

AdamsJ, John Adams, 13 Aug 2003

Father Doug; mother?

[Bowlers outside showroom] There was two bowlers n'probably round about there somewhere they were. The first time it rained they come back out o'the ground. All the water got underneath n'they didn't have enough petrol in'm, once the water table got up to where the tank was it started to bring the tanks out o'the ground. They had t'sit half out o'the ground until the rain went away n'they could put'm back in again.

0.40: I learnt t'drive in that old jeep [photo of Max's Willys]. Left hand drive army jeep. Half the kids in JC might o'learnt to'drive in it.

This would o'been taken at the third rail bridge from JC [photo of boys on bridge]. It was the main channel n'when it rained it used t'fill up n'that's where we used t'go swimmin'.

There's bloody Billy Ryder. Look at the cigarette hangin' out it's gob, too. Still hasn't taken it out, still got one in his gob.

Five mile waterhole [BJ03]. When it rained it would o'run into JC which runs into the Flinders.

1.25: I was born in JC, 9/7/42. Dad was in the army, and mum – we were living in the CWA cottage till I was about three. The CWA hall was straight across from the soft drink factory, just about where Jumbo Harris had his soft drink factory later

I did one year of correspondence at Nelia n'then moved t'JC. I was there till... if I'd o'stopped another year I'd o'done scholarship, but because I would have been the only one in that grade, the school teacher said will you go back a year n'then next year we'll have seven or eight in the class, and I said like hell. [laughing] So I went out workin'. First job was with Max Burns. It would o'been grade six. I think I was about thirteen, 1955.

I didn't get an apprenticeship with him. That's why I left. I went n'worked for Ernie Brazier afterwards, as an apprentice oxy welder, panel beater, spray painter. But doin correspondence by y'self out there, doin' a trade, with no one t'help y', things got a bit tough n'in the end I said, stuff this, n'went n'got a job in the shed.

2.50: First job of a mornin' was sweepin' up n'what have you. I wouldn't o'had a license then. Jumbo taught me how t'drive that left hand drive army jeep. The

rubbish dump used t'be straight down the road towards the scour. Every now n'then I'd put the rubbish in the back o'that old jeep n'Righto Bomb, take that down t'the dump. N'away I'd go. King pin o'the world.

Donny I think was the boss o'the workshop, n'Barry was lookin' after the office side of it. Donny did the mechanical side of it. Jumbo was in n'out. If they come in they'd only work on their own machinery. I'd go n'give'm a hand, grease all the nipples on the tracks, all that sort o'thing.

4.00: [Huller] Helpful old bloke if y'wanted anything done in that sort o'work, book work n'that. He'd help y'. He was alright. Max had his finger in a few different pies which probably kept Huller pretty busy.

Once I had more experience with the different tractors n'trucks an that I ended up on site. Donny'd say, "Come on, we're goin' t'such n'such t'pick up..." somethin' might o'broke down, we go n'pick it up n'put it on the back of a truck n'bring it back.

I was about a year with Max, I'd say. Probably within a couple o'months o'sartin' I was on the tractors.

I think the first dam I went on I was the cook. I was the youngest so I had the job o'cookin'. Don't know how I got that job. I don't think I was the best cook around.

Ocassionally Jumbo'd wake me up in the middle o'the night,

"We need some rippin' done. Will you go n'rip"

I think there was one tractor, I think it might have had a blade on the front n'a ripper on the back. I think it was there for a spare tractor. I think there were about three tractors.

Not that I was ever that bloody bright at school but I was never that dumb, either. I could work most things out. But not that stuff. [referring to apprenticeship by correspondence].

I drove the rippers. Didn't do much scoopin', mainly Donny n'Jumbo.

If you had two scoops, well, there was two drivers, dozer with the ripper on, that'd be three, Choco might o'been the mechanic doin' the repairs, n'the cook, n'maybe a spare driver. Myself, Choco, Donny, Jumbo...

6.30: I remember we got some timber n'we put it all down there, n'everything we wanted t'take back with us we put down, spare fuel, n'we headed orf, kept away from the road, because if y'slipped off into the table drain you were bloody bogged. So we just stuck t'the ridges and on the grass. Anyway the next bloody thing everything just tipped up. All the mud on one side was throwing up underneath all this timber, n'when all the mud got all packed, it wasn't throwin' up on the other side, maybe it was in the water, just got too much weight and all of a sudden it just... up she went, tipped up, everyone hit the bloody deck.

7.15: I was paid bugger all. Even when I went with Ernie Brazier I got bugger all cos, y'know, first year apprentice. That's when I got jack of it n'went t'the sheds. 59 I come t'Townsville.

7.40: It must o'burnt down... I think it might o'been a Saturday afternoon, about five or six o'clock. We were probably wrackin' around the cafe, n'seen the smoke, n'I remember we didn't go down the main street, we raced down the lane way, n'as we got t'the last street, looked across n'it was bloody Burns' house. Nothing y'could do. By the time we got there a bucket brigade was going but... I know Max was there the next mornin' cos I went up t'see Mal n'they were sittin' over near the garage, n'I just went over n'as I was walkin' along there were a few two bobs, n'I went over n'handed'm t'Max,

“Don't worry about it John. Don't worry about it.”

8.40: She was a nice lady. Big, real down t'earth, and always welcomed y'. Soon as y'walked into that house y'get a welcome. I think they were the first t'ever install airconditioning as such. It wasn't like the evaporated ones now where it's got a big blower from outside and wet...

I went t'the pictures everytime m'mother n'father'd say yes.

I remember one year, everyone must o'got'm f'christmas, roller skates. And of course the biggest lump o'concrete was at the picture theatre.

Goats were y'mainstay of life. They were our milk n'they were our meat. Except when Billy Ryder n'I used t'ocassionally go n'get a killer n'we'd do it in either the old man's car shed or his mother's bathroom. We used t'do a fair bit o'runnin' around n'you knew where the weather's were, so y'd go n'knock off a weather.

I had one, a big black one. Bitumen Blonde, was the name of it, n'y'could ride it, but as soon as y'went to a race – we never had bridles, we'd just grip it as y'go along – the ones that had bridles on, that did ride'm quite often, they'd win the

racers. Ours'd just go left, right or turn around n' go back the other way.

[Old Mrs Shaw] Christ Almighty. Her n' Johnny. She's still alive. She's living in the hospital. Cos I asked about her when I was out there at Easter time, I was talkin' t'Eileen Ryder. We went past Shaw's old house, I knew Johnny Shaw had gone, n'I said,

“Old Mrs Shaw, is she still here?”

She's permanently in the...they must have a room or something there for'r in the hospital.

11.00: Goats go walkabout. Y'sort o'knew when it was coming because y'd go t'get'm say this afternoon n'they'd be a mile out o'town. Next day y'go t'get'm they'd be two mile out o'town. And next day y'went t'get'm y'wouldn't see'm. They'd gone n'they just wouldn't stop. I can remember their herd n'our herd joined up n'a couple o'other herds joined up, they must o'communicated, and away they went. And they'd go through fences. They had it worked out how t'get through'm. Anyway they tracked'm down, too, they were about twenty mile out o'town, Mrs Shaw n'I took turns in drivin', back t'JC.

11.45: Mrs Horton, did she have the fruit shop? Dirtiest bloody place in JC I think it was. [Laughing]

It was funny when they was bringin' these goats home they'd bring'm home in a herd, n'when they got over the railway, they knew where they went to – Mrs Shaw's go that way, n'Mrs Mann's n'all that'd go into town.

13.05: [Wedding day of Keith Coleman?] It rained n'rained n'rained. Cars bogged everywhere. Started off from the yard – John dressed up in his suit, Doug in his suit, away we get down near the railway line n'we get bogged. I gotta drive the car n'they're pushing. And of course all the dirt goes up all over them. And they gotta walk back down the railway line t'change into other clothes. They got us out anyhow, n'we got t'the hall. Bernice's best man – I don't know who he was – he come over in the mud n'had t'go back n'borrow a suit from someone, n'they had t'carry Bernice into the church so her dress wouldn't get all muddy. [See also Coleman]

14.10: Who's wedding was it when Choco run over that boy?

That was Henry Winton's wedding.

Mum: I was born in CT, Doug was born in Winton. We got married in 41

n'Doug was sent overseas. Born in 22. I was in Townsville n'they were evacuating them, y'know the young ones that had no family here. N'I went out t'JC because as I said m'sister n'bother-in-law, Norm worked in the railway, n'they had the tea shop at the railway. We used t'meet all the mail trains n'all the troop trains. They'd stop there n'get out n'have somethin' t'eat. No meals, cups o'tea.

15.10: I was livin' on top of the CWA. I had a little flat down the road first, when John was born I had a little flat, mother n'I, then I got this on top of the CWA, N'I used t'clean the CWA.

The railway refreshment job finished before the war ended. The army canteen that was over the railway line, they opened that there then they used t'feed their soldiers over there. But we still had the mail trains, but then Norm got transferred out o'Julia Crick n'he left. Norm's m'brother in law. I think they sold the tea room to somebody I don't know who. 1946 we came home permanently, I started t'work in the railway down towards Nelia. I said to the fellow,

“Kids gotta go t'school, y'know”

“Well I can send y'up t'JC later on”

That's what happened, I went t'JC. That was in 48. I was at Nelia for about 18 months. Tunny's used t'have the pub.

I can remember y'grandmother. Sometimes when I'd go t'JC on the train, when I come back she'd be on the same train coming back n'we'd have a big yabber. And Jill was on the train a couple o'times. And even though they just lived over the road we never seen much of one another, we used t'have a good yarn on the trains.

Mrs Hutton lived in Nelia. Great friends. They lived beside us at Nelia. Dad had a carrying business and so did Frank Hutton.

48 we went t'Nelia n'come back t'JC at the end of 48.

I ended up ganger there. [JC]. Eight or nine years, 59 I left there. We come down t'Townsville for the kids education.

I was at the workshop here till 81 n'that was it.

End of recording