very efficient in what he does. He used to tell the farmers who wanted a loan quite clearly whether it was in their best interests or not. And if it wasn't he would get very frustrated when the farmer who he thought it was not in his best interests to be lent a lot of money, would go to a politician who would say You've got to lend this fellow money. I think that was one of the reasons that turned him off staying in that side of the industry – but also by then he had realized he really did want to have a go with hands-on animal farming. But it was useful – the broader experience, a very good B.Ag.Com result and kicked around in cattle country in Queensland and then the King Country. I remember him telling me a couple of huntaways got loose, and the in thing with Dept of Ag was to have great heaps of sheep and unfortunately the dogs got cracking and of the mob of 3,000 sthg sheep, a colossal number got smothered. Ben in his dry fashion said The locals thought the ones that got killed were the lucky ones – meaning how bad the farming approach was. Instead of, as he does, looking after the animals and giving them the opportunity to perform, just treating them like numbers. Yes, like animals – but people talk about humans acting like animals – but really it's not fair on the animals. A lot of animals know how to behave a bloody sight better than a lot of humans! But that's by the way.

Ben came home in ? 1980? – we had two boys at home – Christopher's been at home - he didn't go to university, he did have a bit of OE, hitchhiking round Scandinavia and Spain and bits of France and so on. He will never go and see his aunt in England, I don't think. He found it interesting and he obviously got a lot out of it but it's just not for Christopher. NZ's the place – the mountains. He was in Otutu? in that monstrous great snowstorm. He always gets away at Xmas time into the mountains because it saves him buying Xmas presents. Pretty logical. But Ben came home in 1981 or '82 and has been there ever since. A very good stockman, particularly with cattle. I remember a fatstock buyer saying he was staggered to find himself drafting fat cattle out of a mob of 80 or 100 which were being grazed on a two-daily?? basis, just walking them over a hot wire because they were the ones they wanted and the rest would just drift away unwanted, and I think he had three different breeds and the blacks? of course were the ones most amenable and had done best and we had some funny ones – I can't remember the breed – that we'd bought to fatten and they shinned off in a panic but these others were... yes, Peter Gay had a real eye-opener. He wondered what the hell he'd been expected to do. He realizes that to get performance – you can't get genetical performance if you don't look after them. So many flocks probably have a far better genetical background than they deliver the goods because... [wot?!]. The only misfortune is that he expects everyone else to have the same standards and visions, which is impossible, but his own results are v gd, hence his lambing percentages, and his cattle, black cattle calve mostly Sept-Oct and they would have averaged 357 on the hooks this year, at 2-yr old. He is particularly gd with the cattle I think. But the sheep the same, and just that attention to detail, an eye for stock that knows when the gate needs to be open and shut. I think the good Lord was quite kind to me in that context also. I think a lot of people don't realize the importance of that fine-tuning to put cream on top of the bucket. It just gives me a lot of pleasure to see him going on topping the 2-th ewe fair and producing animals that you can always be proud of. A bit of a cost because it costs yourself to provide that attention to detail, and yr family. He's much much better than I was. I was hopeless. The kids are as gd as they are because Jane brought them up. I got away before they woke up and didn't come back till after they'd gone to bed. But in my defence I think the expectations of what was to do was not – fathers were not expected to be as good as they are these days. And again, things were fairly tough after the war and in the '50s and '60s. You damn well did have to work and pay attention to detail. Now Ben and William – gee, they're so good with their kids! They spend a lot of time with them. So they've got these three funny kids which are a gt delight to us, and Susie is the bestest d-in-l anyone could have. She's a sweetie. The kids are sort of 9, 7, and 4. Emily was born on the first of the first of the first, so I can always remember that. She really is a joke. And they go to school just over the fence – Father's vision inf giving them the land, of course. No – it's the logical place, at the turn-off there. And the Christoff – yes, he's been a bit undecided in what to do until he went hang-gliding and then he realized he needed to learn to fly a helicopter. And he's been doing that for – must be 10 yrs. He's a bit shattered at the moment, having rolled up his second one. He also gets frustrated by red-tape, and civil aviation requirements. But he is a perfectionist, and I think he concedes that this thing just over here – was there a weakness there? Certainly the fellow that crashed all the people in Chch – I think that's a disaster. He shdn't have been there. And people knew that he was too scruffy. And the Tauhara one... I've flown with Christopher in a helicopter with a GPS on his knee, and you know what course y're taking, and where Tauhara is – it just seems too bloody slack. I love flying with Christopher. He's had lots of experience with the chopper in unlikely places. He did a bit of deer hunting and recovery with a shooter and then he was servicing deer traps down off the Waitara Rd, across the Mohaka river the winter before last, rebuilding the deer traps. There were abt 30 there in a bush block and he had to drop material in because they'd fallen into disrepair in the '70s and 80's. Then he was lifting the live deer out and he is so careful. They all had to be dug out so it cd sit down on sthg flat and one of them it was so steep there had to be sthg dug out to let the rotor go round – but that's it – the funny old thing is just so steady.

And of course he was helping us on the farm. He doesn't like sheep much, and finally gave up. He knows what ought to happen, he'll see a sheep that isn't well and all that sort of thing, but he doesn't like handling them. When he was dagging or crutching a lamb or sthg it had to be turned out as if it was good enough for a men's hairdressing shop, he's such a perfectionist. But cattle is his forte – I think he quite liked them, mothering on calves, shifting them, shedding them out... Helicopter work was pretty part-time, but just this last 18 mths, 2 yrs, he bought 15 acres and had built this stunning base up there – stunning building. Near

the DoC centre at Puketitiri, going up the Hukanui Rd, backs into some native bush, some real big old men matai and kanuka and kowhai. He just finished that, moved from the shearers' quarters into there a week before he crashed on 13 Dec. He was spraying and he knew the air conditions were not v gd – air pressure v low, and he was spraying at 2,000ft, and that restricts the lift in the chopper and because he is a perfectionist, he flies only 12ft off the ground and he was flying on a level to get his load off and was flying over a little bit of a gully, wh was obviously more than 12ft, so he came down and dropped into it, but then he cdn't lift out as the ground rose, so he just went into the ground. And walked away from it. Damn lucky. He did that with the first one – just got a bit of skin off and the chopper rolled down the hill in the bush, on a shingle scree actually. I think the character up there, because I pray to him every week about Christopher! So he wrote off a second chopper, and they're not insured because he's not earning enough to pay for the insurance. But on the other hand he'd just abt had it long enough that the amt he was writing off he wd have paid in the premium. I'm trying to persuade him to get another, because the dollar is so high, and he will. We bought this little farm at the end of the road, which we sold on, in case he wanted it, so the capital from that is his asset to do what he likes with. The planning was there for that.... [ends]

Tape 3, (side 1)

(says Patoka, means Taradale! 3.3.05)

We had a very pleasant time at Pukawa with Hazel and we covered the farming aspects of the Crosse family at Patoka, but my life has been absolutely wonderful because it has been so diverse and people have asked me to do things, such as representing them in National Party, Federated Farmers and all those sort of things, and that in itself has brought me into contact with many many different people – some most interesting ones – and situations and broadened the life from just farming, which of course is a magnificent background and no better place than Patoka to do it. But because of being involved in other things now that I look back on it, life has been so full that I have had a rare opportunity to enjoy life to the full, and am still doing so. So I think after that opening gambit I might cover some of the things I have been involved with after leaving Massey where again we were particularly fortunate, Ralph Beamish and myself, in a course with a few particularly interesting and interested students which, even though it was only a diploma course, gave us a very good background to the subject agriculture beyond just working with your father or on somebody else's farm. You get a background to it which, with the team the year we had, was plenty of fun. But we also were pushed along by a pretty intelligent woman, so we had to work as well in the lecture room and with our assignments and so forth.

I guess it was one of the first plusses in post-school life that came our way, and then we were working on the farm with Father, just the two of us, we learned the background there. But with the rehab people coming into the district in 1948, we developed a Puketapu branch of Federated Farmers, which led up to Patoka and Puketitiri. We developed a reputation of being known as the angry men from Puketapu because both with the National Party and Federated Farmers we weren't going to take no for an answer if we had strong ideas about where we ought to go and what we ought to do. And being very much a junior to the rehab people, I was secretary to both those organisations – and having learned to take notes that had to be read and understood at Massey, I could usually write reasonable minutes and keep the ball going from what happened the month before.

Again, on the local scene we built a swimming pool on part of Patoka station for the school children to learn to swim, and the district – it was deep enough for the diving board. This at a time when the Education Board was prepared to use taxis to take the school children to town to learn to swim, so we built our own pool, which is still going. 'We' being the locals, clubbing together, putting in a few bob. I think we dug it with a bulldozer because there weren't the smart diggers of these days, and then we finished it with a shovel. We had a bricklayer-cum-plasterer who was in charge of seeing the thing was level, and so on – which wasn't really all that difficult, because water finds its own level and although the farmers tried to tell him he didn't know what he was talking about, the poor man was very long-suffering – and we finished with quite a big pool. It was obviously in the middle of winter, and I think the concrete floor poured by hand was about eight inches thick because we couldn't get rid of the mud and all the sort of things farmers do, but the walls were stone, block-laying work and we helped him. We had a roster of people helping him do the work.

And the whole district was so good at pulling in to improve our lot and we contributed the princely sum of £12 each which was quite a lot of money, to build a war memorial hall which was subsidized in the early 50s, and war memorial halls turned up all throughout NZ. This is Patoka – Puketapu is 15 miles away. Both the National Party and Federated Farmers were known as the Puketapu branches, but we met mostly at Patoka – sometimes at Rissington, sometimes at Puketapu, but Puketapu was too close to town so they really dropped off the end quite soon. It was inaugurated as Puketapu branch but the guts of it was at Patoka and we'd go to Puketitiri sometimes or down to Rissington. But because of the rehab fellows, they were really what made things happen in every ??fashion?? and they were the driving force.

And the school house was moved out to where it is at the intersection of the Henley? Road in 1948, and by the time our kids came along to school we all did our stint on the school committee and improved its grounds. And in this context I mention Cecil Thomson as being a Scandinavian with drive and tenacity and never saying no. He was the driving force to make Patoka school what it is today, in its development from a small school to at one stage a four-teacher school, until the recession of the '80s and then more recently the dairy farmers' introduction, so that the staffing of sheep farms came back considerably and the school numbers dropped, and it is now round about 45. School numbers didn't rise with the introduction of dairying, not at all, because they import – er – a sometimes substandard single neighbour which drive [who drives?] up and down the road so fast that it's advisable not to be there at all. This is one of the drawbacks for a community like Patoka. It has shrunk in having a community spirit because it hasn't got the family bond.

- And yet the making of it in the first place was the division of properties for returned servicemen... and it went from how many families to how many families?

- That's a fair question, and I think it should be recorded. I won't give you a good answer off the top of my head, so we'll put that in later. But for instance, one of the dairy farmers now milking about 1,800 cows has absorbed three small farms all of about 500 acres – all of them rehab – one was my (brother-in-law's) farm. ^{sister's} Five-hundred acre farms were economic at that stage, but not now. If you go right back to when we left Massey they were talking about 800 ewes as being an economic unit and now they're talking about 4,000 ewe equivalents. I think this is a point well worth recording and remembering. The costs and the income and people's standard of living you could make a living on a good small farm with 800 ewes – a family – probably not outside labour apart from contract shearing. But I remember the first time I went to Southland, here was a young fellow and his father with 200 acres on that beautiful fertile ground, and the poor little devil didn't have a show. What was there for him to do? Everything was all done. What future did he have? Awful – there was nothing to do. Again, I was so lucky – there was so much to do. And once we had a bit of money to do it with, every day was a bonus. Now every day is a bonus for a different reason! We're drifting onto farming, but life has been so full it's hard to stop.

- But that's what the district was – you were all farmers, so you all had similar values, goals

- And because we were all competitive, not cut-throat, but there are other areas earlier settled in H.Bay and they got it so easy, they go bust because they never had to learn, never had to work or make it happen. All the land was said to be no good on the western side of the railway line, and that now is the pick of H.Bay because people who were determined to make it work were there and the other people who just played polo and so on they're not around. It's interesting. It's a generalization, of course. It's happened in our time – and out time is some 50 years, you know.

But other things in the farming politics – I was also on the meat and wool section and went to national meetings in Wellington in the interests of the meat and wool section, which again was interesting and you meet leaders of our industry. In this context there was Charlie Hilgendorf who I have the utmost admiration for as a very capable handler of the meat and wool section; and John Clarke of the Wool Board who I still consider one of the brightest brains I've ever had anything to do with, even though he got displaced in the great wool debate in 1971-2. The way he could cover his business and what had been going on in the wool period in a very difficult time, while I was on the Electoral College for probably nine years, 1972-81 I think. We met twice a year and covered meat and wool activities and what the Meat Board was doing with our levies and the prospects for the meat overseas.

That was in the national scene of Federated Farmers and coming back to the local scene we developed a golf course on a public domain at Puketitiri..

- Pardon me, but what about the public who didn't play golf?

- You'd be surprised how quickly they learned! That's what we developed it for – and it was just a joy because with the aid of a couple of golfers who could play golf – no, not me – it was Reg Bettington? who was an Australian with great golfing skills and Ernie Sutherland? who was an imported professional from England, who got up into the low figures of positioning in the British Open before he came to NZ. So these two people helped us design the course, and then everybody whether they'd ever seen a golf club or anything else joined in and we had maybe 40 or so golfers. The most amazing was at Puketitiri where the weather is never any good and seeing somebody in a long souwester and gumboot walking around the golf course and enjoying himself thoroughly was a great reward for those who went about our golf in a different fashion.

- Don't you know golf is a nasty four-letter word, a nasty disease?

- Well, it can be, it can be, and I will admit there were some pretty long-suffering wives, because after a day out in the middle of winter at Puketitiri who did need quite a lot of spirits to warm the inner man afterwards. So that again was another opportunity to join forces and do something for yourselves. Rissington was as far south as they came to play at Puketitiri. Patoka is 10 miles, and Rissington another 10. But again it was good convivial fellowship, and I never was very fussed about how good the golf was, but some people took it a bit too seriously. The greens were fenced with an electric wire, and still is, to keep the stock off. When did we do that? – about 1960 I think. It is still playing and there was a ladies golf club and they played on Tuesdays. There were also tennis courts there and we had a hard cricket pitch, so we had Sunday cricket. All this at Puketitiri in the domain, left to the district by the Hutchison family. And some lovely bush, a lot of which unfortunately got burnt in the 1946 drought. There were a lot of logs and rubbish all through Puketitiri from the 1930s milling and the fire started and went up these dead trees. It was pretty awful.

So we've got school committees, swimming pool – it was just such a great bond of people driven by the rehab fellows and Rissington missed out because they didn't have this influx of energy and activity and determination to make the thing work. I think in my previous talk I said the rehab fellows were told they were mad to even be thinking of going to farm at Patoka because of its reputation for poverty of soil, and the fertility was such that it was stupid. But I think Father showed them, as much as anybody, what could be done if you had the money and the fertilizer and the determination to do it.

John Patterson was our really most admirable neighbour next door, about 10 years younger than us. His father was, and still is at 93, very Irish – still going strong, having had a new hip in the last year or three. John's mother had enough good decent English in her to produce the best of both world in John Patterson – who was still very Irish. John had a mass of nicknames for everybody in the district. His father, Windham?? Patterson was one of the rehab settlers, but one of the older ones, and he settled himself in fact. Apart from Howie Castle? who whenever he met you would say How are we doing, so John christened him Howie, and Dudley Hawthorn? who drove the mail bus and was a bit different, so he was Hurdles, I'm not sure why. There was Duffa?, Duffa Mather? from Puketitiri went on a Young Farmers trip and he was carrying a short knuckle-duster thing so one of the boys on the trip asked him What've you got that for John? Oh, it's a duffa. Whadaya mean, a duffa. Oh, duffa anything. So forever after he was known as Duffa, and a very good operator he was too. Tommy Copper is known in H.Bay as a very considerable land owner, and he had Hukunui, where John Mather managed, Hukunui being the highest homestead in H.Bay, at abt 3,200 ft – up behind Puketitiri. I think it would be on the map as Hukunui range.

Anyway, as you would guess having listened to this tape I was known – for quite a long time before I was made aware of it – as Tommy Roundmouth? And I did find that out and got my own back on John at the time of Sarah's first wedding actually, much to his astonishment. Oh, there's Old Freight Train, of course, but again anyone would call him Freight Train if you saw his size.

We'd better get back to a bit of sense now – that was only meant to be for your ears. But these people were all part of Federated Farmers and so on. We had a positive input which is now not there, unfortunately, both in politics as farming politics, and once it dies people and the voice of democracy loses something, and that's been like that now for 15 years or so. It just withered away. Other activities I have enjoyed and which have brought me into contact with other people you wouldn't otherwise have had much to do with. If you just stay on your own dunghill, even if you're a very good farmer and you get rewards from that, the

breadth of your involvement with your fellow man is brought about by going to help him and do things for your fellow man if they ask you to and I'm afraid – well, I think it's a bit hereditary actually – it has been such a reward that I do hope that other people in my family and other families will realize, contribute, and only by contributing do you learn what rewards you get, and a lot of young farmers now are so busy trying to make horrible dollars they forget what they should be doing for their fellow man and they will never know what they missed.

I was very involved and still am with independent schools, partly I suppose because for most of us at Patoka, well all of us, secondary school has to be a boarding operation. I went to prep school at 9, and by being involved in the board there – I think I was chairman for 12 years and on the board for 18, you realize how much it contributes to a lot of boys who wouldn't otherwise come out of their shells as the boarding school brings it. At one stage I was on the board of three independent schools and running the farm at the same time as well as being on the electoral college and on the Richmond's meat board.

Friday 4 March 2005

Not in context at the moment, but I'll recount some of the stories of Bill Ashwell, our cowman-gardener at some stage, and he was a very decent Maori fellow who had kicked around in the merchant navy I think and got the bad habit of when you went to port you filled your skin with alcohol. When he first came to us he didn't have a car, so he'd take the bus down to town and come back by taxi, which was much the most economical for him. They lived on the farm and had four or five kids but they weren't all still at home. Miles, I think was the best of them, anyway, Bill would come back very high, and his wife Mavis, would get a bit fed up with the alcohol problems, and in those days we could vote for prohibition or state control – as at Masterton – and one election day Jane went up to post the mail or catch the bus at about 8 o'clock or something and here was Mrs Ashwell waiting outside the polling booth, so Jane said Oh, Mrs Ashwell the booth doesn't open until 9 o'clock. You're running a bit early. I know that, she said, but I've come up early because I'm going to vote for prohibition and I thought I'd come up and get away from Bill before he made me change my mind. Dear old Mavis!

There are other stories about Mavis too. Bill would go away to Gisborne to some friends periodically and he'd have one or two, or three or four beers and about 7 or 8 o'clock he'd ring up all sentimental Dear Mavis – Janie would you go and tell Mavis that I love her and I'm missing her.. all this sort of thing. He was really quite a card – his heart was right but his other things weren't. They were with us for quite a while. Theoretically he was employed as a cowman-gardener, but ...

Tape 3, side 2

I think we just started about misfortune – Mavis cleaning at the school. She tripped over and fell down the concrete steps and really knocked her head quite badly. Jane would write to the children at their boarding schools all of them every week. Usually I tried to write to one of them, so Jane had three to write. It was my turn to write to Ben so I was reporting this misfortune to Mavis and said that fortunately there was no brain damage because there was no brain to damage. And that stuck in Ben's mind. All sorts of things – falling into the creek – Bill fell in, bringing cows in. Bill quite often came back quite inebriated – uplifted and cheerful and happy and on one occasion he drove his car into the concrete loading bank which didn't help. But I was bringing the cows in in the dark because he hadn't shown up and I heard him coming out from the cow yard – Come on Daisy, come on Reddie? and all this sort of carry on in great spirits, and then there was a big splash as he fell off the edge of the culvert into a big pool of water. But he was quite unconcerned about it and went on and milked the cows anyway. I left him to it! He was quite a character, and he had these kids – Miley, and young Nick. One girl and two other boys, I think. One of the boys did very well – worked with Industrial Gases down here for quite a while and I think we gave him a hand to get through his secondary education, so he didn't have to leave too early. He had to go to boarding school. We did help most of the high school children of the farm staff. That was part of the deal. That might lead me onto other employees of note. The list won't be everybody. Jane's brother Geoff came to us in 1958 I think and he was wonderful and reliable to have around – they came with four children and had two more while they were there. We built a house for them which Ben is in now, though a bit

expanded. Having reliable labour is just such a plus. He shepherded for us – had been with Dalgety's – had been a stock clerk all his life, in places of responsibility, but he had no shepherding experience. Anna? loved the land, and it was a good place to bring up the children, and the school was just a step down the road. Lynne? and Russell McKay, most reliable and conscientious pair. They were with us when we had our first world tour as it were, in 1980. Lynne milked the cows – she was a good girl, and at docking time – she was a great hand with animals. We were away for 4 months – just Jane and myself. We had had excursions with the family. We took the boys to Fiji when they were small and Christopher was already exercising his bargaining skills and having a watch which had to have about six links taken out to fit round his small wrist. Sarah came with us to a nephew of Jane's wedding at Gladstone. But no, we didn't go galavanting round with the family too much. In the 4 months Christopher was home then and the Winstanleys, a pair of our most notable and much loved employees from Yorkshire and Florence often did baby-sitting for us, and did she look after Christopher at that stage? – he looked after our dogs and exercised them every day for 4 months while we were away, which was a labour which I didn't really contemplate the liabilities I was leaving behind me when we went away. But I do now, and record it here. The Mackays? were with us about 8 years – eight or ten perhaps. But for really long-term stuff Len Nesters, cowman-gardener. Many many years later he went to chase his ancestors and that led him to Latvia, but you would have never known. He was just old enough to be called up at the end of the war. He many have got into camp, but only just, and he came to us then, in 1945, I suppose and he was with us for 20 years, single all those years, and mostly fed with Jane and myself for a month at a time, and with Geoff and Anna, then sometimes with the hired hand in his house. But sometimes he didn't get very good treatment with the hired hand. He was a funny old thing but honest as the day is long and just very good value. And to me and Jane the most interesting thing of all was when he left and got married and had a daughter and a son, both quite intelligent and the daughter was dux of Napier Girls' High School and has her brass plate up as a lawyer in Dunedin. We kept in touch for a long time, and so did Mother. He was quite a responsible gardener as well as milking the cows and he and Mother got on pretty well.

Who else did we have? – the Winstanleys I have mentioned. They were just very special – came out as assisted immigrants, and John coming from Yorkshire was used to the woollen mills and did a couple of years in the woollen mills in Lower Hutt [Petone?] then came to us really quite by chance. I think Len had a holiday and bumped into them and reported that he was looking for a job. John was very good with animals. He had his own few animal contacts in Yorkshire without owning land or a farm. And Flo? was just so good with the kids and spent a lot of time when she was first looking after Christopher trying to scrub his freckles off. But that didn't do him any harm. One of the highlights of John's career, I caught a wild pig when I was giant discing some land down at the bottom of the farm and brought it back to John, so he had a 44-gal drum with half the top cut out and on its side and so he put it in this and fed it in the tank, and it grew and grew and as the food and the waste built up I remember seeing it almost at the stage where it was standing at the same height as the cut-out top, but never thought to jump out. John came to us as a tractor driver, which was totally novel to him – crawler tractor – and was just honest and conscientious and did all the things you could wish. The most terrifying experience for me and for him was one day when he parked the D4c? on a slope and got off to shut the gate and the handbrake came off. He rushed to catch up with the thing and stop it and missed his footing and measured his length on the tracks and was thrown off alongside the tractor and, not under it. Somehow I think he did catch up with it because there was no damage done. I heard the clatter and looked up from the yards to see what was happening. After that he only did two or three years on it and he was crushing the scrub or working it up second time round with another tractor at Farthest East? which was crushed when Ben was a baby, and he was a little surprised to look around behind him and the ground was so steep the tractor hadn't rolled over but the giant discs were going upside down. I mention that to say how versatile an honest-to-goodness conscientious person can be, and how valuable they are.

That was not the last scrub paddock we broke in but that's the date of it. I was down there when they were crushing it in June and came back at the end of the day – I wasn't crushing it myself, we had contractors – and Jane reported that she'd just feed the kids and it would be time to go to the home, and Ben arrived. No, we didn't have to come down early – but we did with the first one. With Sarah she came down. I'm not sure if it was Ben – it probably was, she went into the home – no, it was Christopher. He arrived at the wrong time of the day. We went down in the middle of the night so I curled up in the Masonic Hotel lounge

waiting for daybreak – I didn't want to wake up Jane's parents to sleep anywhere, but I called around to them early enough, too early for them, and found Christopher had arrived with the dawn. But Jane was lucky – they arrived fairly easily.

Employees we were looking at. I certainly can't cover all of them, but the ones that spring to mind – not in order of anything either – Geoff and the McKays, Russell and Lynne, and Len Nester before Geoff of course because he was there at the end of the war, and the Winstanleys must have come a bit before whenever Ben was born, which would be about '56, I suppose, '58. Then I had two pairs of brothers – Terry Cheer and Darryl? Cheer. Terry was probably the best mover of animals that we've ever had as a shepherd. A good dog man without being a dog trialist. Often I'd be working with somebody else, drafting in the yards, while Kerry was bringing sheep in from further away and there would be no noise, no fuss, very quickly. They'd be there sooner than I expected. He did have other disadvantages, but having said that he turned teetotal before he came to us, which I think is always a credit to anybody. Once or twice it broke out again which was a bit testing for everybody, but he was so good with animals. His brother Darryl was the odd-job man and teamed up with Christopher and they still are good friends. Again he was just a first rate guy and with Christopher they were the same levels of right and wrong and expectations. He finally left farming, having been orcharding, and did a computer course and performed very well and can't get a job – that's right now. It's just so unfair.

The other two brothers were the Garnham? boys and they were both honest-to-goodness helpers. Ron was not so good with animals and his brother Rodney? was just the same honest-to-goodness and that counts for a helluva lot. Another couple that spring to mind are Bruce Welsh and Len Woodford. They were both hard cases but just tremendous to have around. Bruce was a shepherd and Len, again a Maori man, very good with animals – he'd shoe the horses and tune up/trim up? the donkey. I remember him complaining bitterly that one day when he was trimming up the donkey's feet 'And the little devil bit me in the backside'. Which was quite an achievement, because the backside was quite wide.

These were all married men – we didn't have a cook. At any one time there'd be myself and two married couples, three sometimes. There were three houses, counting the one we built for Geoff and Anna – and they were with us about 12 years I suppose. Sometimes the wives worked. Lynne milked the cows and helped with the docking, and Marie Garnham?, Ron's wife, she was another good girl, but I don't think she worked on the farm. And they didn't work in the homestead – I don't think Jane had any help – except me of course, which was tremendous. I used to get away early and come back after the kids were in bed. – Yes, that's why I was no problem at all – and why the kids are so good. Yes, Jane cleaned and gardened and cooked and raised kids and did meals on wheels and Red Cross.

I think Anna and Geoff and that group when the kids were small – Anna just worships children and is so good with them, she was a great help – and it was a wonderful period of growing up with family around. There wasn't the awful screaming all over the countryside with children in those days. In fact it was bad when they were at boarding school – we only saw them at term end and in exeats – one exeat a term at Hereworth, Wanganui. Woodford was a bit better because we had some really good friends of Sarah's who would come out on Sunday exeats. We'd go in early and pick her up and take her back at the end of the day – with a friend or two or three. That was fun, and one of them in particular who I've seen later and has been chairman of the board of trustees at Woodford, just in very recent years, and that stems back from when she was at school with Sarah [what?] There was the odd friend who came back with the boys from Hereworth, but Wanganui – we had to go there – they didn't come out for exeats.

Getting back to staff. Bruce Welsh?, he was good fun, a good shepherd, hard working, lovely sense of humour. I bump into him every now and then and it's just a joy. Old Lenny Woodford was ... for those of us who know a good Maori that they've worked with and been company to, they're a little different, and he was so good, and a wonderful hand with animals, although he was a tractor driver and a pair of hand shears for dagging, and if he was drafting – everything just flowed out of the end of his fingers. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame was he taught the children to drive with the old Land Rover, mostly on the airstrip and he had the patience and was devoted to the kids, particularly to Christopher, and he introduced the expression kangaroo juice when you don't quite get the engine speed and the clutch and everything just right so the thing jumps. Poor old Len, one day I think he both Christopher and Ben picking up rubbish – bits of wood – in a paddock we were cleaning up, and Christopher was on the back of the tractor on the transport

try? and Ben was sitting up on the spray drum tank beside the driver – not very good, but should have been but was nearly a disaster. He paused before he drove into the tractor shed at the end of the day and looked round, and Ben thought he was pausing to let him off, so he stood up and caught his head between the safety frame and the edge of the corrugated iron and damaged his temple quite badly. Accidents do happen. Len carried Ben over to his mother and then came down to the yards where I was cleaning out the dip, and that was a fairly traumatic period and fortunately ? was there so Jane and I could take him down to hospital, bleeding quite a lot. He still has a jagged scar on the temple. X-rayed? I don't know. I don't think they x-rayed in those days. Just fiddled around, sewed him up and he was in hospital for a while. Life isn't always bliss, is it. But you come through, and you wonder how things weren't worse. ... These wretched four-wheelers give me the creeps. I can't stand them, and you see nowadays so many awful accidents with kids. Adults too. Ben finished up under his for a while. It just happens too often.

In my time it wasn't much horses – motor-bikes and crawler tractors. Two-wheelers- we had probably one of the first, a little Yamaha 90cc, or less. Couldn't do you much harm and if you finished up underneath it you could get out. That was about when Geoff came. Before that it was walking, and a Land Rover. There were one or two horses, a bit of horse work, a pony for the kids, but mostly it was walking. With a lot of road frontage you'd go to where the animals had to come from, then walk, not drive, behind them. Someone would drop you there, or you'd pick it up later. It wasn't nearly as intense as it is these days. We didn't have to dip them every six weeks because of blowfly strike. Ben puts them through an electronic eye pretty often. He's always a jump ahead of the blowflies instead of being a jump behind. [ends]

Tape 4, side 1

Patoka – meaning Taradale!, Fri 4 March 2005

Just to finish up on some of these best, or most easily remembered employees, Jamie Molloy is one of our more recent ones. He was only with us for a couple of years, unfortunately. He was very good with animals and first-rate, even if rather a wild young man. He got most of that behind him before he came farming with us. I encouraged him to go to manage a rather difficult spinster's farm near Maraekakaho. Yes, a difficult spinster – with a difficult farm! I was very sorry to lose him, and he was there for a year or two and enhanced his experience of management and people management and from there he was stolen by the Arab bloke who in the late 90s was shipping live sheep and introduced the awassie? his own Arab sheep – fat-tailed sheep, to Tikokino. Jamie is still with this fellow who now has three farms, at least, a big operation – not pure breds, but he keeps some of that breed going. He gets farmers to rear the halfbreds and three-quarter breds, but he is still with the live shipment job and there is still an influence, say of the awassie in his sheep. Because of the live shipment not being the flavour of the month, most of them are killed in the local freezing works, but he still retains control of the product for his own special market. Jamie wasn't married when he came to us – his wife to be came and lived with him and she was a very capable veterinary nurse and they were married while they were with us, and have produced three pretty hard-case kids. He's left Tikokino, and Terry Cheer stayed at Tikokino and has gone [Terry or Jamie?] to one of the new farms at Takapau. A very good servant to this Arab fellow, and I know he's much rather be dealing with proper sheep and proper cattle.

Also in the labour force I must mention Eric Eagle who planted hundreds and hundreds of posts with the beginning of our fencing programmes. A very hard worker. As a contract price – I think when he started with us he was fencing a conventional 7-wire fence at 35/- a chain and doing very well because he could do for chains a day, and at Puketitiri where the digging was even better because of it being not sticky pumice soil, when he was working with Holts? up there before he came down to Patoka, he was reputed to have planted 100 posts in a day, on a break-fence, not a conventional fence. But his work output was phenomenal. Also the record would not be complete without mentioning my friend John Tucker, who I was fencing with on his 81st birthday at the end of last year. Such a cheerful happy soul, whatever turns up, but had the misfortune to get trapped under his tractor crushing scrub by the anti-roll frame, over at Glengarrik? on the Taupo road, two miles away from the homestead, on his own, and unfortunately when the tractor rolled the frame crushed his arm and he couldn't extract himself and since there were various misfortunes in this period in the late 50s or early '60s, one of his friends, this had happened to him and the

tractor had gone on fire so the unfortunate driver was incinerated, and this spurred John Tucker to reach round and get a bit of a hatchet he had in his tool box and the crushed arm was severed with the hatchet and his own tenacious spirit, and after he'd got himself free, he scratched around and got the arm out from under the tractor frame and stuffed it down his shirt and drove the two miles to the homestead – he ahd his ute nearby. He didn't bleed to death because the blood vessels were all crushed. They were crutching at the time and when the first shed-hand saw him she collapsed in a faint. They drove him to hospital – no helicopters or anything and the surgeons – no micro-surgery at the time – fiddled around with him and stuck it together as best they could, and much to everyone's astonishment a week or ten days later he found he could wiggle his fingers! And from there on he's been the best fencer I know. He still uses his left arm, hammers with his left arm. He's phenomenal and just the most delightful fellow, a wonderful guy.

And Alan Elliot, the morepork – started the Patoka timber company – another extraordinary piece of work. He was called the morepork because he was out in the dark in the morning, and home in the dark at night. He was the only one who would do logging on his own and he would cut his trees down and clean them up and with a small tractor would put a snatch block up in a tree and hoist his log up in the air, then back his truck in under the log swinging out of the tree, then got on his tractor and lower it down onto his truck – he did a lot of logging for us. And the mill – built by Jock O'Neill? but Alan Elliot at 84 was still working in the timber mill. He was really mad about decimal currency and the metre and all that and used to spend hours regaling me at night about how they could stop going metric, and how stupid it was to have everything in tens because you'd get a dozen of beer 4×3 and a dozen battens is 4×3 and all those sort of proportions. And I have got an article he wrote expounding his theories and his wrath about it. And he used to do his block about British Israelites. So lucky these funny people.

Oh, the single people I've got a list of. I think all farmers have not done the best by the industry. Most have been reluctant to have single people who want to learn farming, and thanks to Jane's wonderful attitude and ability to get through a lot of everything, we did have at least ten cadets living with us. The first two we fed three times a day, though they lived in a cottage outside the house because the children were sort of five, six and upwards. I think the first one might have come before Christopher was five – he might have been only three or four. Bill Wallace was from the King Country, Walter Tye was a delightful fellow doing his degree at Massey, and he did some sheep-farming experience – he was from the Hauraki Gulf. Christopher gave him unmerciful ribaldry, if that's the word, and Walter was so good. Peter Macdonald, I think was the third, from Macdonald's Transport and he subsequently bought a farm and is still up in the district at Hawkston? Mostly the cadets stayed just 12 months, but some two years or 18-months. Hamish Yule, another delightful young fellow, and again we see him – he got his farm down at Mangarapa? and had a pair of twins in the fullness of time. Mark Watson? I've not kept up with afterwards. He came from Gisborne and he was with us for a year. Phillip Barnett, another extra good young fellow. Blond? Phillip. He was from Dannevirke, and he also married and got family and so on. Malcolm Macdonald's boys, three of them, his own sons, and a fourth who was under his wing – Nick Chizzard, I think it was. Grant Macdonald was the first one and Bruce, and Ross was the youngest one and good boys, and I'm just delighted when I see them around. Malcolm Macdonald was a stock agent and he was just one of the most honest and capable, and the amount of work and responsibilities he gets through – a full-time job with Wrighties? and kept on buying up more pieces of Hawkes Bay for his three children – and they also had a daughter, and he is still just the same, fairly young looking, although he is perhaps not so.

Yes, wage rates were controlled, but I think both parties were fairly happy. I freely admit that with one of them, Malcolm's first son, we weren't paying him nearly enough, but we did make that up when he left. I don't think farmers ever pay enough to their staff, except those that are paid too much because they're not worth anything. We're only helping ourselves by having cadets, and there have been some good cadet schemes, but then when the industry got so sad in the late '80s early '90s nobody would be advised to go into the industry, and we are paying the price now for a shortage of capable people. Just before I go back to my own off-farm activities, I'll quote three – four, instances of poachers which were quite amusing to us. The first one was the bloke who was shooting our geese. Now he was a – an insurance agent, I think, so he'd drive up and down the road and see where some geese lived. One day at docking time Father and I and Len, I think – we did all the docking, about four and a half thousand lambs, and we were setting up the yard in the middle of the afternoon for the next paddock, not very far from the road and

quite close to a gully where some geese lived, and we were suddenly aware there was somebody shooting at these geese. So Father could get quite a short fuse and we looked at each other and said we can't stand this any longer, so we high-tailed it off to the road, to where we knew he would have parked his vehicle, and just about the time he got back with his geese we arrived at the road. – No, he didn't have any geese – he'd just been shooting for the hell of it, so we accosted him and said what the hell have you been doing? – you've been shooting those geese down there. What with one thing and another, we weren't getting anywhere. He wouldn't concede that he'd done anything he shouldn't have, he didn't have the birds with him, so Father then turned to me at a bit of a lull in the discussion – and this fellow had got in his car and I was standing in front of it so he couldn't drive off, and Father said Open the bonnet and take his rotor off. at that stage he realized that things were getting a bit hot, and again there was a bit of a pause and the fellow said to Father – who used to take the testicles out with his teeth, so his chin was pretty bloodied – and the fellow said Oh, have you been doing a bit of docking? so Father put his head in the window of the car and said Yes, and I'm not sure that I've finished yet. By that time the fellow was totally nonplussed and came to the arrangement that if he paid £25 to the Plunket Society Father would not take proceedings with the police. We felt we'd both won that round and since he was an insurance agent, if he'd been before the court he'd have lost his job.

Another bit of fun – we had some Rentokill people doing borer control in the woolshed – the shed being 80 years old at that stage was well worth treating. So these people were there for two or three days and they must have noticed that in a winter's evening when we came in a bit earlier than in summer, and the turkeys roosted just at the yards. They had another job down Henley road, and one night as we were walking back in the dark – well, the gloaming, at least, and we heard all hell break loose amongst the turkeys. We couldn't get there in time to accost these characters, but as we got there a van started up and took off down the road, so we went straight home and rang our friend, Inspector Gartley? I think it was at that stage, at the police station in Taradale, and said would you please hurry up the road and stop a van coming down and open the back, and you'll find it's full of turkeys. That is exactly what happened, but I can only regret not being there to see the look on the faces of the people when they were stopped. – Yes, the cops were more biddable in those days – and they enjoyed the joke – and I think Father told them to keep one of the turkeys! Another one, much more recent, 20 years ago, maybe 25, there's a little dam just down from the Tikati? hill, and every year I'd find some empty shells around it after duck-shooting opening, and it used to bug me that these people would have the audacity to just come and shoot ducks, and I was never there to catch them, but I did have a bit of luck one day when I was coming up the road at the critical moment and a couple of shots went off. I was in the Land Rover and I went on down the road and passed a car where I knew the car would be to down to the dam, so I got out and hurried back up the hill, and just as I got in sight of the car somebody in camouflage uniform climbed over the fence and was getting into the driver's seat, so I sung out what do you think you're doing, and hang on a minute. He didn't speak, just got in the seat, so I picked up a big rock and hurled it with too much velocity and it skidded along the top of his car, but I had better luck with the next rock which went splosh through his back window, and just as I had the direct hit, up came the other fellow, the real culprit, with his shotgun and a couple of ducks. So I really had him red-hot there, and he lied to me and said he'd been at school with one of our nephews, and that Tim had told him he could shoot ducks there whenever he liked. That really made me angry. To be honest I can't quite remember how I got him his just desserts, but after ?? I told him what a bloody fool he was and so often, if someone wanted to come and shoot a rabbit or shoot a duck they've only got to ask – or to pick the mushrooms, but they just take it for granted.

Another occasion when the rabbits were very bad and we were poisoning them right left and centre and if there was much mollestation of the rabbits it would put them off the bait line. Father caught up with somebody walking around the place shooting rabbits – they were everywhere – and was very polite to him and said what a nice looking gun you've got – could I have a look at it please – so the fellow was conned into handing the gun over and he was told to bloody well go. Again Father took the gun and he had to pay up to some charity to get his gun back. Life's what you make it, isn't it!

The last poaching incident that we caught – Ben did actually. He found a sheep with its throat cut, up on the side of the road. We have alleyways and it was quite easy to catch up with the sheep, and the silly thing was it was the end of September and she was so full in lamb and heavy, that the silly ass that caught the thing

and dragged it up a bit of a slope to the side of the road, found it was far too heavy to lift into the boot of his car that he left it there. Cut it's throat, left it there for us to find, but he was also good enough to leave a cap which had been handed out to the dairy farmers in the district, so we found that and the police were able to track down who it was, and find he'd also stolen a sheath knife from where he'd been spending the night with his girlfriend, so he was up for the \$300, the price of a pregnant ewe. So that was a bit of justice again. – Yes, it's nice when you have a win. There are occasions – when I've found a neatly rolled-up calf skin and the guts, in behind a stump, and plenty of times when – oh, they've shot a couple of 2-tooth ewes down at the woolshed there. One of them must have been injured, I think, and they carried off another one. But we do lose animals like that, and all you can do is thank your lucky stars when you have a win.

- What put paid to the rabbits?

- I think a disease built up because the population grew so fast and furiously. I think that's what it was – not an introduced disease, calicivirus or anything. I think it must have been because it built up to such a crescendo, and suddenly they are breeding in such profusion, of frequency and numbers, that the litters fell off from 8 to 5, and only two or three times a year. That's the only explanation I can come up with – but of course we killed millions of them, but that was not what stopped it. The height of it was in the '45-46 drought, where they like short tucker and dry conditions. Pasture management? – they were managing the pasture, not the farmer. I don't really think humans can take credit for the subsidence of that plague. They come and go a bit. They're getting up a bit again now around Patoka because the spring was so dry they have had good reproduction.

Just to finish off – worth recording – pigs – before we sold The Dome and the 3,000 acre scrub block, there were hundreds and hundreds of pigs out there. And there was one awfully decent fellow – Colin McCutcheon had a regular arrangement of letting Father know when he was coming up with a friend to hunt for pigs with dogs, and this particular year, probably 1946 or 7, somewhere there, just after the war, and he caught 100 pigs in one winter, out in the scrub block. You could see where it was rooted over. There was pig rooting within 250 yds of Ben's house one day. They'd just come up the gorge. And another one that Harry shot – 6ft long or so. And there must have been a big pig around because a cow died and it only took the pig about four nights to eat the whole cow. No, there was no market for those pigs, not dog tucker. Nothing, just the sport of hunting them. Poor old Colin – that's right. He always let Father know when he was coming and this was quite a long way from the homestead. You could get out on a farm track around where the Huirangi? road is now, and walk off into the scrub, and Father happened to be out there and came across this strange vehicle, not Mr McCutcheon's vehicle, so he thought to hell with this, here's some guy who has no right to be out here, so he took the rotor out and walked home with it, and past the end of the day poor old Colin McCutcheon came home, and he'd been brought up by a friend, therefore a different car, and for some reason, just chance, hadn't told Father he was going to be coming up, which was most unusual, and he was so upset, but Colin was so understanding – he realized it was working in his own interests and Father was keeping everyone else at bay!

That's enough of that area. I didn't really finish the other great plusses I had in life, involving being outside the farm. To go back to independent schools. I was only on the Wanganui board for three years when I was president of the Old Boys' Association, but in that time we appointed one of the best headmasters that Wanganui has had – Ian McKinnon. In fact we had the pleasure of taking, Jane and I, I think it must have been in '84, a school register. And at that stage he was deputy principle of Eton College and we delivered it to him and he gave us a quick run around of Eton. And I have kept up with him as much as I can with him ever since. In fact recently we were involved in the appointment of a new headmistress at Woodford and he helped us go through that process, and that appointment I think ranks with Ian McKinnon as the most spectacular principal appointment that I've been involved with. In fact I've been involved with the appointment of six principals to the three independent schools – Hereworth I think four, and Woodford two. I've been so lucky to be there at the right time and meet these prospective people and choosing them. A very great responsibility because nothing is more important than the head of a school. Not that I think independent schools are the b-all and end all. They have their high points and their low points, just as state schools do, and some of the state schools are tremendous seats of learning and do a wonderful job, but I think the boarding school, although it's frowned upon by many mothers these days, it gives an opportunity for students at that age and stage to learn to live together and make friendships that are there for a lifetime.

And because it's 24-hours a day and the independent school has to supply something above the norm to justify its existence, which I think they do do – notably a religious education, which I regret seems divorced from state education at the moment. The wider elements of what we are in this world for, whereas some education can be just a means to pass the next exam. Well to me that's quite inadequate for life. I haven't touched on the Nomad golf society which is not... racist – what is it when it's highly undesirable in this modern world where everybody's got to be equal – yes – not politically correct. It started – Father and two or three of his friends used to play cricket in the '20s when a Nomad team would wander around the Manawatu or Rangitikei and Hawkes Bay. Just a group of friends who would go and play with like-minded cricketers in different parts of the North Island, and when they got a bit too old for that in – might have been 1931 or 2 – they turned to start the Nomad golfers, and they were the same original people, I think, and they would go to the Wairarapa, Masterton golf club or the Wellesley? golf club and play at Heretaunga, or over the Marton and Hawkes Bay, and just nomad around, but it grew to the stage where they were so broad-minded as to let some of their wives come. Now that really was breaking out. And this was the base of the Nomad golfers as we are now, and when I started playing with them in 1948, I think I went first as a very petrified schoolboy, or just left school, and I found myself on the first tee with the reigning NZ gold champion and Guy Horn? a past champion and another pretty capable golfer, and I was so petrified that I hardly uttered all the way round and much to their surprise, I think I was partnered with John Hornabrook or somebody, it was a four-ball best-ball, and I'd got the lowest score once but that happened to make the difference between us beating the other two or not! That was my initiation and from there I went as often as I could and Jane would come when the babies permitted, and that sort of thing. And then in I think 1971, I was asked to be chieftain, that is the one who invites who he wants to invite, and be responsible for running the tournament. Jane and I did this together. It was a bit hectic, it was always after Easter and the sports at Wanganui were a fairly full-time involvement when the boys were there, and very often arrives about the time the ram goes out, and so we'd go over for Easter at Wanganui and straight on down to Paraparaumu and play three days of golf of which I had to have the draw and see that everyone had a partner. At that stage we were inviting 32 men and 32 women. Once you're invited you're always invited, but if you couldn't come you didn't come sort of thing so the trick was to find an equal number of men and women and hopeful 32 of each. Sometimes I got quite close. Once I got absolutely spot on but other times there'd be byes and spare people around. But the real joy of it was the pleasure these Nomads got of playing with like-minded people, usually pretty low handicap stuff – it was real serious golf, but in the right spirit, and I was chieftain for 13 years until the bull made my golf impossible. The bull that knocked my shoulder around. After that I passed the mantle on to young Fullerton-Smith. Jane used to have to collect the green fees. There were times when she'd have \$1000 wrapped up in her bra or hidden in the bottom of a drawer in the most awful accommodation you could ever believe – the Majestic boarding house at Paraparaumu – on the beach there, and just a hop and a step over to the golf course. A stunning golf course – a links – a proper links not a flash American golf course. I guess I got the most pleasure out of golf playing with those people on that course. It was just such a privilege to have ever been asked, let alone be responsible for running the thing.

So that brings me down to the involvement with Richmonds which started when I was asked to join the board, when the office was just a tin shed on Railway Road or sth in Hastings. I think that might have been about 1973. That again was really like a family affair and the directors were self-perpetuating, but you still had to be voted upon, if there was a vote. When I went on I think I was replacing someone – a Mr Kitto - who had been there a long time. And it was only subsequently as the company grew and became a public company... it still retained the family feeling and a great culture and relationship right through from producer, supplier and the staff and the freezing works...

Side 2

We relied on Whakatu or Tomoana to be killing, processing the animals and Richmond then sold the products to their own markets in England. Then stepping on from that, Graham Lowe? Dawn? Meat Co came into existence and we both wanted to advance from selling quarter beef – I can't remember the year – about 1973, '74 – that I remember still seeing quarter beef in Tomoana in sacking, scrim, hessian, whatever you call it, and Richmond and Dawn Meats were determined that the way to go was to cut it and sell in

cartons and we had to convince the Meat Board to give us a licence – both of us, independently because one was a private company and the other was an entrepreneur with very different cultures and philosophy. Finally we did get a licence for Pacific Freezing, but we had to be a joint operation – one slaughter floor for the beef, but two processing areas for cutting and so on, so they could be independent, but it was only one freezing works. This was a rather difficult arrangement with two very different styles of getting a product from the people. One company that developed along its lines to Oringi sheep and lamb processing and finally I left there I think in 1985 and subsequent to that Richmonds brought out Dawn Meat and became one company, which made life much easier. Before that I was chairman of Pacific Freezing at one stage while Graham Lowe was managing director and since he'd never been beholden to anyone else except Graham Lowe it was not a very easy job, but all part of the learning curve.

Then a more recent development in this area that I've been involved with was Richhold? and the Bell group who found that PPCS's attempts – successful attempt in the finish – to take over Richmonds, PPCS being the South Island exporting co-operative – they'd breached various rules and regulations on the way and the Bell Group fought a bitter contest through the courts to prevent the very scurrilous take-over operation which breached not only statutory laws and commercial regulations, but also the constitution of Richmonds, inasmuch as they were buying shares without divulging certain advances that they'd made, and that had been going on for a number of years with the aid of the bank and a nominee buyer of the shares which proved to be just a racket. I was very involved with John Foster and Robin Bell, a most interesting lawyer in Napier, and finally although we did/didn't?? get a hearing in the Privy Council and we won the High Court in Christchurch but lost – we didn't lose the appeal – they justified everything that had been found as proven as breaches of conduct in the High Court, but they didn't realize the enormity of the ramifications of the breaches of the law. So PPCS were able to take over Richmonds quite improperly, but all we can say is that we fought a very hard battle in the interests of proper commercial law. The fight may not be quite over yet but as far as the take-over of Richmonds by the co-operative that has come to pass, but the price – instead of them being able to get control of 55% of the company at \$1.60 a share, they've had to buy all the shares at prices up to \$3.30, I think, so at least we got value for the shareholders, even though we didn't get justice done in the eyes of the law. A very intense battle. To me it came at a very useful time as I'd just handed over all the reins to Ben and moved to town, which gave me time to work with these brilliant people. Robert Dobson was our QC, for whom I had the utmost admiration for integrity and what's right and wrong. And it gave me time and full interest which was a helpful change moving myself off the farm, to let Ben tackle it in his own way.

I don't think I mentioned in the other recording in 1998 when the drought was very bad we bought 400 acres over in the Colyton area and shipped a lot of young stock over there. That happened again at the time that I moved off. I turned 70 in 1998 and moved out of the homestead just after I turned 70. Those two things kept me sort of out of trouble and involved, which is vital if you want to keep going. So, in the full context of the battle for Richmonds against PPCS I had a colleague, who I think will write a chapter or two expounding the steps PPCS took to bring about this improper take-over. I think it will be of interest not just for the family, but to a lot of legally-interested commercial people, and it makes fascinating reading for how a scurrilous company that planned to steal another company to its own ends and as much as anything else, grandiosement, but it was thwarted by some determined shareholders who could see where they'd taken illegal and improper steps and by tenacity they probably had to pay twice as much for a company, which they will only go and ruin, kill all the things which in the old days stood of value. People relationships from consumer to producer and staff. Sure the company could have been more efficient, but if the shareholders and suppliers were happy with the performance they were getting, the other can be easily changed. You don't have to tear the whole thing down to make something more efficient. Its just an example of the strength of the horrible dollar these days and people's thinking. If ever this comes to print I'll get Chris Abbott? to do a couple of chapters.

That's probably enough, isn't it...

You can see what a wonderful life I've had. Isn't it stunning. I'm so lucky.