

Lancel Brown

Interview by

John E Ransley

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- John:* So your father's name was?
- Lance:* Leslie Howard Augustus Brown. He was born 29 October 1882 in Union Street, Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) Victoria and he died in Bulli in 1949 aged 67 years.
- John:* Leslie Howard Augustus Brown. And his father?
- Lance:* Leslie's father was named Augustus Brown, born 1856 in Slettin, Germany. Leslie's mother was Agnes Brown nee Dennis, born 1 August 1855 in Fingal or Falmouth, Tasmania, on the east coast near St Marys. They married 26 December 1881 in a Wesleyan Parsonage in South Melbourne.
- John:* And then your mother was?
- Lance:* My mother was Ruby Marion Gertrude Brown nee Polglase. She was born 22 August 1888 at Eagle Hawke and she married Leslie Howard Brown at Jumbunna Victoria 27 February 1906.
- John:* You said you didn't know your father's background very well.
- Lance:* No, because his grandparents came from Slettin in Germany and we don't know very much about them.
- John:* And it would have been a German name?
- Lance:* For sure and they think that our name originally was Braun.
- John:* But you haven't got that established?
- Lance:* No. The only information we have is that my grandfather Augustus Brown's parents were Karl Brown or Braun, wheelwright, and Fredericka Bertani, and they were living in Slettin in 1856 when my grandfather was born. My grandmother's parents were Thomas Dennis and Janet Cree.
- John:* Janet Cree was English?
- Lance:* No. Janet Cree came from Glasgow, Scotland. She was born there in 1831-2, her mother's name was Margaret and she had two brothers and two sisters. She was sent out for stealing silver, being tried on 11 January 1850 and sentenced to seven years. She was one of the last convicts transported to Tasmania, arriving 25 July 1850 on a ship called "Baretto

Junior". She applied for a Ticket of Leave on 6 November 1853 and this was granted 7 March 1854.

John: She married in Tasmania?

Lance: She and Thomas Dennis applied for permission to marry on 28 July 1852 and they married in Christ Church, Cullenswood 16 September 1852. Thomas Dennis was from England.

John: He was free, he wasn't a convict?

Lance: No he was a free man, a blacksmith born England 1818. He left Portland Bay Victoria on 18th May 1849 in the Cutter "Mary" under the command of Captain Sanders and arrived in Georgetown Tasmania on 23rd May 1849. He died 4 September 1901 at St Marys and Janet died 7 January 1912 and they were both buried at the same church in which they married. The headstones are still there. On Agnes' marriage certificate the name of her mother is given as Jessie Grey. The researchers who went over there looking seem to think Jessie was an accepted nickname for Janet, and that 'Grey' was the result of a heavy Scottish accent pronouncing Cree.

John: Which one of their children comes in?

Lance: They had a child Agnes Dennis and she married Augustus Brown and then Leslie Brown was born. Leslie married Ruby Gertrude Polglase in Jumbunna, Gippsland on 27 February 1906. They had 12 children.

On another record it says that Thomas Dennis was a nailer and Janet was a servant. I copied it all off those and put it all together on paper and instead of having a bit here and a bit there I can go through it. That's why I have got it all over the place but I've got it numbered so I can follow it. There are the originals from Tasmania and then there are original copies. They got a lot through the Mormons.

John: Yes, that's the best place. If you want to look up your German ancestors, you would go to the Mormons because they have German records. You might need someone who can read German that is the only thing. But they would probably help as they are usually happy to help.

Lance: Well that's where they found that information about Tasmania. When Thomas Dennis and Janet Cree married he was 26 years old and she was 20 years old. They both could read and write which was something in those days. Janet Cree was twice convicted before this offence for stealing silver from a person unknown and given 8 years and 8 months sentence, however the 7 years shown on her record may be the length of

time overseas and transportation. She was a French polisher by trade, 4ft 11ins tall, fair complexion and had a large head with light sandy hair; she had a high forehead and hazel eyes, a small mouth and a large chin. She absconded several times while in Tasmania and was not permitted to enter Hobart town. It is interesting though isn't it when you can go back over these things and they still have records of it all from 1800. Very interesting. I wrote it down this way just because I can put my hands on it and I can follow it better than looking for something, its there all the time.

I've been writing all sorts of things. I wrote all my own sporting history and I wrote all our family history and I've put it all in a book so that the grandkids can read it. It starts from when I was a little boy and it's interesting because they are different times. Like when I was first started I remember we had no money and then you go over the back of the mountain after you've worked 3 days on work for the dole to get a ticket for food. We worked on the Bulli Pass making gutters and banks and we also made a football ground at Bulli Park. You never got money in those days for anything that you worked for on the main roads or all that sort of thing, you just got tickets for food during the Depression. Then after we had done that we would go over the back of the mountain and cut wood, living in a tent and getting up at 3 o'clock in the morning and working till 9 o'clock at night to get a cord of wood, blisters hanging off your hands like bunches of grapes and you got 6 shillings and a cord of wood is over 2 ton.

John: How many pieces roughly.

Lance: Well you had to drop the tree and it didn't matter how big you had to drop it. Then sort it into 2ft 6in lengths then split it into 4 inch billets then stack it. A cord was 10 foot long and 5 foot high, comprised of two stacks or rows of billets laid crossways to the 10 foot length (so the width was two times 2ft 6in). You had to clear the bush a chain wide. It was half ironbark plus wattle, very hard, you needed a maul and wedges. Mostly green timber, but we took dead timber too; out the back of Appin. Then you had to wait until Mr Firth came with his truck to take it away and then wait again until he sold it and come back and give you 6 shillings. He sold it to bakeries, for example Robertson Campbell in Woonona, Steve Adey in Bulli and the Woonona Cooperative bakehouse. (Adey also owned five houses including the one we lived in.) One day I had a huge tree, very knarled, very hard work, I waited for the truck but then I went home and never went back. This was in the 1930's. Sometimes no butter on your bread and you got honey by robbing beehives and things were tough.

John: Well what is your earliest memory then of your childhood?

Lance: Well my earliest memory was when I was about 5 years old and my uncle came back from the War with his leg shot off and we picked him up at Bulli Railway Station. They had cars with running boards and I sat on the running board at night time and went up to where they were taking him for the welcome ceremony and I was 5 year old and that is the earliest I can remember.

John: And which uncle was that?

Lance: Uncle Matty, he got his leg shot off in the War so he was sent back. He was a boot maker. I remember when I was about 6 year old I was walking home from school at Woonona through Mr Graham's paddock and saw one of my mates had got into trouble in a water hole. I couldn't swim either but I jumped in to help him. Luckily Mr Jones from Nicolson Lane was walking and heard us yelling and he pulled us out. Lucky we both weren't drowned. When I got home I was all wet and I got a hiding for being wet. When they found out that I had jumped in to help him – when the story really came out – my uncle, the boot maker, made me a leather medal. We had some tough times in those early days. I was born in 1910 so that would have been in 1916.

John: 1910, the same as my dad was born.

Lance: The tough times I can remember at the steel works when 300 men were waiting on the hill to get a job and we went in there and were working on the hot beds and I remember that we had to put 5 stamps on a 2 inch red hot billet and there were hundreds of them on the bed and you would go along with a hammer and one stamp at a time and your sleeve would burst into flames and you would have a tin of water there to stick it in to put the flames out and all the skin peeled off the side of your face. We had to work like that day after day. It used to be tough.

John: If we go back to when you were a kid and what you remember next after that? Going to school?

Lance: Well going to school to at Bulli. To Woonona first for about 2 years and then we went to Bulli school and nothing much I remember in school life. After school I got a job at Bunker's Garage in Bulli working there as a petrol attendant and then I got a licence to drive his bus from town to the railway taking people to and from the train.

John: It was a garage and nothing else?

Lance: He did repairs and he built the bus himself with aluminium and I drove it from there. Ivo Bunker was a very clever man. He made his own car parts with a lathe. When anyone came into the garage he had a short piece

of wood and he would put it on the head of the engine and listen and then tell you exactly what was wrong. He made his entire wife's pots and pans with aluminium. He even made his own false teeth. He was taken to court for making two shilling pieces but they didn't convict him because his two shillings had more silver in them than the government issue! After the court case the police went back to his place and had a beer. But we didn't have anything as youngsters. We didn't even have a push bike because our mother had a big family and there was no money.

John: Well what did you play with?

Lance: We used to roll tyres down hills and we used to slide down the steep little grass hill near the boatsheds with candle grease on the bottom of a sheet of corrugated iron bent up as a sledge. We never had much as kids because our parents had no money.

John: Did you play cricket or anything like that?

Lance: We played marbles mostly in those days. There were big green and small marbles and tops. We used to spin tops and that was more of a game and we had big hoops but other than that no games till later when I got round to playing tennis and bigger sports later. I finished up an A grade tennis player and won all the A grade championships in the district, and played at White City in Sydney. I won the South Coast indoor bowls singles championship and South Coast pair's championship for 2 years and won the fours indoor bowls championship. Won a hockey competition and was runner-up in a snooker competition and got a pennant for soccer and I won all the big green championships from green bowls in singles, pairs and triples. So I got a very good life with sport.

John: Did you play sport at school? Did the schools have no organised sports? When you were that age, what sort of sports did people mostly play, bicycle races and things, what sort of things?

Lance: No school sport when we were young. We didn't have bicycles. No sport I can remember you made your own sport in those days there was nothing much organised at all. There was soccer played but I was never associated with it at that time although I did play later.

I used to go and see all the big fights when I was young. There was the Sydney Stadium and another place at Leichhardt. Ambrose Palmer, Archie Moore and Vic Patrick were all good boxers to watch. I was there on the night in 1940 when Archie Moore, a white Yankee, fought the Australian champion, an Aborigine. One time I went with Edie and Henry Young and his wife Thelma. We did heaps of shopping and then left it all

in the car with the back window down but it was still there after we came back from the fight.

John: Were there Boys Scouts and Guides and that sort of thing or not? Did you go to church?

Lance: There were boy scouts but I never got into it. My mother used to take us to the Salvation Army although most of us were Methodists. Not because it was closest, but because she got in with a few of them and liked them because of all the good work that they'd done.

John: You didn't get into a Sallies brass band or anything?

Lance: No my father was a band master but he never ever taught us any of it. Although one of my sisters learnt to play the piano and another one learnt herself and they were all musical. But he never learnt any of us to play. He was in bands everywhere he went. I remember lots of places that he played bands in, one was Eagle Hawke and Jumbunna in Victoria and Kurri Kurri and lots of places he played in bands and eventually he was a band master. It is a wonder he didn't learn some of us to play an instrument. He did learn another boy to play but none of his family.

John: Was that just because he was too busy?

Lance: Yes. When I was young I can remember him working in the coal mines and then he would work weekends and afternoons at the hotel in his spare time to make a few bob because when you have 12 kids you are looking for money or something to feed them and clothe them.

John: What instruments did he play?

Lance: He played the cornet. I don't know if he played any more but I would imagine that he could because I remember him having a steel guitar at home and he used to play that and he would have a steel plectrum and run it up and down the strings. I imagine he could play nearly anything if he put his mind to it. If you are bandmaster I think you would have to be able to play most of those things.

John: And what was he like as a father?

Lance: Very strict, extremely strict. If you stepped out of line he had a razor leather strap and you'd cop it and many times we got beltings but it didn't do us any harm. I think that is what is wrong today, they have taken away the cane and they have taken away now being able to control your child, you can't even slap them so I think that is why we haven't got so much discipline in our country.

John: And was he fair?

Lance: Yes pretty fair but very hard and tough. When he was ready to go to bed every night it didn't matter who was there he'd get the clock off the mantelpiece and then when he started to wind that clock everybody had to go. He was a very strict father and you couldn't go out much at night time or anything when we were young, he wouldn't allow you out and if you did get out and you came home a little bit late you had to watch how you were getting back in because all the boards used to creak in the old house and he'd wake up. He was very, very strict.

John: Where was the house? And what number of the street?

Lance: In Stokes Lane and Bulli where most of us were reared – not all of us, I and my sister were born in Kurri Kurri and I think Lionel was born in Jumbunna but the rest were all born around Bulli. I don't remember the number but we lived in Hopetoun Street for 2 years when I was one year old, and then we lived in Stokes Lane until I got married and that was the last house on the left. It was called Rose Bud, but it was sold later and there are all flats on there now. It had a huge yard with about 50 fruit trees on it and we could have bought it for peanuts, a mere nothing, but we never ever thought about it of course. At the time if you didn't think about it, we didn't have any money anyhow. Later I lived in 60 Farrell Road all those years, with Edie's parents.

My sister bought a unit there and you wouldn't believe it, she bought a unit on the exact spot where our house was and the cement steps of the old house were still on the footpath, still there, amazing. Edie's father Jack Hawkins had a chance to buy a block of land opposite where we lived in Farrell Road near the shop. It was covered in pricklies and he could have bought it for 300 pounds. But he didn't have any money whatever, none, and in later years 34 houses were put on it. You didn't have two pennies to rub together or anything.

John: And you couldn't borrow the money from the bank?

Lance: No, it was hard. I remember Billy Dunk the Newsagent coming to me one time. He had land all over Bulli, down Bulli beach and everywhere, and he said I have got to unload a lot of land, do you want some blocks of land. He said you can have any of those blocks along there for 100 pound, no deposit and no interest and I took two and I gave one to Nancy and another friend of ours took the other one and I don't know what happened to them later, they never built on them but we could have bought them for 100 pound and no deposit and no interest. But we didn't have any money either; nobody had any money in those times.

John: What sort of meals did you have? What sort of food? Did you have butter for example?

Lance: We never had a lot of sweet stuff. Bread and butter pudding was one of the main things we had and bread sop we used to call it, it was bread fried with butter and nothing much else because they never had the money.

John: But you had a vegetable garden and fruit trees?

Lance: Always had a vegetable garden and grew a lot of vegetables and at that place we had nectarines, plums, peaches, and oranges, mandarins, cooking apples, eating apples and persimmons. We had all the fruit trees so tons of fruit all the time, 6 lemon trees and plenty of fruit all our lives. Maybe that is what helped being able to eat plenty of fruit. I think its great for you but we never had to want for anything like that. When you had 12 children and the wages in those days was about 4 pound a week you didn't have a lot of money to chuck around.

I remember my first job was down at Jack Hawke's wood-and-coal run at Thirroul and I got 3 pound a week. I remember one day we got a truck of coal in, it was 14-ton truck and my boss had asthma. I had to shovel a ton of coal onto the old T model Ford, take it to a miner's cottage and shovel it off and I had to empty the truck in one day because he had pay demurrage if the coal truck was left in there overnight. It was 28 ton of coal and he could hardly do anything and he would leave you with it. Then some days we would get a truck of flour for the baker and I would have to stack them 24 high and I had to carry every bag of flour because he was too little and he couldn't carry bags. I was so exhausted there one day I fell off the top of the stack onto a bag of flour and this is 8 o'clock at night. I went home I was that done. Three pound a week!

John: What was his name, was he the driver?

Lance: He was the owner. Jack Hawkes. He had asthma and he was too little to carry a bag of flour. But they were the tough times then, he ended up putting me off because he couldn't afford to pay me. We started a fruit run then from door to door from Bulli to Clifton.

John: Your father did?

Lance: No I did. I took my brother in with me as a helper for a half share and my father bought me an old 1946 Chev utility. I used to go to the markets twice a week. I'd get up at 2 o'clock in the morning and go to the markets sitting on the back of a Heggies Transport truck. He had a solid tyred Leyland truck with hand-operated gate-gears on the outside of the cabin.

He only had a small cabin that would seat three, and no windows, only canvas blinds. We would go to the market and he would wait for us all day and he would bring all our fruit back for 6 pence a case and one shilling a chaff bag that was all the cost was in those days. Of course that was as much as you could pay in those days, we had no money.

John: To buy them or transport them?

Lance: Transport them. In those days we only paid about 6 shillings for a case of fruit and after we brought it back, we would sort it all out and travel from Ferry Meadow to Coalcliff door to door. When the depression came we just had to give it away. I remember the last day that Bulli Hospital closed their account and some others closed their accounts so we found that we couldn't continue and I went and paid the rent the last day we finished and mum and I had 3 only shillings left. "What are we going to do with it, she said its not much good to us is it". I said "I'll go round to the billiard room and play pool". So I went round to the billiard room and that time they used to shake the marbles out of a bottle from number 1 to 16, because there were pins numbered from 1 to 16 all around the table and you'd bet on that marble being bigger than your mates, you would bet him 6 pence. So I could bet 6 pence on the marbles and 6 pence and a shilling or whatever on the pool game and I had a wonderful run that time, I kept winning the pool and I took home 3 pound. That was a week's wages. I was married in 1930 so it would be about 1935.

John: Going back to when you were a kid, did you eat meat as well? Were you able to afford meat? Chooks and eggs and stuff?

Lance: Yes you could eat meat because it was cheap then. You would go around and buy a little bit of meat and the butcher would give you a sausage for nothing because meat was a lot cheaper then and you could afford to have meat. Different to today. We always had a few chooks and eggs and you would kill off the old chooks to eat and get fresh young ones. That used to keep people going.

John: You didn't eat sheep's stomach or brains or those sorts of things because they were cheap?

Lance: We used to have a lot of tripe (sheep's stomach). Of course in those days you didn't have any washing machines and my mother had a big wooden mangle and they used to put all their clothes through a hand turned wooden mangle. You didn't have any mod cons at all. My father used to have a round tub with two handles on it and that was our bath. He would come home from the pit and he would bend over and my mother would wash his back in a little tub because there was no bathroom and you boiled the water in the copper. Different from today. She used to wash his back

and then they would all sit in the tub and wash the rest of themselves. The coal that was on your back was too hard to get off by yourself so he would sit in the bath tub and she would get it clean. There were no water heaters in those days but you had a copper, you would boil the copper and that was the only way you could get hot water. You got by, it is wonderful how they did get through. For example they used to buy flour in a huge bag of flour and they would make clothes with the flour bags. They would make petticoats and pants and that sort of thing out of the cotton flour bags.

John: So you didn't buy clothes much?

Lance: Very little. They used to make all their own clothes in those days and did their own sewing and they didn't have any money to buy clothes. All the money would go on food.

John: Did they make jams as well? Did you make your own bread or buy it?

Lance: That's how they used all the fruit, to make all sorts of jams. I had an aunty, my mother's sister, she had a room underneath the house just specially for jams and the shelves were stacked with peach and plum jams and it stood for years. They always had a big pantry full of jams and everything they made for themselves including preserved fruit. That is how they got by. Never ever wasted anything. Always preserved it and made jam with it and was a standby for years, because it doesn't deteriorate and we always had all that sort of thing.

We never bought bread. We used to make dampers and that type of thing but not loaves of bread like they do now. They only bought just what they had to. You didn't buy a lot of because you didn't have much money, you had to buy butter and sugar and meat and a few things like that but you made your own jam and everything else that you could. Wasn't much fun in those days.

John: Did they drink any alcoholic drinks?

Lance: My father used to drink a little bit. He used to like rum in his older days and he had a shop on the main road in Bulli, a mixed business, and mum always argued about him having this rum. So to stop her from finding it he put a bottle of rum on a string and put it down in a container for the milk he used to serve in the shop. But one time it leaked and a woman came back and complained. None of us children ever drank. None of our family ever drank and only one ever smoked out of the twelve. Twelve children and only one ever smoked. My father didn't smoke either.

John: When did your father get the mixed business?

Lance: Late in life he got a mixed business on the main road in Bulli. He lived in the house opposite and although I don't know how they got the money they bought the house eventually, it came with a big block of land. Later on when dad died mum met another man and got married and she had a very happy time with him for about 10-12 years. Before they died mum and him decided to give the Masonic Hall this block of land and house on the provision they could live there for the rest of their days rent and rates free. That is what happened and when they died the Masonic Hall took it over and knocked the house down, it was a beautiful sandstone house .

Lance That mini cassette recorder is a clever little gadget. Its worth having for somebody like you that goes into this sort of thing. I don't know what else there is to tell you.

John: Your first job was at a petrol station, the garage?

Lance: I used to work for a fellow on a fruit cart too very early days. Name of Mr Walton, he had a T-model Ford truck and it was a door-to-door thing too and that was maybe my second job. Up the top of the pit there used to be about 10 houses belonging to miners and that was the last of the run. By that time I got there I didn't have much petrol left. The T Model Ford's are gravity feed so I had to go all the way up in reverse to get up to these last customers. I often had to do that and of course it is not an easy job on a T model Ford because you've got a foot pedal for clutch and a foot pedal for reverse so you are holding one foot in with the clutch and one on reverse and then as well you have to drive it backwards and that was a matter of about a mile and I would reverse all the way up there to serve the last of these customers and then get back home again.

John: A foot pedal for reverse instead of using the gear stick?

Lance: You had no gear stick. There was a clutch and second gear in one pedal, the reverse gear pedal in the middle and then the foot brake pedal. There was a hand accelerator underneath the wheel so they weren't easy to reverse for a mile but I used to. You had to hold the reverse pedal in the whole time.

John: And you had to hold the clutch in too?

Lance: The clutch was second gear all in one so you had the clutch in with the left foot and press the middle one for reverse and then drive it and the petrol would only run if you were going backwards if you didn't have enough petrol in the tank. The Waltons didn't have anything much even though they had a little shop with fruit and vegetables but they only got 2 or 3

customers a day perhaps; and then the door to door thing. They didn't have much money to fill the tank with petrol.

John: So actually the business really depended on door to door. Because there was no passing traffic outside the shop?

Lance: Yes. That would be 1928 so there weren't many people in the town. There was an Estate Agent named Mr Cottrell who lived opposite the fruit shop and he was a friend of my father's and he used to take us down to Albert Park shooting rabbits on a Sunday. He supplied the ammunition and the guns and we would get 40 rabbits in an afternoon. He was one of the only men in Woonona at that time that had a motor car, a Fiat car and the hood was strapped down to the mudguards with straps and a buckle and it had carbide lights. That's how far back it was. Only two carbide lights I think, the other two were on the battery but he had two carbide lights on the top in case anything went wrong. It was real old fashioned, I remember the shape and the real old fashioned light. But he had a motorcar and nobody else did and he was the first man to sell all the land on Sandon Point in Bulli for 100 pounds a block and that was pretty big money at that time as well. He sold the land on Sandon Point at that time, not all of it, and he also sold practically the whole of Coaldale when nobody was hardly there and it was all broken up into lots and he sold Coaldale to the people and started Coaldale as well. So a pretty influential citizen and he had a good business of course, but he was a friend of ours and we used to go there quite a lot. There used to be a very top photographer – I remember I used to go there when I was going to school backwards and forwards – when I was coming home from school I would often call in there and he had his own dark room and printed his own photographs even in those days, so he was pretty knowledgeable you know.

John: Did he do portraits of people?

Lance: Yes. He was a really clever man. In those days we had processions too. We went into a procession one time in 'Back to Woonona' week. There was an old car in a Mr Hill's yard under a pile of blackberries. We cut the blackberries away from it and got the car out and I remember it had compression caps on the cylinders it was that far back. We played around with it for a while and then we turned it with a crank handle and we got the motor going. So we put some tyres on it and we decorated it up and we put a bit of a gum tree in the middle of it, a small tree, and we hung a cockies cage on it and we painted ourselves black and we had a big placard "the vanishing race" and we went in the big procession and it was so successful they decided that they would rerun it a fortnight later. But we couldn't get the motor going the second time so we put a draught horse

on with chains and we towed it. The things we used to do, lots of things you can go back and talk about.

John: Can you remember any other processions?

Lance: No. But they always had Anzac Day parades and all those type of things but I never got implicated in them.

John: Your father never went to the First World War but your uncle did – was he the only one you knew?

Lance: Yes, of course, there were others that I just can't remember but I do remember them talking about others that did go. I remember my uncle because he came back with his lower leg off, below the knee. He lived in Woonona as well so that made it stick in your mind more. He was a boot maker and everyone took their boots to him and we kept in touch with him always. He married a lady named Rose and they lived in Rose Street, Woonona and I was reading about it in that book the other day. He was a very nice man and had a boot shop on the main road in Woonona and did very well too but I don't remember any of the others who went to war. None of them soldiers seemed to talk much about war did they?

A lot went to war, my sister Betty's husband Lou went to war later in Vietnam and so did Brian Pender from Perth. Brian got bitten by a mosquito and got encephalitis and that bugged him really. He's never been 100% since. He's just been in hospital now with nose and related trouble, he is still under the doctor from war troubles in Vietnam. When he came back from Vietnam he saw a bloke building a house at Dapto and signed a contract to buy it. He thought he would get the pension but he didn't at that time. His mother in law – my daughter Nancy – didn't have any money either. So I loaned him 400 pound at no interest to stop him going to gaol! I made him sign a paper to repay the loan when they sold the house. After they lived in the house for 3-4 years they sold it and moved to Perth. He bought a "Charger" car and they drove across the Nullarbor plain with a 6 month old baby and a tent. After arriving there he got a job as a "grey ghost", like a brown bomber, parking cars. He found out he was good at office work and he finished up second-in-charge at the Perth Council. Retired with good super, he must be about 63 now. His wife, my granddaughter Caroline – was a hospital worker and she retired with super as well. They left here with nothing and finished up on top! They've done up their Perth home beautiful and are talking of selling it. Their son is a Ranger in Perth; he bought two houses and a block of land so he is doing really well. Their daughter is married to a plumber/gasfitter and they have their own home.

Lou came home and then they formed a dance band. Betty never had a music lesson in her life and she learnt herself to play the piano. Lou was on the Kokoda Trail. When he came back from the war he had a bad pain and he went to the doctor and the doctor examined him and sent him home. He just got home inside the lounge room and collapsed. They sent for the doctor and he came as quick as he could and operated on him on the floor, opened him up and tried to massage the heart and one thing and another but he died. That was 19 years ago. They had a wonderful dance band and yet Betty couldn't read music but played beautiful dance time and everything else. She stills plays the piano and organ, she has a piano and organ in her lounge room and she is coming over here on Friday night. She is 80 now, she is no chicken any more either.

John: Did you go to dances when you were young?

Lance: Yes that's where I met my wife Edie Hawkins. We used to go to dances on a Friday night so that's where our marriage and everything started. The Friendly Societies held them in Woonona.

John: Would there just be the one dance every week?

Lance: Yes, that's all there was. They were very well patronised dances, it was a big hall – the hall is still there but it is a garage and repair shop now. At the back of that hall there was another little hall called the band hall, we had a little club and we used to rent it once a month, we called it the once-a-month club. I used to collect the money, everybody paid a shilling a week, and we would have a keg of beer and then Betty and all of them would play music and we would have a dance and we had artists galore amongst all the people we had and we had a wonderful time and it cost us only a shilling a week. The little band hall was big enough to dance in. We would have maybe 30-40 people and they all paid a shilling a week and that bought us a keg of beer and paid for the hall. That started in 1936-37.

John: But you were going to dances before that? Ballroom style dancing?

Lance: Oh yes, when I was 19-20, about 1929-1930 we were dancing and that's when I first met Edie. Old time dancing. All the old time dances but that was the only dance around at that time but it was a very good one and a lot of people used to go to it. Funny the old hall was never knocked down and is still there.

There was another place alongside with a garage that is still there too. It used to belong a woman named Mrs Knott. She had a town bus that ran to Bulli station and I used to drive it. One night she decided to have one of these séances with a Mrs Heggie talking to spirits. We went to Mrs

Knott's place and if I hadn't been there I would never believe what I saw. We had a round table and we all sat round this table, about 10 of us I think there was, and we all had to put our hands on the table like that, with just our fingertips [demonstrates]. [Edie wasn't there.]

Mrs Heggie started talking and she would ask questions in alphabetical order, A, B, C, and D and she said the table leg will rap for A, B and C so many times, A=1, B=2, C=3 and so on. I am waiting for it to start and it wouldn't start and she said "is there somebody in this room doesn't believe in this, will that person stand up", and my mate Ron Evans stood up, and she said, 'I will have to ask you to leave the room'. So Ron went out the room and we put our hands down and the table started rapping.

One leg lifted off the floor and rapped up and down. And you wouldn't believe it when she started to ask questions she asked my boss if she had a boyfriend and it went yes. Do you know his name – yes. Can you spell it – it started spelling and she stopped it. Wouldn't let the table go on with it.

Then later when she had finished and had gone home the four of us – Eric Vigel, Alf Pierce, Jim Snell and myself – we got round the table and we had the table rapping and we had it standing on one leg with just our fingertips on the table and that's true and I wouldn't believe that if anybody else told me but I was there.

John: Was there any other information? What other information apart from the boss?

Lance: We asked it all sorts of questions, you know what people wanted to ask and then she would ask them and then this table would rap. It was spooky.

I never went back and I've never seen anything like it since. But I was there and that was true. It is hard to believe that it can happen but I've heard since that Norm Heggie – that used to take us to market – Norm's mother used to have those parties and her daughter started to get ill and the doctor told her that if she didn't cease having those parties her daughter would die, they were so affecting the daughter. I don't know if she stopped but I know that happened.

A mate of mine, Mrs Meades, used to do weddings in the Bulli Hotel. She'd set up the tables with all the knives and forks so, and the lights on. Sometimes all the lights would go out and the doors would shut by themselves. Other times she'd go out to the kitchen and come back to find that all the knives and forks had moved. Apparently a bloke had committed suicide in the top attic of the hotel. One day she said "Look, I

know you're here but for Christ's sake just leave all the things alone!". I don't know if it worked; she is still living at Bulli.

A family called Mant used to run a horse and coach to Wollongong. The Mant's house is still two doors down from the Bulli Hotel.

You know Norm Heggie started off by taking us to market. He hired a solid tyre Leyland to take us to market twice a week, 6 or 7 of us and bring us home. From the hiring of that Leyland he went on and on and on until he became a big company where he had hundreds of trucks. It's sold out to big enterprises now but its still called Heggies Transport. He had hundreds of trucks before he finished, him and the two brothers who got into it later, but Norm started off by hiring a solid tyre Leyland to take us to markets. Its amazing what can happen in life isn't it. People taking a punt and then finishing up rich.

When we finished our own fruit and vegetable run we used to ride a pushbike from Bulli to Port Kembla every day looking for work at the steel works. We would take a pack of cards and sit on the hill from 7 o'clock in the morning till 3.30 in the afternoon. Sometimes they would call you up at lunchtime or they would call at 3 o'clock so you had to be there for the 7 o'clock call up and the 3 o'clock call up and then if you didn't get a job well you would ride the bike back home again. Sometimes you might get a job for one day. So we did that every day, for weeks and weeks and weeks.

John: You and your brothers?

Lance: Oh no, there were hundreds, maybe 300 people. Wes Newton, my brother-in-law – he finished up my brother-in-law – he used to go too. Then one day I went there and the bloke came out – he had an office just to engage people to work. He looked over the top of his glasses and he said "is there anybody here ever work in the plate mill" and of course I put my hand up and I said yeah, me! Actually I had never worked in the plate shop. Well, he said, I want you to report to Bill Pendlelieth and see him straight away. So I went in and I was there for 19½ years.

John: 19½ years. What was that like, what about the safety and stuff?

Lance: No safety in those days. One day I was on the mill floor and I saw a bloke called Rump Swannel killed by a steel bar on the finishing stand swinging around at high speed and taking his scalp off. Saw another one get run over by a red hot bar which took his leg off. I saw a bloke named Digger Smith get his leg cut off by a billet mill trolley car and an electrician got killed when he was squashed by a crane up against the end buffer. Another day I was in the ambulance station and they said bring a stretcher

to the blast furnace over the other side of the yard. The blast furnace had blown out a ball of molten steel five feet in diameter, with terrific power. The blokes who were standing there got their legs burnt off and their eyes burnt out and all the flesh burned off their bodies. Two of them were still alive and singing out and one had just burnt to death. One fella said tell my wife I was thinking of her. One was standing on the stumps of his legs. I just chucked the stretchers down and cleared off, I couldn't stand it. Oh gee I saw a lot of terrible things, it was a slaughterhouse.

Another time we were supposed to go down a ladder and clean this hot soaking pit out. I put a handkerchief over my face but when I got down there my eyelashes and eyebrows singed off and I had to go straight back out it was that hot. Another day Wes Newton and I had to into the soaking pits where they made ingots of hot steel and clean them out with a crow bar and sledge hammer. You could only work 2-5 minutes at a time it was so hot and you had to wear wooden clogs to protect your feet from the white hot sand. The aim was to break the pit out. You could only stand a few minutes in and then you got out for five minutes and another pair took over. It would singe off all your hair. Look, men wouldn't do it today. You couldn't get anybody to do the work that we were doing in those days. It was terrible work but you had to do it. The pigs mill was very hard. But if you didn't do it, well then, there were 200 or 300 who were waiting to take your job.

John: Was there any compensation for the families for the people that were killed?

Lance: Very little compensation in those days. You just couldn't get a job, you just couldn't get work. Of course the laws were different and it has changed a lot since then. I was about 26 when I got the permanent job.

Then I left there because I went on a holiday to Hayman Island. We were working 12 hour shifts every day because of the war and the doctor told me I should have a break. So he gave me a sick leave certificate to go on a holiday to Hayman Island and a certificate to start work. But when I went to work they wanted to know where I'd been, they had heard I went on a tropical holiday. I said what if I have it's my business. They said you have got to tell us where you've been. I said I am not going to tell you, that's my business. They said if you don't tell us where you've been we will sack you for serious misconduct. Well I said you are not going to know, I am not going to tell you what I've done on my holiday and that's my business and I had a doctor's certificate to go. So they sent me back to the superintendent Mr Smith who said you have been very impudent Mr Brown, the top office said you've been impudent. I said I haven't, they want to know my personal business and I won't tell them. He said if you don't they will sack you. I said I am not going to tell them, well he said

you are sacked for serious misconduct and you better be out of the gate quickly or I will escort you. The union took the case to court because it was a test case, you had to work at the steel works for 20 years before you could get long service leave. When we got to court I was scared stiff when I was called to give evidence, I nearly fainted and had to ask for a drink of water. But the union never took the doctors certificate and when I asked them they said they had forgotten it. The judge reserved his decision to get the certificate. After the court the union representative, Billy Frame, went to lunch with Jimmy Potts, the representative for Australian Iron & Steel who owned the steel works. When I chipped the union they said we'll appeal and we will win the case. I told them to stick it up their arse. I could have beat them and I could have got my job back, but I didn't want to go back to court and I was fed up with three shifts. I had had enough; that was 20 years after 1936.

A friend of mine, Mr Dalton, was a pipe fitter so I went to work into Bulli coal mine for one week as a pipe fitter's labourer. But the roof caved in after two days, and one fellow broke his leg and two fellows got killed when the skips broke away. All that just in one week! So I put my notice in and left.

Then I saw a notice in the paper wanting an outdoor salesman at Lavis Electric. The fellow advertising was a man that I had played tennis with so I went and applied for it. He said Lance I'd like to give it to you but I have got two men who are experienced that have put in for it. I said, what about giving me a go, a month's trial, and if I don't come up to scratch sack me, but give me a go. So a fortnight later he rang me and said I am going to start you as an outdoor salesman. After 3 months he said to me Lance we have decided that you have a permanent job and we will give you a rise in wages. So I worked with him for 4 years. It was when television first came out and we were working into the night time showing people television like a theatre. Taking names and addresses and putting temporary antennas up for them and selling them televisions. We asked Lavis Electric to give us a pound a week rise for the extra work we were doing but the boss told me he never had it in the barrel to give it to us. So I said if I see another job that comes up I am going to take it.

About a month after that a job came up at Nock & Kirby's. They were opening a new store and they wanted a furniture salesman. So I applied and he said what are you doing now, and I said I am working with Lavis Electric selling televisions as an outdoor salesman. He said if I put a new department in the store and put all electric in, will you come in and take it if I give you 4 pound a week which is more than you are getting. I said yes I will take it and I put my notice in. Then Lavis Electric presents me with a trophy for winning the end of the bowls pairs championship that same night, and the boss said are you still with us or against us and said I

am leaving you. He said I will give you 5 pound a week to stay, I said no you won't, you wouldn't give me a pound when I wanted it and I am going. So I left for 4 pounds a week. I worked there for 5 years and Mr Pitman from Illawarra Appliance store came up and said Lance we want you to come and work for us. I said, why, well we've heard that you're a good salesman and we would like you to come and work and I will give you 7 pound a week, more than you get here, to come and work. I said I'll take it. 7 pound a week was a lot of money, so I went and worked at Illawarra Appliance store and then it changed hands to Charlie Wheeland. I worked with him but then the name changed to Bob Pollard and it was still the same people so I worked 16½ years for them and ended up as manager. I was manager of the store over the years not having had any schooling or anything much so I did very well with a bit of push. You've got to be pushy, you've got to have a lot of confidence and push yourself so I did well.

John: You were working as a salesman for a wage, there was never any kind of extras like commission or something?

Lance: Yes, there was commission too and I've got a couple of trophies in there for the best salesman for a period of time and if the bosses had a promotion on washing machines I'd win it, I would sell the most washing machines. There would be a radiogram that had been there for two months or something and they would say, well it's got to go, so drop the price to a certain price and the salesman would get \$5 but next day it would be gone. As soon as there was money in it everybody would be pushing to sell it. I was a good salesman; I had to be, if you get up to be manager of a store like that as big as that.

I had 9 staff but I was the only one on an incentive scheme. When I became manager of the electrical store I signed a paper in which they agreed to pay double my superannuation contributions plus interest plus bonuses when I retired. But the day before I retired the accountant phoned up and told me he had a form with my signature saying there was no interest and no bonuses. I never signed it! So I only got my own money. Could have taken them to court but I didn't.

John: What was the secret of your sales success?

Lance: I had the knack of reading people. People would come into the store and within 2 minutes I could tell whether I could push them to buy or whether I had to stand and be nice and talk nicely to them. You have the knack of summing people up and most times you would get it the rightaway. I remember with radiograms I had a special record and when I was going to demonstrate I'd play this record and I'd say well if you buy it the record goes with it. So I had a stack of 33 records so I am selling radiograms and

giving records away, but that one record would sell the radiogram so you learn all these tricks as you would.

John: Did it take long to learn or do you think you had a knack from the beginning?

Lance: Well I had been social secretary in Bowling Clubs and I had been on committees so I had the know-how of how to talk to people. So you get to know all them things and then the further you go the more you learn of course and then you have a little bit of push. You have to have a little bit of pushing and shoving. I was good at mental arithmetic, I'd go over the street and I'd buy 4 or 5 things and I'd come back and she would say how much do I owe you and I'd tell her. She would say, write them down, and I would say no, I am right. Then when I went in there to be manager I would be selling a fridge and you had to fill out a contract. I would maybe have a girl alongside me doing the contract the proper way and I would do my contract mentally and I'd be finished before her. But I couldn't do long division sums or anything because I left school too early and never had the education. So I wasn't good on paper, but mentally I could do that contract and print it out before this girl could. I could do it real quick.

I left school when I was 14 and I never did an intermediate certificate but it didn't hold me back because I had a bit of push and shove and I was always looking for work and it didn't matter where I was looking for work I always got it. Then I had enough guts to push into being an outdoor salesman at this place and from there I wanted to go further and ended up manager of the store so it was a big lift.

John: In the Second World War you weren't tempted to join up for anything?

Lance: We couldn't, I worked in the steel works, so they wouldn't allow you to leave your job, nobody in the steel works was allowed to leave. We were working 12 hour shifts because of that. We worked 12 hour day shifts, 9 hour night shifts, 7 days a week.

This was for a fair while during the war and it was tough work. In amongst heat all the time, running past steel backwards and forwards all the time through the mills. You had to keep your eyes open all the time because it was something dangerous all the time. Cranes flying over your head with big magnets holding loads of steel and they would let go and drop stuff so you always had to have your wits about you. It wasn't a good place to work but you had to work somewhere, there was nothing else to do at that time.

John: Did they bring any women into the steel works or not?

- Lance:* Very, very few in the offices only. No they never worked on the mills or anything where there was hot work, no women ever in that type of work, they would never do it. I don't know if they had women working in the factories, making ammunition and the like.
- John:* The unions came in eventually, what, after the depression?
- Lance:* Unions have always been there but they don't have as much clout now as they used to have in those days. They used to have a fair bit of clout and we had a big strike against loading pig iron for Japan about 1938. See it didn't do us any good either because we went back on the same terms as we came out on and none of us had any money. We were out for months.
- John:* Did you get support from the union when you were out? Was there any kind of strike fund?
- Lance:* There were tickets, you got tickets. Meal tickets but the unions didn't have a lot of money in those days. There were picket lines too I remember. We weren't allowed to do other work during the strike, but there were a few got other jobs, I remember Keith my brother-in-law he went away into the country putting up steel frame sheds and one thing and another. He got work.
- John:* But he didn't go back to the steel works?
- Lance:* Yes he finished up back there and he retired. He was there a long time as well and he retired from there. Wes Newton my other brother-in-law he used to work there too. Men wouldn't do the work now that we did in those days. Most of those mills have closed down now. They started a big mill in Western Australia and they took all the rolling of the rails and everything over there so now they only roll special slabs and stuff at Port Kembla now. Special steel but they still make pots of money. You worked with them one time didn't you? Up in Queensland?
- John:* Not them. It was a geological exploration company, where I worked for a year. What was the management like at the steel works? Would you have a supervisor on the floor?
- Lance:* Very tough. We had a shift foreman then we had an office nearby with a man over the shift foreman and then a man over him, the superintendent, and then you had the big office up on the hill so we didn't have a supervisor all the time. But you couldn't do anything. If you didn't do everything they told you, you were gone. Work was tough and one day I remember the day I poured sweat out of my boot.

See, when the steel ingots exit the furnace they are about 12 feet long, 5 feet across and 4 feet deep. They go first to the breaking down mill where they had 3 sets of rollers in 'stands'. Each stand had a big set of rollers. A big steam engine drove one stand and the other two were driven electrically. Operators up above the floor would electrically adjust the distance between the rollers depending on what was needed on the day, and the foreman would give the signal after measuring everything up at the start with callipers. If they were rolling for billets – 18in square billets – then the mill would keep breaking them down, running them backwards and forwards, until they got 2in square billets, which would then go to the hot saw. The billets were 150-200 feet long. The rollers would thin and lengthen the hot steel with the last set of rollers doing the finishing. They would adjust all 3 sets of rollers for whatever they wanted, beams, flats or billets. They would also sample the hot saw by cutting test pieces and taking them to the foreman. This was to ensure it was within gauge – correct thickness/width – so the customer wouldn't knock it back.

Plates were 7-8 feet wide and up to 30 feet long. After they were rolled through the mill, 3-4 men would pick them up with "keys" (clamps or handles) and pull them across to the plate shears, which would crop off the ends and the sides. Then when I was working there I would attach six "dogs" to the plate so the crane driver could pick it up and take it to the plate stack. Then I would have to climb up the stack and release the dogs, using a bar to lever the plate up so as to get the dogs out. It was tough work as the plates were still very hot.

They had a huge diesel engine driving the steel mill including the cranes and belts.

I used to drive the hot saw cutting red hot steel and the sparks off the saw would fly everywhere, straight through your flannel shirt and burn you. I would be sitting in a little cabin on one side of the roller bed which was about 3 foot wide. The 6ft saw was housed in a twenty foot structure on the other side. I operated the rollers and pushed a lever to move the saw. If I was cutting 24ft by 7.5in red hot beams an 80ft beam would come from the mill along the rollers from my left until I stopped the rollers and cut the butt off the front end. Then I would start the rollers up again and the beam would move along until it met one of the "stoppers". There were three of these stoppers which were 2in thick steel plates that moved along a thread and came down to the floor. One man was assigned to place the stopper, whether it be for 20, 24 or 30 foot. When the beam was stopped I cut the butt off the back end. You had to cut or crop the butt ends off first and there would be two butt-end pullers for billets and four for 24ft beams. They stood in front of the saw and they had tongs for the billets and 6ft steel hooks for the beams. Pieces from the big beams would often hit the butt pullers, it was very dangerous work. You had to be very careful the

next beam coming out of the finishing stand didn't hit the end of the one you were cutting. Everyone had to wear safety goggles and there was a lot of noise but you could talk.

After they were cut the beams or billets were moved to the hot beds, specially made iron beds, to cool off and be stamped by the stampers. When I worked there a list of serial numbers would be sent down from the office. Then I and my mate had to wait until the hot bed was full of red hot billets, about 200 billets. Then we would put one number in a steel holder, take a hammer and go between the hot beds hand stamping every 2in billet with this serial number, one at a time. The complete serial number might be five or six numbers, for example 15794, and it all had to be done strictly in rotation before you went back to get the next number. We wore long sleeve flannel shirts and big gloves and we had three tins of water along the hot beds. When your gloves or sleeves would start to burn you would shove them in the water. The side of your face near the hot billets would get blisters. When the billets had been stamped and were cool enough the cranes would pick them up with their magnets and move them away.

One time we were on 24ft by 7.5in half beams, the saw was cutting through them and the stuff was hitting me everywhere and we were short. The saw cut a big piece off the front end and you had to get it away with hooks, pull it off and then put it right down to the end and shove it over for the crane to take away.

John: On rollers?

Lance: No, just on skids. We were going for a record this day but it got so bad we couldn't stand it anymore, the heat was terrific. 24ft x 7.5in red hot beams from here to there all day [gestures]. Anyhow we were pretty stuffed and we just couldn't keep going any longer so we sat down and stopped the mill and of course once you do that there is hell to pay. We stopped the mill and the superintendent came over, and said "what's wrong?" A bloke named Bob Castle, nicknamed Bones Castle, said "we are exhausted and you are sitting in your office drinking coffee and we are dying". And he pulled his pants' legs up and showed the superintendent his skinny legs and said "my legs are not going to carry me all day, we need more men". The superintendent, Mr Davidson, started to laugh and he in turn pulled his pants' legs up and said "my legs are as skinny as yours". And Bones said "well you better get over here and give us an extra man". The superintendent then got us more men. The mill was rolling 24ft x 7.5in red hot beams and was trying to roll a tonnage record that day. The mill foreman that day was Ray Gibbons. Anyhow we finished up with an extra man over it because we were going for a record and you just couldn't stand it. That did a lot of good for us that day.

Another time when I was driving the saw the steel billets were coming up to the sawing station at what seemed like a hundred miles an hour. I was cutting several billets at a time; they were all packed together on the rollers. If they banked up you were supposed to turn the warning light off. But you can't watch the back end and front end all at the same time. If fresh billets hit while the saw was going the saw would fly to pieces. It happened only once with me, the saw revved at high speed and smashed to smithereens and cut the three big leather belts that drove it. Took the mill down for two days. The fresh billets went straight into the saw and they buckled up and the saw flew into pieces. One piece hit one of the butt-end pullers on the thigh. Luckily it hit him side-on or we would have been in trouble. The piece made an imprint of saw teeth in his thigh.

There was another day we were going for a records on 2 inch billets and they came through like sausages and maybe from here to that corner of the lounge room long in one piece coming in and going out like this, and you are trying to cut them up and you are trying to watch the back end and you'd be cutting 6 or 8 at a time because they are all backing up on you, they are so fast and like you are running rollers to run them in and you are running the saw to cut through the whole lot while you are watching the back end and the race for a record.

John: Why did you do this, did you get a bonus for the record?

Lance: No but the mill foreman gets a big pat on the back because he has broken a record. So here I am on this day and maybe 8 or 10 coming down at one time and I am trying to watch the back end and I am cutting through them and in the finish it beat me. When you put the light out it shows up on the mill for them to stop because there is something wrong. So I put the light out but they took no notice of it and they still kept coming. I am cursing and cursing, I did my nut. So I just stopped everything, stopped the saw, stopped the rollers and walked out and threw up my arms and stood there. Well the billets still kept coming and coming and backed up and what happens then they can't cut them because they get cold and they have to get the oxy cutter, stop the mill and cut them all up with oxyacetylene. So I have this great heap of billets laying there and the boss Ray came down and he said to me, "I ought to job you" and I said "yes you bloody do and I'll bloody job you back". He started to laugh and so with that he got oxy cutters and then the mill is off for about an hour cutting and he came over to see me with a big grin on his face and he said, "We got wild didn't we?" He knew I was bloody annoyed. I would have done anything that day. They were beating me and he wanted a record, and everybody was in danger down there so when he wouldn't take any notice of the light and still kept rolling I walked out. Then he was in all sorts of trouble, his record gone bung and he had to cut it all up with oxy and stop the mill

which costs thousands of dollars but they are things that happen in your life and things that you can think back over. But anyhow I cost the mill a lot of money.

John: So the hot cut was a big diamond saw was it, a steel saw with diamonds in the teeth?

Lance: It was a cold saw, it was about 6 ft high all teeth driven by a big wide belt at a hell of a speed and you had a handle and as you ran the rollers down to where you wanted to stop it you pushed the handles and it would go straight through, cut the hot steel straight through.

It was just a special sort of saw but it cut through them and pieces would fly everywhere and hit you and burn you and the men had to pull the rough ends of the steel away for scrap, the rough ends that were cut off to get a square cut end. Then you would run the cut pieces out along onto a hot bed. Some beams were 12 inches by 3. Some were maybe 24 foot long and when they got on the hot beds and cooled they would buckle up in an arch. The two men had keys to fit on them to turn them up and over. Those two men stood between those hot beds all day turning those things up. Then they would push them up with triggers and the magnets would come and pick them up. Fancy the heat those two men were in all day, and they weren't easy to turn up because they were in a big arch. They would put the key in and turn them up on their sides and then the arch would be that way but then they would get them together and the magnet would pick them up and stack them. Men would never do the work today that we did in those days, they would never do it.

John: Did the mill supply work clothes?

Lance: No, they supplied nothing, you had to buy your own flannel shirts and they just burnt to pieces. Those days you see there were 300 on the hill waiting for work and if you didn't do it you didn't do the days work. One day I got a day's work in the blast furnace cleaning out the troughs where all the molten steel comes in. I got gassed and they had to send me home but I got a day's work out of it and that's all. Terrible work that you had to do down there and the heat was terrific and people wouldn't stand it today. But I used to be able to do all the work, I used to be a pulpit operator driving the pulpit, a plate shears operator cutting the billets, a stamper, a trolley driver, and a hot saw driver. I was on the big mill, and I was a general hand. I did everything you know and then they had the hide to sack me because I had a week off on a holiday after working 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week. So they were pretty tough.

- John:* The 300 on the hill was just during the depression wasn't it? It wasn't just up till World War II perhaps? Because a lot of those unemployed people went into service then didn't they?
- Lance:* No, it was like that for years. Yes there were quite a few went to war but there was always a lot of them on the hill waiting for work at the steel works, always, and you didn't know if you were going to get one day or two days, or three days, it was a rotten job anyhow. And then occasionally you would get a permanent job which I was lucky enough to get hold of and I was lucky enough to finish up as I did because you can't get anywhere unless you have got a bit of go in you. I've had a pretty good life, nothing that I regret and always had plenty and had my own place and everything else so we did well. Our family has done well too, all our family, they have all done pretty well. I had Judy and Roger here just recently for an hour. Roger is cracking up. He was falling asleep when he was here and he didn't look real good.
- John:* No he isn't well. It was a fairly long trip.
- Lance:* Yes and he had that heart trouble too so that is not going to help him any now at his age, you don't get over those things properly. You get over them but it always leaves something there that you are battling. They must have a nice place over there.
- John:* It is about half an hour out of Hobart and there is a big shopping centre fairly close and the house overlooks a river. It is nice there, big grounds with lots of trees and mostly gum trees, different varieties of gum trees and lots of birds.
- Lance:* It was a good move Judy made to go to Tassie when she was in the offices in that convict place, Port Arthur. I remember when she went over there and was working there. She looks well.
- John:* She has had a double knee replacement. Got it all over in one go. But you have to do a lot of exercise to make it work. You have to be good and exercise.
- Lance:* At the same time! How game are you, how tough are you? You've got to be tough to get back up on your feet after two knees done at one time. She was brave but she got through it. She evidently knew that she could and took it on. I don't know if there is anything much more I can tell you John.
- John:* I think there is but I think we will have a break.

Lance: When I first met Edie it was at a dance hall and then after we got married we lived in Stokes Lane Bulli until we found out that Edie's mother and father couldn't pay for their house so we went over there to pay off the house and give them a home for the rest of their lives. Early days they lived in Campbell Street at Woonona and then later they went to a forestry job at Newnes Junction where he was in charge of forestry there for several years. Then they came back to Bulli and Jack got a job as a coal miner at the old Bulli mine and that's when I met Edie after that. Her parents were two wonderful people and lived with us until they both died. She died in 1952 and he died about 12 years after retiring from the mine, in 1962. They were very wonderful people. They also had Mr Hawkins's father living at Woonona. He was an Albino with snow white hair and pink eyes, practically blind, and he had a little shop on the main road, you had to step down 2 steps from the street to go into it. He used to sit there all day making kid's toys and sell them but he didn't have toys on display. I'd been in where he made his toys, like little trains and all that sort of thing, all wooden toys. I suppose he would have a bit of a lathe or something but I forget what he used. He didn't do anything else. He lived near Woonona RSL for many years but that was way back when I was only very young because I used to pass his store when I went to school so it was a long way back. That is about as much as I can tell you. Later he committed suicide near the Woonona RSL.

John: Edie's grandfather, the toy maker, didn't he cut his wrists in the bath or something?

Lance I just forget how but he committed suicide but he was fairly old then and I suppose nothing much to live for and no sight properly and he took his life. I can't remember a great deal about that because I was pretty young and it was long before I met Edie of course.

I've learned some more about Edie's family since, there was a write-up in the paper about it. In the early days there were no trains or buses to Wollongong and there used to be a coach run by Mr Bennett from Bulli to Wollongong by coach and 4 horses. There was a railway line that used to run from the mine to the jetty at Bellambi and one day they were coming across when the train hit the coach. Edie's mother was on the coach with two children but she wasn't hurt and the children weren't hurt but the driver was killed and several others put in hospital and I think one of the horses was killed as well. Now that railway line is still there but not in operation and when I drive across it reminds me every time. That's what happened in old days, you had no transport and no way of getting anywhere, only on horse and sulky or horse and coach.

Edie's father Jack Hawkins was a coal miner for many years and her mother Margaret came from Yorkshire in England and they were a very

loving couple. We got on very, very well with them all our lives so that was excellent and we carried on in the old house until it was starting to fall to pieces a bit, it was over 100 years old. I did a little bit of work to it but there was too much to do so I sold it for \$97,000 and bought a brick veneer 3 bedroom house for \$45,000 in Dapto and it was only 3 year old. We sold that house 4 years later for \$110,000 and that's the first time in our lives that we really had any money behind us. We then bought into the retirement village at Tarrawanna where we lived for 10 years before Edie died and she died at 93 so we had a wonderful life really. At the moment I am 95 and I am still driving my car.

My mother was a very, very loving mother and a wonderful person and my father was more strict but it didn't do us any harm. He kept us in line all our lives and if we needed the strap we got it, but it made men and women out of us and we don't regret those days even though they were hard. He worked hard in the mine but he also worked in the hotels on the weekends and afternoons to make extra money because they had 12 children and times were very hard and pay was very poor. Later they bought a business very late in life but they still did alright with it and my mother was still the same happy-go-lucky person and everybody loved her. We had a piano and my father had a steel guitar and we often had sing-a-longs round the piano. My mother and father used to harmonise and sing together and all the family could sing. My sisters were excellent singers and we often had sing-a-longs and had lots of music and that's about all we did have really in our past but it was a good life even though it was hard. My mother would do anything she could to make everybody happy and she could sing lovely as well so we had a good upbringing, a wonderful mother that way that she always made you happy and always made you feel that you were wanted. Not much more that I can tell you. We travelled a lot I believe when my mother and father were young and work was very, very limited, they travelled and lived in Victoria. They first went to Wonthaggi, then Ballarat, Eaglehawk and Bendigo and he worked in a coal mine and they went to about half a dozen other places that I know of until they got to Kurri Kurri where I was born, then they came to Clifton, then Bulli. Stanley was born in a house that was round the cliffs at Clifton and he was named Stanley Clifton. From there we shifted to Woonona for 2 years and then to Bulli for the rest of our lives so it was a very, very good life where we lived in a house that had plenty of fruit trees and we never wanted for fruit because there was about 50 fruit trees on the property. Even though we didn't have much money we always had enough to eat. My father was a coal miner and he was a bandmaster, loved music and was a hard worker. He died at the age of 67 and my mother died at the age of 84.

John: Did they have any interest in politics?

Lance: None. My father was a Mason. He went through the Masonic Lodge and he was in the chair at the Masonic Lodge so that was the only thing that I can tell you that he followed through other than bands, being a bandmaster and playing in brass bands all his life.

John: What about his attitude towards Catholics for example?

Lance: Never worried him, religion or anything it never ever worried him. We were Methodists and yet we went to the Salvation Army for church and then all our family got married in the Methodists church so religion was never a worry in our family.

John: Do you remember going on horse driven sulkies and suchlike?

Lance: My father had a horse and sulky that we used to drive on a Saturday afternoon from Bulli to Port Kembla to the Tom Thumb lagoon to fish. The sulky was one big seat between two big wheels with the pony named Bonnie harnessed into it. There was just one seat where 3 of you could sit. When we finished fishing we used to go across to where the steel works is today and trap diamond sparrows and goldfinches with a little trap and a caller bird and keep them in cages at home. So we did that quite often and it was a special outing to go to Tom Thumb lagoon and then go trapping birds. There was no steel works there in those days just open paddocks. My father, my brother Lionel and I used to trap birds there. It's a long way back and it's a lot of history.

Much later your mother Lucy (Edie's sister) and Edie used to be great friends and this way we were not only relatives but good friends and we used to go to playing cards a lot. Lucy would often ring up and say come over and we will have a game of cards. So we would go across to the lake and play cards with them and just friendship for the afternoon which filled in a few hours and that went on for a good few years. They came to our place as well and I remember one day George (Ransley) was there in his big old blue Ford and he just had a new box put in for the exhaust and he parked it on the footpath and he went out to start it up and there was a huge explosion and everybody in the street came running out and somehow petrol had got into the exhaust and blew it apart and it was a fantastic noise. It really blew up and blew it to pieces and it was brand new one. It was the old Ford with a big heavy bumper bar and on his way home from our place one day he pulled up along the five islands road and he must have pulled up in a little bit of a hurry because two cars behind him piled into him and he got out to have a look and there wasn't anything wrong with the old Ford and they had to tow the other two cars away. It was built like a tank. Yes we had lots of fun with your mother and father and with cars and they didn't have a lot of enjoyment otherwise. But George liked his garden.

John: Which was after they came back to the south coast to live?

Lance: Well they had a house at Bribie Island and they left that and came down here and I did a lot of searching around for them to get a place and eventually they fixed on this one at the lake and we used to go across there quite often to play cards and have an afternoon with them and they came to our place as well so as life went on we kept company with one another a fair bit until our families grew up then time passed and they passed away. It was really good to have the friendship and to have one another that we could go and have a shoulder to rest on.

John: Edie's father, Jack Hawkins, did you know him when he was working in the mine?

Lance: I didn't know him in early days but when he came back to Bulli I knew him when he was working the mine. At 60 you had to retire and at that time they still had a good few years left to pay the house off and they couldn't afford it on the pension so they asked us to come and take over the payments and pay the house off and give them a house for the rest of their lives which we did and that ran into 20-odd years. So they lived with us for 20-odd years and then even after they retired they were there for about 14 years.

John: Did he ever go to the pub? Was he a pub person?

Lance: No. He used to get a flagon (2 pints in a high not wide bottle). At those times you could get a flagon of beer and he would have a drink at home but not much. His son Ernie used to like his beer a lot, he used to live up near Llandilo way and he used to come down occasionally. At one time he got a little bit funny because his mother and father left the house to me and he wanted me to pay him money because of that, but we had taken it over with the understanding that we paid it off and gave them a house for the rest of their lives and his mother had previously given him money but he was still a bit angry about it. Still it got passed off and there was nothing more done about it.

John: So he had some congenital heart problem?

Lance: He did die with a heart problem and he wasn't very old either but I don't know. His wife's name was Burns. Her father was called Bawler Burns and he owned a vineyard. I will tell you why they called him bawler. He had a big grape vineyard at Llandilo one time and a hail storm came and got the whole of his crop that was just ready to harvest – the storm only went through in a small strip – and he just sat in the middle of it and cried and cried so they christened him Bawler Burns. I don't know a great deal

about their family only that they had that vineyard at Llandilo. I used to go to Llandilo to Eve and George Ransley's place on weekends. They would take a picnic basket down into the middle of a paddock and play tennis on a tennis court, just on a Sunday afternoon. One time I was there they said to me "why don't you have a hit?" and I said "I wouldn't play that sissy game". Anyhow I eventually got up and have a go and they said "you should take it up, you'd be good". So when I went home I did. I went to a tennis court and joined and I played C Grade and won the C grade championship the first year and at that time I was 21 year old [1931] and I'd never played tennis in my life before. I won the C grade championship the first year, the B grade championship the second year and the A grade championship the third year and I hadn't picked up a racquet until I was 21. I've still got all my tennis pennants. I used to play at a tennis court behind the Princess Theatre; at one time there were two theatres in Woonona. We had many good times there with George Ransley and Evelyn in Llandilo.

John: You were going there with Edie?

Lance: Yes. At one time I had a horse and sulky myself that I wanted to sell and George Ransley wanted to buy it. The sulky had car tyres on for wheels and it was beautiful. I harnessed the horse and got in the sulky and drove all the way to Penrith in one day. The pony was still flighty when we got to George's place. We got there in one day from Bulli, so George bought the pony and outfit.

John: When would that have been you reckon?

Lance: I couldn't tell you. In around the early 40's anyway because I was married when I was 20 and born 1910 so that's 1930 so it would be round about 1940. Drove it all the way from Bulli and Edie's father went with me and sat in the sulky all the way. He even sat in going up Bulli pass, I walked up to give the horse a bit of a go and he sat in the sulky all the way and she was still shying when we got to George's place. Wonderful little pony it was.

John: You could buy a flagon of beer like a glass flagon?

Lance: No it was a quart bottle. I remember when the man across the road used to get on a binge of beer and he wouldn't go to work for a week. He was a miner and a friend of Jack Hawkins and he would get real bad with beer. Jack Hawkins would know that by the Sunday he would give it up and go back to work on the Monday, but then he would have a full week. So Jack would get a flagon of beer from the pub and go over to this bloke whose name was Seaweed Jones. Jones had a boat and he used to do a lot of fishing so they called him Seaweed Jones. Anyway Jack would get him

and say come on, you've got to go to work tomorrow, so we will go for a walk, and they would walk from Farrell Road Bulli to Bellambi Jetty which is miles. On the way back he would pull this flagon out of his shirt and give it to Seaweed to have a drink and they would sit down and drink the flagon on the beach and on the Monday Seaweed would be back at work again. Jack sometimes went fishing with Jones who had made a boat out of corrugated iron and put a motor in it. One time they were up off Stanwell Park and a bad southerly came up. He didn't know how they were going to get back because they were in this little old boat. And Jack got the fright of his life when Seaweed bent down and took the bung out of the bottom. He let the water come in up to their knees and put the bung back in and then went straight through the breakers onto the beach. It was so heavy with the water he drove it straight onto the beach so he knew what he was doing and never turned a hair. He was a rough old customer but he knew what he was doing of course.

John: Did Ernie Hawkins have a car? I have a photo of him with a car with a tray back.

Lance: I don't know him ever having a car. I've got a photo of him alongside the Ute (utility) that I used to have for fruit. That was the Ute my father owned, it was a 1926 Chev. Ernie's wife was called Florrie (Florence), and they had two girls, very pretty girls, one was called June. She joined the Australian army (not the Women's Army). I have got a photo of her somewhere in uniform.

John: You never heard what happened to them or who they got married to? Do you know anybody that would know, who would know them? Any friends of hers? I did ask Joyce but she lost contact.

Lance: Yes Joyce or Betty Eldridge would know their names. Doonside, that's where they lived, but I don't know the street. I've even just recently thought of going up and trying to find them. Rona, that's Evelyn's daughter (Edie's niece), still lives in Richmond and I've got her address, they told me somebody from that family called on her just recently. She drinks a lot, she likes her grog. She tells her sisters or anybody, if you've got to ring me, ring me very early in the morning because I get full.

John: It's an alcoholic thing that they are really bright first thing in the morning.

Lance: Rona had a big superannuation when she retired she's got money, she is not destitute. She used go on cruises to that French port Noumea, in New Caledonia. She went there several times. All the cruise ships call there on the way. She used to go there regular, she went 5 or 6 times there, and she liked it. I've been there and it's a terrible place, unless you go to a different part where they have the clubs and everything else. She didn't

go to Europe that I know of. When she went for a long holiday one time she got Joyce to fill in for her. She was a clerk on the council and because Joyce filled her job she never lost her super.

Not long ago Rona had a fall in her unit and broke her hip. She was lying on the floor for three days without food or water. She eventually managed to pull her phone off the hook with her walking stick. It was only just this week she started to drive her car again. The hip operation was not real successful, it grates. Talked her into getting mobile so I can ring her for 20 cents instead of \$1.45.

I still keep in touch with Joyce Coles and Betty Eldridge. Betty lives at Bomaderry and Joyce lives at Batehaven and they all send me cards and write to me and I keep in touch. Daphne has gone a little bit off the rails a bit and she has trouble with her mind. She has been up a couple of times to my parties. I've had a couple of parties up here and they've always been invited and they turn up here and come to the parties. I've got videos of them all, I've got about 6 videos.

Lance You go back maybe 4 or 5 years ago there is a big difference in them now and about 5 years ago.

John: Sometimes people don't change for a long time.

Lance: But videos are good to look at and better than photos because you have the live thing. We had artists and all that sort of thing so we've had a ton of fun. I think I've had 5 or 6 parties in the village hall over here. It's a big hall. I've sat 82 down so its pretty big and there are chairs there for 84 so I've had a really good time and enjoyed it and a lot of music and my sister Betty always comes of course and then I've paid for a singer a few times and he's very good but we get all the family together you know and its great.

John: I remember one time you were telling me about SP bookies before the War, how that used to work.

Lance: We used to play poker every Saturday afternoon especially and Sunday afternoon we'd play poker and play pin pool and I was pretty good with pin pool, I made a lot and used to win money.

John: Pin Pool is which sort of pool?

Lance: You have a pin about 2 inches high that stands on all the numbers from 1 to 16 all away round the table they'd be numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 right round to 16. You could have up to 16 players because there were 16 numbered wooden marbles to play with. The 10 pin would be at one end

of the table and the 6 pin at the other and you got that good that you could fire one of the billiard balls and hit the cushion and come back and slam the end of the 10 pin into the 5, you had to knock 15 down if you had the 16 alley – the wooden marble. You would hit the cush – cushion – at the other end, come back and knock down the 5 pin, and then the ball would come down the bottom and knock the 10 pin down in one go. So you would win the pool, the whole lot, but you got so good you could do that, a lot of good players could do that. Otherwise you had to go around the table and if you knocked a 5 pin down you had to knock a 10 pin down and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or whatever. If you had a 16 alley you had to knock 15 down. This is with a billiard cue and billiard balls, but the pins would be all round the table.

John: Instead of potting billiard balls in the holes at the 4 corners.

Lance: Right. Right round is the cush all the way around. There would be pins about 2 inches high just standing there and you fired the red ball at that pin and knocked it down, that's what counted. So it might be a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 pin right up to a 15. The marker, usually the owner, would shoot a marble out of the leather bottle from 1 to 16 so if you got the number 16 alley you had to knock 15 down to win the pool. If you had only ten players there were less marbles in play. So you'd fire down and knock them down in one go sometimes you got that good with it and then you would get the money that everybody put in that paid to play, a one shilling or two shilling pot. The alley bottle bloke would keep a portion of it and the rest would go to the winner. We also used to bet when he was shaking the alleys out. He'd shake the marbles out to me and to you and him and I'd bet you 6 pence that my marble would be bigger than yours so if yours was bigger well you took the money. So this is what you did, you bet on the marbles and then you played the game.

John: To play the game you had to keep the ball in play, you had to knock at least one pin down?

Lance: You couldn't knock too many down or you'd bust, so you had to knock the correct amount down, you had to get 31; so it didn't matter how many pins you knocked down as long as you got 31 without busting. If you had a 16 alley you knocked 15 down in pins to get your 31 score. You couldn't do it in one go all the time, but you could do it. Then we'd play cards and they would bet on racehorses, SP bets, Starting Price bets. Maybe once every two months they would get word from the police to say that they were going to raid the billiard room on a Saturday. So the man that's in charge, the owner, would get someone to sit under a window with a book in his pocket with two or three bets written on it. The policeman would know what went up and he would come and get this bloke and look and yes you've got bets on you, you've been betting. So the bloke would

be taken to the Police Station and get charged and get fined 2 pound or something. The bookmaker would pay the fine and then he would give the bloke, the fall-guy, a pound for doing it. About 2 months later the same thing would happen but with a different bloke copping the arrest and fine. But the owner kept going with his billiard room business and SP bookie business. The local policeman would always let him know beforehand and of course the bookie is paying him all the time too as well.

John: You just get the information on the races from the newspaper?

Lance: The radio. You could phone the bookie or you could go and put the bet there and then. He would write your name down in his book and what price it started. If you phoned you would give the bet over later. After the race you would collect whatever bet there was. Nobody interfered with them because the police knew it was going on plus they'd tell the bookie when they were going to raid him. It was a happy thing with the police and bookmaker. The only thing was the bloke who went to court and got a mark against him for SP betting, a conviction but they didn't care at that time, they got a pound and that was a lot of money so it didn't matter. I never got arrested because I didn't want that mark. The bookie was never charged.

That went on in every billiard room at that time. There were 1, 2, and 3, there were 4 or 5 billiard rooms in Bulli and Woonona; now there are none. Dreamy Winn was the guy in charge at Woonona, and Con Quilkey at Bulli; both did SP booking.

John: Was it the same bookie that was running all of them were they all independent operations?

Lance: At one time they were all independent but then one crowd got hold of the lot, Meades from Coaldale. They had a billiard rooms at Coaldale and Thirroul, then they got one at Fairy Meadow. In later years when things were more up to date and the police more on the ball and everybody was getting charged, they had iron bars on the doors at the Fairy Meadow place to stop the police getting in. But the police broke it down, they smashed through the bars and put him out of business. But that was years later. There is still a tiny bit of SP booking but not much because they go to the TAB now and all the clubs have got TAB. Melbourne Cup day there is an odd bookie or two in the clubs.

John: When you said that one mob acquired all those billiard rooms, did they just buy them out? There weren't any strong-arm tactics?

Lance: Yes, they bought them out, it was a very lucrative business. No strong-arm tactics at all. They were the Meades family from Coaldale. Right

back when I had a fruit run I used to serve them with fruit and vegetables. They had a mixed business in Coaldale and the billiard room as well and the eldest son was the heavyweight boxing champion of Australia. They were a big family but then they got another billiard room at Thirroul and then they went on. Now there are hardly any billiard rooms anywhere. There are still a few in clubs like the billiard tables in clubs and that, but no billiard rooms like there was in that time because it was SP betting and playing for money and all that type of thing. We played for all sorts of money in those days. We used to bet on the marbles when they shook them out of the box and then we'd play the pool and we'd win pool money for playing the pool but there is none of that now.

John: Did you ever play 2-up?

Lance: Yes, they used to play 2-up all the time in the billiard rooms and play poker on Saturdays and Sundays. A lot of poker was played in those days.

John: What particular kind, there are different kinds of poker aren't there?

Lance: Oh well this is the highest hand, like a full pack of cards and I'd bet that my hand was bigger than yours. We used to play all day Sunday and sometimes I've played all night, never gone to bed. One day we were playing at Billy Williams and his wife was away so we all knew one another and we were playing and the most you could kick it was a shilling, you could bet it a shilling and you could kick it a shilling but you couldn't kick it any higher because that was the rules. Anyway this day Billy Williams had a good hand and Mrs Highland and another lady that used to play with us they had a good hand and they are betting and betting and betting against one another, back a shilling, back a shilling until Mrs Highland ran out of money and she said to Billy I've got no more money so I've got to have a look at what you've got and he said I've got 4 Jacks and she said I've got 4 Queens and that was a full pack and that was a hell of a good hand. Anyhow he done his nut and tore the cards up and chucked them out of the window. I had a poker school too at my place in Stokes Lane. I remember one time the next door neighbour was there, Ron Evans and his brother and a few more were all there and we were playing poker and it went all day. They used to eat all the fruit that Edie had there in a bowl but they'd leave money for it. If they ate a biscuit they would leave money for the biscuit. She'd go to bed and I'd keep playing. We played all night this night and in the morning Jock McMann from next door jumped the fence and got his crib tin and went straight to the pit. We'd played all day and all night, and we'd just drink cordial. Whatever there was they would pay for it, they'd put the money there for it.

John: No grog, no cigarettes? Because there is usually an association between them and poker, at least in the movies.

Lance: No. None of that and we used to go to Billy Williams or play at my place and another place up in Pitt Road in the old days. There was also a place at Corrimal that we used to play but it was 2 shillings to bet out there. The woman who ran it was a bit cunning she would take 2 shillings out of every pool to pay for the light she reckoned. But by the end of the night she finished up with all the dough, she was cunning. You don't see poker played now. We used to play it all day Saturday and sometimes all day Sunday as well.

John: There is some international game on TV now.

Lance: I've seen that on TV but I can't follow that properly. They bet on nothing and I haven't seen any good hands in it. A Pair or Jack high or King high will win it. Our game was good hands, Straights and Flushes and Three of a Kind or a Full House. Nothing like that on that TV game and they bet big money too. But we used to play every Sunday, we would go to one or another's places. Now you don't see it. It is a game that has gone right out but we played it and there was always about 8 of us that played and we would play all day.

John: You must have loved it.

Lance: We used to like it. You couldn't bet any more than a shilling but at that time a shilling mounted up because very likely your wage was only 3 pound a week.

John: Did you make a lot of money?

Lance: One night I was down to work on the Dog Watch in which you have to catch the train at 10.30pm, and I went up there to these people's place in Pitt Road to play poker. That night I couldn't do anything wrong, I won, I forget how many pounds, but I won so many pounds and I came home the next morning after work and I chucked the money on the table and Edie said to me "you haven't been to work". She said "you couldn't win that and go to work". I said, I did. I won all that and I went to work. I had one really good night where I won pounds, couldn't do anything wrong but you didn't very often do that. I used to like my cards, I still do, I still like to go and play cards and I still do alright and I think that that is what helps to keep your mind active and ticking over instead of sitting down reading and doing nothing.

John: So you must have a good memory for the cards?

Lance: I have, I could tell every card that was played during a game. I watch what they shoot out, the discards, and especially if they take it up. When

we are playing Euchre and that lady takes it up there and her partner plays the Ace of Hearts and she shoves a spade on and I'll watch that and I'll keep that spade because she will have it for her last card and I might have the Ace of Spades or the King of Spades and I'll keep it because I know that she is going to have another spade most times. So it pays off, you get 2 points instead of one because your memory is ticking over and you are watching what's doing.

John: So you don't have any memory technique. You just see the card and you remember. You don't do anything else?

Lance: No. You have to remember every card that has gone, every card that's played because there is Right and Left Bower and there is Ace and King and whatever and there are only 9 trumps of whatever suit is taken up, so you have to count and watch, you lead a Trump, maybe Right Bower and there are 4 trumps played so you know there is 4 gone and you've got 2 in your hand so that's 6 so you have to watch and just memorise.

John: So obviously you remember the trump cards, do you remember the other cards as well?

Lance: Only the person that takes it up I will, only the person that takes it up because you can't tell with the other people because they've been given a hand that you don't know. But if somebody takes it and they play a card; like say hearts was taken up and you see them throw a spade or a club off, you know they will have two of them so you hang onto it and then they'll play all the trumps and then comes the last card which was a spade and you've got it. But you've got to memorise the cards and watch. I've got a good memory for cards. I suppose it keeps you that way when you keep playing, keeps your mind active and ticking over.

I still play Euchre every Sunday at the Unanderra Club. You pay \$2.50 to play cards. The winner gets \$30 and the runner-up \$15. I'm a member of 4-5 clubs. The Unanderra is a very progressive club, they own the big hotel at Thirroul and if you join on your birthday you get your ticket free. Every Sunday the pokie jackpot goes from \$500 to \$2500 and Christmas dinner is only \$28.50. If you manage to visit the club at least 30 times in a year you get invited to a free Christmas dinner for card players, free prawns, and free live music. If you play every week over a year they give you \$50 worth of vouchers to spend there or in Woolies. The annual championship card winner gets \$100 – I've won that twice. The runner up \$50, which I've won once. All for a days fun with cards! I also get dinner/lunch at Wests Leagues Club, pie and vegies, for \$2, and smorgasbord lunch is only \$3.90 (for members). Most people play Pokies, especially at Wests, but there are a few card players. The pokies built the clubs but I don't play them. Different clubs pay different percentages and

some alter them to get more so you can't win. But Nola's husband, Jimmy Cambourn, is very lucky at the clubs. He put \$1 in at Wests and pulled \$120.

John: Mum used to do crosswords and puzzles and things like that, as well as the knitting. Any knitters in your family?

Lance: Nola was the most fantastic knitter and crochet, Nancy too. Made all her own knitting and things. Nola finished up she made a pledge to her granddaughters she would give them a big bundle of crochet work when they turned 16. She also used to do what they call tatting and it is very, very hard to do. They were very clever with their hands my two girls.

My mother used to sew, she never used to do any knitting or anything. She made clothes with a sewing machine, one of those old treadle machines. But she used to make clothes out of all the old flour bags and everything else.

Edie did that when we were married and she used to make underclothes out of flour bags for the two kids that lived two doors up as well, Melba Murphy and her sister. Times have changed for the better of course, everybody has got modern things and you don't have to do that now. People have enough money now that they can go and buy what they want and now of course, retired people are better off, they get the pension and some have super so it is much better than the old days. We don't want those old days back. What do you do with yourself?

John: I am on the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties which is a voluntary organization and we have two spokespeople who comment on legislation and stuff relating to civil liberties. For example freedom of speech is a civil liberty. I am the secretary and we have monthly meetings of the Executive and also we have a website on the internet which I look after and post documents and press releases.

Lance: Only yesterday I heard a program about the internet on the radio and I listened to it for about an hour and it was very interesting. I have never bothered about computers. On Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock at Bulli, there is an open morning on computers and I am going. If I can grasp it quick enough I will buy one. Even know, even if I only have 6 months, 9 months or a year of it, I can grasp it quick enough.

John: Just give it a little bit of time. You don't have to grasp it quickly but it's much easier than it was 10 years ago I must say. But there is a fantastic amount of information on the internet and it is just incredible.

Lance: When you get a computer and you turn it on, how do you get onto the internet?

John: Through your phone or through cable if you have got cable for the TV, but you can connect it just through your phone.

Lance: That's what I've heard them say. They try to ring somebody up and they said we can't get him because he is on the computer!

John: Yes, if they are connected through their phone the phone might ring out or give an engaged signal. If you just do it through the phone, you need to have an internet service provider like Telstra has Big Pond which is the biggest one and you just pay them a monthly fee, so it is \$25 or \$30 a month. When you are connected you get two functions, you can get email where you can just type messages and send and receive them just like letters but without costing you a stamp. And secondly you can look at the worldwide web which allows you to look up newspapers, magazines photos and stuff. You can't look at movies because it's not fast enough to do that, but the web has libraries of information. The main way you access the information is by what they call a search engine, so you type in your name for example, you can see if your name was on the net, which people do, just type in Lance Brown, and put it into the search engine and it looks to see if your name has come up anywhere. And if your name was in the newspaper or you'd been mentioned in a news item or something like that, it is amazing how often people's names come up. There are literally billions of bits of information on there and the search engines are very, very fast and they respond almost instantly. There is a lot of history for example and encyclopaedias and general and specific information and atlas's and history, you can look up a particular item of history you just type in the words.

Lance: I could play cards with other people on it.

John: Yes you can play cards. You can play just about any game that you can put on a computer screen for example chess and so on. Anywhere in the world. There is a lot of that and then teenagers and younger people play computer games with mediaeval settings and hundreds of people can be playing from all over the world and they each have their own player in the game who does something or fights people or builds a city or something like that. Hundreds of people can play on the net in live time so it has got an amazing capacity. It is well worth having a go and you don't have to learn it instantly, a lot of it is just a lot of tricks you learn and the best thing is to have someone to show you.

Lance: I know my granddaughter in Perth, her husband he spends about 3 parts of his time on it. If Nola and Jim want to get a flight anywhere he gets it.

John: That's right. Yes that's how I got my flights. You can book flights like Virgin Blue and Jetstar.

Lance: He got them flights recently, they are going to Perth in May and then they are coming down here in April so they are going to have a week with me and he got the flights to Perth and then they are coming back here to Nola's when the wedding is over and then go up to the Cape, right up in the North and have a run up there with Nola and Jim. Nola came down here from Brisbane one time for \$39.

John: Sometimes it's amazing. You can book travel and you can buy meals over it, you can buy books and CDs and there is a site called E-bay, it is the best known site where people sell second hand things and it's just like an auction arrangement you just put in a bid and so on. In Brisbane, I think it's the same at other places, like the major libraries you can just order books over the net and then they send you an email when the book is ready for you to pick up. Real estate is really into it, they will put a house up for sale and they will give you a photo of the house from the outside and photos inside the house. You get some idea of what it is like before you go so you can look up all their houses that they list in a particular area and so on. And the other thing is you can bank and you can buy things but you need to use a credit card to buy anything. Credit cards are about the only way you can buy things on the net.

Lance: It has a lot going for it. But one thing I won't have is a credit card. It might be the only way to buy if you are on the net, but I am not on it. I have seen too much happen with them. Betty Ransley had a credit card, the back of their place is a reserve and there are all trees and everything. She went out to the letter box and Stan was in the garage and didn't see anybody but a few days later they went shopping and tried to use the credit card and they found \$2,000 had gone out of it. Betty didn't even know the pin number, only Stan knew it and yet they got \$2,000 out of the bank account. The bank had to give it to them back, but just shows you what can happen. They sent me a couple of cards from the bank but I just got rid of them, I always put my hand in my pocket and pay cash.

John: There is a lot to be said for cash.

Lance: Well you can do a lot with it. You can get better prices and you instantly have got it there. But what makes me mad is if I get in a line of people at the Woolworths checkout and a few of them are paying by credit cards and they hold you up.

John: My father's uncle George who married Ev, did you know him very well? Anything you remember about him, he was a very keen fisherman wasn't he?

Lance: He had a poultry farm and used to send the eggs to market. At that time you had to clean and wash all the eggs or they'd give you a bill for having dirty eggs. He would sometimes get a bill back for dirty eggs after washing and sending them so he used to have a couple of customers that bought them at the back door. But he had to be very careful because they had a bloke from the Egg Board spying on them, sitting in a car up the road watching to see if he sold eggs. If he was caught he would get fined. But now of course they have abolished the Egg Board which is the best thing they ever did, it was only a job for the boys. There were a couple of egg farmers they sent broke telling them what to do with all their eggs and the poultry and everything but now of course its free for what they want to do with them. They do what they please and send them out much better.

But George liked fishing as well, he used to go and catch a lot of mullet on the Hawkesbury River in his early days. He was a very quiet type of a fellow. He used to go and rob wild bee hives in trees quite a bit. One time he got caught with the bees and had to put a bag over the horses head and bolt with it because they got up into a hole in his hat and stung him all around the head and gave him a hell of a time.

John: I wouldn't have thought there would be many bees around in the bush near Schofield? And near Llandilo?

Lance: At that time there was. Yes. There were quite a lot of beehives in those early days. People used to rob them and sometimes put them into hives but they would rob them for the honey mostly. But George and his mate got a bad batch this time and they were robber bees and they took to them and they had hell's own job to get away. They had a couple of horses to get away but they got stung pretty bad. I used to go up there to play tennis a lot but other than the egg farm I don't know much else that was their life. There wasn't much else they did only played tennis.

John: Did they have fruit trees, lime trees?

Lance: He didn't have many fruit trees, not many, an odd one or two and a good orange tree at the back I remember.

John: He used to work on the roads I believe at one stage. And I remember him as always joking all the time.

Lance: Early days he worked the roads. A very quiet fellow. It was an out of the way place, there wasn't much there when he lived there. I went there a

few times. I went there pretty later on in life because I used to go up and play bowls in the next town, green bowls. But the first time I played tennis there I was pretty young and they used to have a picnic every Sunday, but other than that they had nothing.

John: They had a horse and sulky too. There is a photo of them with the girls, George, Ev and the girls in a paddock with the sulky.

Lance: They bought my sulky. They didn't have one before that. They must have had one because they were robbing beehives and had a horse and sulky and that's when the bees took to them and they had to get away and Ev's father Jack Hawkins was with them. But other than that at Llandilo there was nothing there. One shop I think across the road, one shop and a school and nothing much.

John: And a Post Office.

Lance: There was nothing else there. We used to go quite regular. Of course we had a car then. I remember the first time I ever went I hired a car off a bloke I had done a couple of jobs for and he gave it to me real cheap and it was a Vauxhall open tourer and Edie and I drove up in that. That is the first time I ever went to Llandilo.

John: Do you remember when that was?

Lance: Crikey no. That would be 30's, about 1935. Later on I bought the first Holden and that was in the 40's wasn't it. The first Holden that ever came out. I bought one off Purnell Motors in Arncliffe and I paid it off on time payment and I made up my mind that I would never, ever, have time payment ever in my life again, and I never had. It was only time payment I ever had and I never had one in all my life since. The day Nancy and Nola got married on their wedding day I made them promise me that they wouldn't have time payment because when you came home with the payments paid docket you could say well that's mine, I own it, and so they never had.

John: But they borrowed money to buy houses didn't they?

Lance: They both own their own homes and they paid them off yes. Not ordinary things for time payment, cars and fridges, but they bought the house each for sure, they had to pay it off. No, waited till they had enough money to buy carpets and all that type of thing and they had the money and then paid for it and finish, which was a good thing.

I remember a man from Walton's in Wollongong who used to come around on a horse and sulky to my sister's place and he would have big

bags of merchandise and he would come to the door and he'd say, here you are, have whatever you like and put it on the bill, no money. But one day I said to Shirley, get your bill, and let me have a look at it. She got the bill out and I said, have a look you are paying 20% interest, and she nearly fell over. From that day on she scrapped it and finished because she was paying 20% interest on all the stuff she was adding on and adding on. So didn't matter if she wasn't paying any money at the time but by the time she had paid for everything she'd used a lot of money. So she stopped from that day. 20% was a lot of interest in those days.

John: Well that's what you pay on a credit card if you don't pay the credit card off each month, about 18%-20%.

Lance: But I listen to people with credit cards, they have about 3 credit cards, they'll owe money on this one and they will lend the money on the other one and they are in up to their neck. Then it comes around to paying time and they wonder what they are going to do and how they are going to get out of it. They could perhaps be good at times but they can also be bad and can get you into a lot of trouble.

John: I think 50-60% of people with credit cards pay them off each month so they never pay any interest at all. But where the credit card companies make their money is the people that pay interest and don't pay it off and keep adding to it just like time payment, and they keep adding on.

Lance: I knew people at Bulli, Henry and Phil Young and they'd start buying toys for Xmas in maybe in June or July or something and they would keep paying and paying and then by the time it got to Xmas there would be more coming in and they would be in debt and then they would be up to paying again and never out of debt. Not a good way to live. Like a dog chasing its tail you are never in front, in trouble all the time. I've never been that way. That first car learnt me a lesson so I've never since that, I've never had a time payment and I've paid cash all the time for anything even though I didn't have much money. We never had any money behind us much until we sold our house at Bulli and then we bought that one at Dapto for \$48,000 and sold it for \$110,000 in 4 years. Well that was the only time that we really had had any money. But we have never been in debt always kept our head above water. We started off with second hand furniture when we were married, we went up to the second hand shop and bought a table and chairs and a bed that we kept until we had saved enough money to buy new ones and then we bought new stuff and replaced it and we did that all our lives. I remember the day I finished working for Bob Pollard. He said to me "Lance, you can buy anything you like in the store for cost price". So I bought this table and chairs and that buffet and two beds and I bought everything that I wanted so that it would all be new.

John: You buy a new car every few years?

Lance: I never kept a car, one time I never kept a car longer than 2 years, sometimes only 12 months but I never ever in my life had a motorcar in for repairs in a garage. I had new tyres all the time, I had new batteries so sometimes I would lose a \$1,000, sometimes I would lose \$2,000 but I never had a car for repair and I always had a year's warranty or 5 year warranty or whatever and new tyres. I wasn't out of pocket doing that. I wasn't in those days anyhow. Now it is a different matter, they are too dear.

John: They've dropped their price secondhand; it depends on the car make.

Lance: Now if you want to you can buy a car for about \$12,000 or \$14,000 for a small car and they are pretty good too. Get you where you want to go quick and lively and pretty good on petrol. I bought this one I've got now I said to Edie one day oh bugger it we have only a few years left I might only drive for another year, but I'll buy a new car and we will enjoy it and then I'll give it to Nancy or whoever wants it or half each and see who wants it the most. Anyway Nola's car is 12 year old and I was going to give it to her but here I am into my 5th year still driving, into my 5th year I bought it in the year 2000.

John: What model is that?

Lance: It's a Lancer, Mitsubishi. So I am going to have a year's driving and now I am into my 5th year with it so maybe they won't want it now. Nola's car is 12 or 14 year old. Nancy just bought a new one when they retired and sold off everything, when they sold up and went into a retirement village, I went and did all the spadework here and got the best price. It was in Sydney, I went to all these blokes all around here and then Nancy went to Blake and Spade. She wanted a Mitsubishi Lancer and the lowest price I could get was \$20,000 with everything. So she went to the dealer down there and she said I've come to see about your best price you can give me on a Mitsubishi Lancer. So he went and had a look and he said we have got specials on this weekend, and I have a very special price I can give you, he said, \$22,500. Nancy said I am sorry, and he said why. She said my father can get one up at Wollongong for \$20,000 so he went away and he came back and talking to his boss and he said it is going to hurt us but we will let you have one. So she got it for the price down there when she can get all the service and everything. They have got it new so they are set up too. Only in the last year they have got it.

John: So they have got into a retirement village?

Lance: Yes they are in a retirement village too. Nancy's 70, she is over 70. Anyhow she hasn't had the best health and Ken hasn't had the best health so they went into a retirement village where they didn't pay the full amount because they want to keep money so they could go anywhere they wanted and spend everything. Both their kids have their own homes. So they paid so much but they lose a fair amount of money in the long run. But they will have plenty of money in their pocket for the rest of their lives while they are alive. I didn't do that, I pay the full amount here, paid \$134,000 when I came in here 11 years ago, so my kids will get \$134,000.

John: It's not indexed? No account for inflation since then?

Lance: No, but I still live here and they are good units with all the gear. Anything breaks down they fix it for free, fridge, washing machine, clothes dryer, blinds, light bulbs everything, wash your windows, do your lawns, all for \$113 rent a fortnight initially, now \$121 because of the old age pension increase. I don't pay any rates, the only thing I pay is the phone bill and electricity, so it's pretty good. A lot of retirement villages take money off you but this mob here gives you the full amount back. So it's pretty good when you sum it all up. Come and go as you like and they look after it.

John: What about when there was the big rain, was there any trouble?

Lance: No. The creek came right up to the fence but it never caused any trouble. There was a lot of rain that time, but we didn't have any trouble so that was good. I didn't hear of hardly any residents that had any trouble even leaking either. I am alright here because I have the unit up above me. I don't hear anybody here. They are pretty soundproof, pretty good.

John: Warm in winter as well?

Lance: Its good in the winter because I have sun all the way round and in the summer I just open that back door and a beautiful breeze comes through. I wouldn't swap this unit for any unit in the village, it is a really good one. \$113 a fortnight is not bad you know for them to do everything. I think it's alright, I don't pay any rates. Rates are pretty high now and we don't pay any water rates and we don't pay any other rates, land rates, they pay all of that. Don't matter what breaks down they fix it, even light bulbs. Pretty good. Not many of our family left now. There was 12 in our family and there are only 4 of us left.

John: Who were those, can you just run through them? The whole family?

Lance: There is Lionel, Dulcie, Lance, Doris Lorraine and Stanley, Elsie, Jack, Myrtle, Valerie, Betty, Shirley, Nancy. That is a big family. There are

only 4 of us left, Lance, Betty, Valerie and Shirley. Shirley's daughter rings me from Lismore maybe once every fortnight and she will talk anything from an hour to 2 hours, she rang me last Wednesday and she talked from 5 to 8 till 5 past 10.

John: What about?

Lance: All about family. Her family and my family and she is having a bit of trouble with her son at the moment, not trouble, he is a schoolmaster and he has a car and his own home. He bought a motorbike and he was out on a trip with a band of motorbikes and they had a bad accident and a couple of them got badly hurt and he missed it by a hairs breath. So he came home and he was talking to his brother and crying about it and she had a bit of a talk about it with him and told him it was about time he sold the motorbike, that he would be next. So he went home and made up his mind to sell it and get rid of it because it is too dangerous and to buy a small car instead and I said I think that is good thinking. Because you can't ride motorbikes these days with the traffic that is on the road. There was 3 killed in the last 3 weeks on Macquarie pass with motorbikes and speed or going too fast round a bend and hitting a car or truck or something, but there is no protection with them. Cars are so cheap, little cars are so cheap these days that you buy one for the price of a motorbike and you have a little bit of protection haven't you. None whatever on a motorbike. Anyhow he has decided to sell and his wife is expecting too. She said it wouldn't have been nice if it had been you and your wife expecting and no father so it made him stop and think. He is a nice boy, a level headed boy. She has been a school teacher and he's a headmaster. He was out at Walgett for 4 years and it's pretty rough out there and he had to do 4 years out in the country to get a decent job. He went back to Walgett for a second term to get a headmasters job so after he got back they offered him a job on the border of Queensland and New South Wales, at Tweed Heads. He lives at Mooloolaba, so they offered him a job and he said well I will take a job with the young ones; I don't want 12 and 14 year olds any more, I am fed up with them. So he is headmaster now, he's getting headmaster's pay but he is teaching the young ones and he likes it better. He is quite a nice lad and he has got his own home and they bought another home somewhere up in Queensland that they are paying off for a rainy day. This is what happens these days although the Government's have bugged it a bit with this tax on buying extra places and they have land tax on and so they are stopping it a bit. I don't know why, because people are preparing for their rainy days and now the NSW Government wants to stop it.

John: They always want more money. From what I can hear, Carr will probably withdraw the extra land tax.

- Lance:* What is wrong they are after more money all the time. He said he will but by that time he'll have enough money for what he wants so he is laughing all the way to the bank. He's done the damage but I don't know what they will do with him, he's caused a lot of bother. Myself I don't think Carr has done a good job. That tax has crippled a lot of people including Peter, my granddaughter's husband he is a panel beater down here. They have got their own business so they have got no super so they decided to buy – there are 3 of them in the business – so they decided to buy a house, one at a time, pay it off and have it for super for each one when they fold up at 65. Now what happens this bloody tax comes in so that will hit them.
- John:* Well they should be alright if it's withdrawn.
- Lance:* Yes but in the meantime he has hidden the money. It is coming out of their business all the time and the 3 of them have to get paid.
- John:* There is a national campaign against land tax. All the State Governments have made a mint out of it.
- Lance:* I haven't grasped properly what's going on with the Prime Minister and the Treasurer with all the States. They reckoned they signed papers for some agreement on GST and now they are reneging on it so there is this big hullabaloo because Peter Beattie and them are calling them liars, straight out. They said they are liars so it is not going to do much good if that's the way is things are going to carry on to run our country and then tell me this, why are they selling Telstra?
- John:* For ideological reasons. The Liberals always want to privatise everything. They privatise it and then they sell it to their business mates and then their business mates give them money so that they can get back into office at the next election.
- Lance:* But when a business is making \$9 billion a year why would you want to sell it when you've hospitals and everything that have got no money?
- John:* I agree with you. But its ideological. It's a short term, a one-off bonanza for them. They hope to get \$30 billion or so which they will use to pay off some of the debt and then they'll spend the rest on pork barrelling.
- Lance:* And then they will crow about it but they don't say anything about the \$9 billion that it is making a year that they could give to hospitals.
- John:* They want to privatise the hospital system like America, that's the way it's going. And the US free trade agreement makes everything much harder in dealing with the Americans.

Lance: That's the end of it if they do if they privatise hospitals. And we are going to have to put up with them for 4 years? I think he will do so much in that term that they will kick him out.

John: Well 3 more years. There is a good chance for Labor especially with the Industrial Relations. When Howard introduced their first Industrial Relations Bill, the Workplace Relations Bill, they made it much harder for Unions to get reasonable wage agreements and conditions and stuff. If they go with these new Industrial Relations proposals that they are talking about it would make it just that much harder again and from Howard's point of view I think there is a real risk to alienate a lot of people. I mean first they will go softly, softly, but it will soon become apparent that more and more profits are going to corporations and to the shareholders and less and less of the income is going to the workers and the workers have to work longer and longer hours and they get less money. And if they complain then there won't be any kind of safety net, the Industrial Relations Commission.

Lance: It is the saddest day for Australia that they got control of Parliament fully, the saddest day for Australia.

John: Absolutely.

Lance: Ever. They have no opposition now to anything that they want to do. They will go and do it and he is going to do a fair bit and he is going to get into trouble too. By the time his term is up he will want to get out anyhow because he has been there too long. I think that by the time he is gone he will be have caused a lot of trouble. At my age I have nothing really to worry about but the young ones coming on have. He stepped out of line with all the States as well and none of them can see eye to eye with him. But he is telling lies.

John: Well the States are all Labor. Howard has always told lies. And he gets away with it.

Lance: He is always telling lies, that is the trouble. Well he is so clever that he turns it around to his own benefit. Same as he did with the kids overboard and all those things, he turns it around and gets away with it. Occasionally that bloke on the Channel 2 talk back program gives him a bit of hurry up.

John: Kerry O'Brien on the ABC 7.30 report.

Lance: Yes. He had Howard very uncomfortable the last time he spoke to him, very uncomfortable, he was very pleased to get off, but nothing much they can do about him now. They've got him, they are stuck with him, and the

worst part is that nobody can do anything now to stop him. Only people power if they are strong enough to rise up and have a go at him.

John: I think people will if he goes too far but the question is how far. He will try and take it to the brink but not so that it causes riots in the streets.

Lance: And he will have an answer.

John: So which of them do you reckon will be the next Prime Minister, Costello or whatever? Who would do the least damage do you reckon?

Lance: Well if Costello gets in the first thing he will do is say sorry to the black people and that will cost the country a lot of money. The very first thing he will do. Well they will put in for a lot more claims than what they have done in the past.

John: No, it doesn't work like that I don't think.

Lance: Don't you think so?

John: No. Don't think so.

Lance: I thought that is what would happen because they are all the time making claims and they are getting the wrong people at the head of them. They haven't really had anybody that would lead them on properly with all the money that they get from the Government; all they've done is thieve the money. This fellow that was just put out recently?

John: Sugar Ray Robinson?

Lance: No the one before – Robinson is one of them, then there is another one that just got put out of ATSIC. He went overseas with his wife and he has got rid of millions of dollars that should have gone into housing and stuff like that for the people. They sacked him anyhow and he was caught in a brawl in a pub too.

John: Geoff Clark.

Lance: Well he has squandered millions of dollars belonging to the people instead of giving it to the people.

John: I don't think that has been proven though. I mean people have made allegations but if he actually stolen something then he would be up before the Court. Like he went through a court case recently and the charges against him were dismissed.

Lance: But he was up for brawl in a hotel for which he was charged with and then he was up for spending money overseas with his wife and he paid it back so he has never done the right thing with funds belonging to taxpayers.

John: That was just a few thousand dollars.

Lance: Oh a good many thousand dollars, hundreds of thousands of dollars or something. A lot of money and then down here on the South Coast we had another fellow that was running the Aborigine part of it and he put in to have an X-ray machine but it was never ever bought but the cheque was paid. So they are the sort of things that they have got to stop. They have got to get somebody who will handle the money for the Aborigine people that will give them homes, that will give them a decent living and that type of thing and instead of them taking it.

John: There has been a bit of petty corruption here and there but it's everywhere. The Aboriginal organisations are the most scrutinised and get the most publicity but when the Government does much worse things it is ignored. Like the Howard Government heritage fund they had before the last election. They said they would give millions of dollars to the bush to fund worthwhile bush projects, well when the audit came in at the end of that, there was \$2 million missing. Yes, two million dollars missing and they couldn't account for it.

Lance: So they never ever found it?

John: No. And that just gets a mention one day in the news and then it's gone because it is not Aboriginal. It is OK for the white guys to do it but not for the Aborigines and like that money they were spending last year, they called it "Regional Development", it was just a pork barrel for National Party seats. Actually not just for National Party seats but also for marginal Liberal seats which were actually in the city. They called it Regional Development but a lot of the seats were in the City. And again the heritage railway on the Gold Coast, did you hear about that? They gave them \$5 million to start it up under this fund but it was just well-meaning people who had no idea how to run that kind of a tourist railway. They renovated these old steam engines and stuff and then they had a big derailment and the whole thing has just collapsed. It collapsed a year or two ago and they had all these creditors and then last year before the election they gave them more money, they gave them a few hundred thousand dollars more, just throwing good money after bad, but it was all electioneering stuff you know. There are just endless examples where they were spending hundreds of millions of dollars on pork barrelling. There was another one that was a cattle yard somewhere in some dying country town and a country hall and so on. Instead of spending money on

railways and roads, good infrastructure, they spend this money so they can get back into office.

Lance: Winning votes. It is pretty bad and now they have got full control and I don't know where it is going to finish. I don't think the bloke that is head of Labour will be there very long. I think that within 6 months there will be an attack on him.

John: Kim Beazley. I think a year because the people who want to go against him, they need to get some experience that is the only thing.

Lance: Yes. There is a couple there who look bright but they have got to get the numbers. They have to get the amount of people behind them before they can move but I think there will be a move against him before – maybe 12 months, but I think it will. He has had a couple of elections and he's done no good. I can't see that he can improve with his age, improve to go up as high he will have to be.

John: It depends how he goes but if he is polling well it will be hard to remove him. If he'd changed it might be different but he's just the same as he always was whereas when Howard came back after losing but he learnt from his mistakes, unfortunately.

Lance: Yes and we are going to suffer for it. The next few years will be pretty hard with him, he will get rid of a lot. He will do a lot of damage in those few years, then he will get out. He will, he won't stay the full term, he is too old now.

John: He will get out before he loses, maybe. But he loves it, he loves being there. I think he will be really tempted to stay until he is kicked out. He is fit.

Lance: Well I am the other way, I think 2 years will see him gone because he won't have time with his wife and enjoy himself because he is 65 now. Yes he is fit; he walks all the time I know that. What sort of a life have they had?

John: They are both political animals and he wouldn't be interested in anything else except politics. I reckon he will stay there as long as he can and Peter Costello can go jump.

Lance: Costello will bite his fingernails to the bone. I bet he could punch him in the nose.

John: I think Costello is the second longest serving Treasury in Australian history now. I think Howard, if he could, would try and beat Menzies I

reckon. If he thought he could get away with it he would try to go longer than Menzies, 25 years or something.

Lance: He won't do that.

John: No he won't do that but he wants to be the second longest. I think he is almost the second longest now. He is longer than Hawke.

Lance: Somebody was telling me one day that one of his sons got a big prime job in America. This gets me, they have just given a job to another fellow I will think of his name in a minute, he had a beard, Gareth Evans. \$370,000 a year no tax, an overseas job. Holy hell you know the people in Australia are paying some money to Parliament and we have more Parliamentarians in Australia than in any other country in the world.

John: But try and change it.

Lance: You can't because there is too much money in it. They are all getting too much money out of it. I think you only have to be there 7 years I think and you are on a full pension.

John: Latham at least pulled them back a bit on super.

Lance: If he'd a stayed in a bit longer he'd a got a few things done. He was going to sell Kirribilli House which if the Government doesn't use it, why should you keep it? Now we have a Prime Minister living in it instead of living in the Lodge and flying to Canberra every day.

John: And not just that, like he has got all his staff who shuffle back and forth between Sydney and Canberra, bringing documents to sign and meetings and stuff; it costs taxpayers a fortune. Howard likes that harbourside view.

Lance: Hell, people are paying, paying through the neck. That is what that Labor leader was going to do, Latham was going to do something about that but unfortunately he got sick. I think if they had given him time he might have been alright but he got sick anyhow and that finished that. I think a lot of it was to do with the pressure of the job. Now they haven't got anybody that is standing out. They have got a couple in the wings that look promising. I like that ginger headed woman, she's a lady.

John: Julia Gillard. The one that was going to run then withdrew. Yes, she is good value.

Lance: I think that eventually they she will put in a bid eventually. She stood up to that bloke that they found out had a child and abandoned it, you know.

John: Tony Abbott.

Lance: Yes, Abbott. Well she had a debate with him and she killed him. Rode him into the ground. I thought she was good but there again she needs time, time to get experience. I think she will have a go, she will be one that will have a go, there might be another one that was going to have a go too and he couldn't get the numbers either.

John: Kevin Rudd. But Kim Beazley thinks he is staying there as leader.

Lance: That bloke won't stay there.

John: The trouble is the caucus were all so traumatised by losing last year with Latham that they thought now we will play it safe and we will have Kim back again. I don't know if they are game to have someone else for a while.

Lance: No, not for a while. It will be 6 or 12 months and then there will be a move. I saw Beazley's photo there on the TV the other night and it said, 'are you in or just keeping the seat warm?'. That's what I think, he is keeping the seat warm. But they are going to have no say for 4 years, they will have a say but they won't be able to win any battles. That little shrimp will have all his own way.

John: What about your brothers and sisters, what did they do?

Lance: My eldest brother, Lionel, he was very influential; he started off with an ice run he bought off Streets, selling ice by the block to the house when everybody had an ice box. Then he worked it up and more people got ice boxes and then he got a bigger run and then it got too big so he sold half the run to somebody else and then supplied the bloke with ice. Then later on fridges came in and of course that finished the ice so he had to close all that down. He lent some money to a bloke that had taxis at Bulli on provision they had to pay the money back or he took the taxis. So they paid half it back and didn't pay the rest so he took the 3 cabs and they all were very good to him and he got drivers and run them. Then another time he lent money to a man who had a grocery business in the Wollongong Showground, it was a very big business and he was a gambler and the banks wouldn't lend him any money so Lionel lent him money with the provision that if he didn't pay it back he took the business. So he paid half of that back and never paid the rest so Lionel took the business and it was a very lucrative business, a mixed grocery business before self-serve came in. When he heard that self-serve was going to start up he sold out of the mixed grocery. Everything he touched turned to gold. Then he had another fellow with a confectionary business and he

finished up with that. Later the Bulli brickyards started with lots of people putting money in because they were going to build a brick house. The Bulli brickyards were supposed to have very good clay and everything else but when it got to the stage where the machinery was coming from overseas, word went round that the clay wasn't any good. So all the little people sold out and who bought them but the 3 main blokes that started the business, my brother and a bloke Newman and a bloke Jack that owned the Bulli hotel. So they bought all the shares, so then it turns out that it's the best clay in Australia!

John: They started the rumour?

Lance: Yes. So then BHP came into it and got into the business as well. After quite a few years Lionel is making money right, left and centre and he put lots of money into one of those bottom-of-the-harbour schemes that they set up to beat the Government with tax. When the government found out about it he withdrew his money and gave eight of his children \$67,000 each, and he still had the capital! Anyhow he went on then, I remember him telling me one day when I was having a drink with him, the Westpac Bank came and said Lionel there is a bloke over the back of the brickyards of Mossvale wants a lend of \$100,000 and we haven't got it to give him at the moment can you lend it to him? So he lent the bank \$100,000 to lend this bloke, he got 17% and the bank got 20%, so they got 3% on the money they were lending this bloke so that was paid back. Then they rang him and said we've got a full big block of units at Surfers Paradise at lock up stage but the bloke has gone broke and we've got control of him. Are you interested? So he went up and he had a look and he bought 3, they were gifts with money, already just carpeted and everything and walk into it. So he sold 2 a few months later and made a huge amount of money and he kept one for many years and he sold it for a huge amount of money so everything he touched turned to gold. When he died at 84 he had 8 million to spend between his kids. His wife had plenty of course and then she died and the kids got that as well so they are all pretty wealthy lot. But he was the only one in our family that ever had any money. The rest of our family have all been hard workers and got their own home and that is it but he had lots of money. Well 8 million that he finished up with and he paid \$120,000 for his car, he said that was tax, so how much money did he have? His wife had a lot as well. His kids have got it all now. But he is the only one that really got into any money in our family all the rest struggled to get a house and live but he was wealthy, very wealthy.

John: What did the other ones do? What sort of work did they do?

Lance: Jackey had a garage at Bulli and he was a mechanic but he died young. Stan had health troubles, he never ever really worked much at all and there were only 4 boys so the rest were girls and all got married. None of them

have been very wealthy. Lionel was the only one that really got much money.

John: And were they all like you, they left school early?

Lance: Yes, they all did. They all left school early and never had any apprenticeships or anything. Jack was very, very clever mechanically. He had a garage at Bulli but he was too good a bloke, he used to give everything away but he was a hell of a good bloke and very clever with mechanical things, welding and all that type of thing. But none of us ever had money. Because there were 8 girls and they all left school young and got married. So there was no money and our parents were poor so when my mother and father died all us kids had to pay to bury them. They never had any money, never had enough money to bury them. They were a happy family and got through life and that's as far as it's got, I suppose I am as well off as any of the rest of them. I have got a sister Valerie in Victoria that did very well and she got a payout for an injury she had and then they invested money and she has always been able to put her hand on money whenever needed. Val has always seemed to have some money, money behind her. Her husband was a painter. He painted houses and he went into the army, he was in the air force but he never went away from Darwin, he was in the air force.

John: So you never had any association with the RSL or anything like that?

Lance: No. Not to that extent.

John: Did you know my mother Lucy much when she was young or not? When you first met Edie did you see much of her mother, my nana? When you first met Edie in the late 20's or 30's?

Lance: No we didn't have much association at all. None. I remember your mother lived at Narrandera and we had your sister Judy for about 6 months while she had another baby, Marjorie. We had Judy at our place at Bulli, a long time ago now. We did a lot of that over our life, Jimmy's mother was sick and in hospital and we took their baby for 6 months or best part of it and looked after her. When my sister Myrtle was having her first child we took her and George in and looked after them and they lived with us for a long, long time and she had her first baby at our place. Then there was a couple at the steel works who had nowhere to live. She had one arm off and he had just got a job there and we gave them half of our place for 6 months till they got a house. When my sister Lorrie (Lorraine) got married her husband got married in my suit and they lived with us for about 12 months. So all our lives we have looked after somebody or helped somebody and did good turns for different parts of the family and different people. But it is nice to think that you've been able to.

John: There seemed to be a lot more of that at that time.

Lance: There was and another mate of mine, he is in one of those photos that I picked up out of the paper, Peter Morris, he had a row with his family and he came and stayed with us.

Lance: My brother Jack left home and came into our place wearing a white flower in the lapel of his coat and Edie said “what have you got the flower there for?” and he said “I am getting married”. He and Marge went away and got married him and they finished up with 3 children. I spoke to one of their sons just recently at a party I had over here, he is quite a nice lad. One of their other sons did very well too, Ronald, he was the head man in the office of a very big carrying firm at Port Kembla. Very, very good in his job and later he got sick but he built himself a beautiful home at Bulli. I went out there one time for something, I forget now, but I said hello to him but he sold that home and now he has gone into a better home at Woonona where Pendlebury’s Brick Yards used to be. So Ronald has done very, very well for himself for a young fellow and not much schooling either and no background either because Jack was only a self-taught mechanic. But Ronald finished up running the offices of that big firm and when he left they had to put two other people in his place so there were actually 3 people doing the work that he used to do on his own. Very, very good he was at his work. Jack’s other son lives down here at Towradgi – I saw him just recently and he is a very nice lad too. He got married but it didn’t work out and then he married again and he has done very well in the second marriage.

All our family haven’t been wealthy but they have all done well for themselves so you know, considering our background with a father with no money you have to admire them all for getting where they have.

John: Going back to when you were a kid, your mother would cook on a fuel stove or what?

Lance: Always old fuel stoves and we used to go up the back of our place – of course the back of our place was all bush – and we would have ropes with a stone or something heavy on the end of them, and we would haul it up over the top of all the old branches and then pull them down. We would pull them down and then stack them in the backyard. When we had heavy downpours of rain all the coal used to wash down from the Bulli pit to the football ground at Bulli and that’s why it’s christened Slacky Flat – slacky is fine coal dust. I’ve seen tons and tons and tons of coal across that flat, feet deep including big lumps, and we would put it in barrows and cart it up home and have great heaps of coal from when this flood would come. It wasn’t all coal, there was a lot of shale and that so you

would have to break the coal away from it and we would cart the barrow loads and we would finish up with tons of coal. But when that wasn't happening we used to take a corn bag and walk to the mine which would be 2 kilometres, to where they used to dump it over, and we would carry a full corn bag of coal on our shoulders from there home to use in our stove. So things weren't easy even though you were kids we used to have to do that. When the flood came we would get lots, other than that we used to stand alongside the railway line and sing out to the engine driver to shove some off, and they used to shove some off and we'd pick it up along the railway line. Things weren't easy in those times. You never had much, the barest of foods. Our main food for breakfast was fried bread; there wasn't much of anything else ever.

John: Not porridge or anything?

Lance: Not much. There was no money, our parents had no money. You had 12 kids to clothe them and everything and yet when you have a look at those photos there we are, all pretty well dressed, clean and always tidy, with buttoned up boots. We all had buttoned up boots, we used to have one of those hook things that you pull the button through. But it must have been pretty tough all the same, you see in those days there was nothing else, there was no television and very little radio. I was talking to a man about 3 months ago that lived on Bulli Pit Road, his father was my father's friend and he built my father a valve radio, a little valve radio that was the only one we ever had.

John: A crystal set? Before the War?

Lance: Yes, his father built it and he still lives in his father's house on the Pit Road. It was not much before the war. I was talking to him only just recently and he brought it up about his father building a radio, but those times you were lucky if you had a radio or anything else. You had to make your own fun, you had to get out and play marbles or tops and I always had a great big bag of marbles and tops and we would try and see if we could split your mates top. He would have it spinning and you'd go up and spin and try to hit the top of it and split it in halves. Some of the marbles we played with came out of a cordial bottle made by Mr Tom Ball, who had a factory on the main road at Woonona. The marble was held in the neck of the bottle by gas pressure, we called those marbles bottleles. They don't do that now, that's all gone and kids don't, of course they go in motorcars to school now.

John: Did you read books when you were kids? Comics?

Lance: Yes comics but not books, we didn't read books. Other than that we went off on one of these sledges and slid down the hills and played rolling tyres

down the hill or some other thing. But in the past I've done a lot of good in and around in everything – I was a foundation member of Bulli Bowling Club and we built the first green by our own labour and it cost nothing, only the materials, but we built the first green and it is still there and it is still the best green anywhere in the district, a beautiful green. Later we only had a tin shed, then later we built the clubhouse, so I was mixed up in all of that sort of thing. Then we formed the first hockey association and run the first hockey tournament ever run on the South coast and we won the first tournament. So I've been mixed up in a lot of things like and then I raised all the money to get that jet boat for the surf club, I've been social secretary in clubs and I've also been on committees so I've been mixed up a lot in doing good in the district. Then I coached 14 kids to play tennis all under 14 years of age, no men allowed to play on the court, all women and half of them reached A grade, they were good. The first year they won the C grade tournament and they were under 14 and the men were chewing their nails off but I had some good kids really good. Nancy and Nola were amongst the under 14 and they played A reserve, they both won a lot of tournaments. Nola has only just recently stopped playing tennis because of her eyes, she is getting up around the 70 year mark but she still played up until recently. She is in a ramblers club and she goes on trips and goes on walks and she does Tai Chi every day of the week, a few times she has taken the class up there, so keeps herself very active. She does a lot in that type of thing so she keeps herself very active.

John: Were your children born at home with a midwife or what? Not in a hospital?

Lance: No, one daughter was born at a midwife's place at big Bulli hill and the other was born at Nurse Cramms at Woonona and had a nurse at home. Midwife at home.

John: What about your generation of brothers and sisters, were they all born at home? Were you born at home?

Lance: Look I can't tell you because I was born in Kurri Kurri and I don't know what happened there. Lionel was born in Eagle Hawke and Dulcie was born in Kurri Kurri, Stan was born at Clifton and then some of them were born at Bulli but I think most of them were born at the nurse's place, I think. I don't know for sure.

John: A District Nurse or something?

Lance: A District Nurse or something yes. The midwife had their own practice, something like a doctor, they used to call and see you and then when it came time you would go to their home like a nursing home sort of thing

and there was one of them in Bulli and there was another one at Woonona, at Cramms Cottage just near Richmond's Pass, so that was where most of it was carried on there.

John: What about funerals, were people buried or cremated, and when you were young did they have showings at home or what did they do?

Lance: My people were all cremated. Edie's parents both died at home and were cremated down at Wollongong. My sister and my father at Sutherland, they were all cremated.

John: What about their parents do you know?

Lance: No, I don't know, I don't know what happened unless it just tells you in there where they died and whatever but not where they are, I don't think. The Polglase family, they were a very well dressed family too when that family photo was taken too so they had a lot of pride in their family. Grandfather Polglase used to have a great big moustache and he used to wax the ends of it, and bring it all out into a point. They were a well respected family from grandfather's right through. Big families too in those days, they had 12 in their family as well. So that was the go, there was a family in Bulli that had 16, the Lovedays, had 16 in their family so in those days big families were all the go.

John: But the elder children would look after the younger children?

Lance: Oh yes, they brought them up. Then the younger ones would bring up the youngest. That Mr Loveday at Bulli had 16 in the family, he gave me my first axe and maul and wedges for me to go into the bush to cut billets that time when I went in there. He was very little fellow but very good bushman. He also used to make axe handles for sale.

John: In what particular way was he a good bushman, like finding his way around?

Lance: No, like working in the bush. When I first went I hadn't done any of that work. But he had and he was only a little fellow. I would get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and I'd be in the bush to 9 o'clock at night to get a cord of wood but he would be back in his tent maybe at half past 6 and he would have his cord. He knew how to sling an axe and a saw and everything else and he was very good and he knew how to keep them sharp and everything, he knew what he was doing, he was very clever but he had to do some extra work somewhere with 16 kids to keep.

John: Anyone very religious in your family?

Lance: No. We all went to church a bit, not much, not very often, Sunday School that's about all. I remember Dulcie's eldest Kevin could sing very nicely. She only had one boy Kevin, he wouldn't sing a great deal but yet he sang at the church where Nancy was married, sang beautifully. He got killed up the North coast a couple of years ago. He was a sort of solicitor doing paperwork for people up there and he had sugar very bad and he went too long without taking something to eat and he crashed his car and it killed him. Bonza bloke too, wonderful fellow. He was married and lived in Melbourne and had 2 children and his son Mark was in computers. When computers first came Mark went and worked in America for a long time on computers. He is back here and married but I don't know what he is doing now. They live in Melbourne; both the kids live in Melbourne. His wife still lives there even though they are separated. He was a nice lad. All our family did fairly well, never rich, only one but the rest have all got through fairly well. That's all you want in life, there is no need to be rich, all you want is to be able to put your hand in your pocket and get what you want when you want it without being rich, you haven't got to be rich, as long as you can get things as you want them and that's all you need.

John: You used to go up to over the mountain to get fruit and stuff from where? I remember that from when I was visiting mum and dad.

Lance: The Darkes Forest. We used to go and get the seconds and get boxes and boxes of fruit and it was cheap in those times. When we were young, maybe 12 or 14 year old, my brother Lionel, my friend Ron Evans and I used to walk from Bulli to Loddon Falls regular on a Sunday. That's maybe 8 or 10 kilometres. We would walk up there and pick Xmas bells and chocolate flowers. Put the chocolate flowers in the middle and the Xmas bells all around and then go to the lookout and sell them to the tourists for 6 pence a bunch. Sometimes we would get Waratah flowers, you were allowed to pick them then. We did that for years and years and if we weren't doing that we were into the rivers after crayfish. Used to get a lot of crayfish with meat on a string.

John: That's all, a bit of meat on a string?

Lance: The last time that I got crayfish at Darkes Forest was not all that many years ago. I went into a creek there; you're not supposed to be in there because there are rangers and that. But I went in and I had some meat and a string and I got the biggest crayfish there I have ever seen in my life. I must have got about 20 big ones. I bought them home and got the next door neighbours and across the road neighbours to come over and we cooked them and they were beautiful. They were big crayfish they were like lobsters. I've never been back since then but you are not game to go back now because there are rangers there and you get pinned for doing that now for going in there.

- John:* That is probably why they were big, because people weren't going there.
- Lance:* Oh they were beautiful, lovely to eat. But these days – see I've got a cabinet full of sea shells there, the most beautiful shells you've ever seen in that case there, very rare shells but now you are not allowed to pick up a single shell. I don't know what will happen to my shells, I don't think any of my family are very interested in them. I used to get them everywhere I went. I got them over at Tonga and I got them at Vanuatu, I got them at Pago Pago and I got them at Suva and at Hervey Bay and Eden and Hayman Island. Everywhere I went I was looking for shells but now you can't pick one up, they won't allow you. Not allowed to pick them up any more so really they're priceless and nobody wants to be bothered.
- John:* That's the thing with the internet. If you just put your piece about shells on the net, you would probably find that there are a whole group of people not very far away, maybe in Sydney in Melbourne or something, but there would be people with an interest in shells. The net is very good for locating groups of people with particular interests. You may not know anybody with that interest but you can find them on the net and you can usually find somebody in Australia.
- Lance:* There is one big shell in there, a beautiful shell, I saw it in the shop in Suva for \$70, one shell only, but I have lots of shells there, very rare shells. I am the only one that has been interested, the rest of them couldn't care less about them. I don't know what they will do with them. If I could find somebody now that was really interested I would sell them because otherwise they are going to go to waste somewhere.
- John:* Well that would be a good thing to put on the internet. You just wouldn't put in shells, you'd put in the name of the shells, as you say you know a lot of the names. You would put in the name and you should be able to find people that are interested in those shells. There are all kind of weird groups interested in the strangest of things you know, there is not just stamp collecting but anything, anything that is collectable. You will find somebody that has got a group that is interested.
- Lance:* Well that's what I've been thinking of lately, rather than see them go to waste. I would like to find somebody that would love them and enable me to get rid of them. Because these days nobody bothers about them and they just sit there and I am getting into the end of my tether so if I could find somebody who really liked them they would go. But the rest of my family wouldn't bother with them. I've got a big shell there, a Bailer shell. The boat builders used to sell them, and the black fellows used them to carry water. They have a handle inside them and that is why they call them a bailer shell. There are some good shells in the cabinet there but

you have to find somebody that likes that sort of thing or somebody who wants to be bothered with them.

John: Otherwise they go in a garage sale for a \$1.

Lance: Yes and get all broken and that is what would happen and they'd get smashed up. Some are very delicate shells, as thin as thin, you've got to be very careful how you handle them. If they were chucked just anywhere they'd break into pieces. I think there is one called a Nautilus shell and it's as frail as frail but a beautiful shell. When I was on that Hayman Island trip that resulted in me getting the sack from BHP, a shell collector there told me that you'll never in your life find two shells the same. The pattern that is on the shell is made by the fish inside and it takes its time and creates that pattern all over that shell so it's really wonderful how it all happens. This bloke studied shells and he had a big collection because he worked on Hayman Island. Gee there were a lot of shells there. I went out every day after shells and I had a good catch. One day I came across a round ring of shells, a circle, and I thought gee that is funny in there like that. I picked them up and there was nothing in them, they were empty. Next thing I see an octopus arm come up out of the hole. This octopus was getting shells and bringing them back and then eating all the shellfish out of them. Each day I was going back there and he has got more shells. He would eat the flesh out of them which was hard to get rid of. I got a lot of nice shells from Hayman Island when I was there but you have to be careful because the tide comes in so quick: you'd be out up to your ankles in water and about 5 minutes later you would be up to your knees. You had to leave a note if you were going to the little island out the front to say that you had left there at a certain time and would be back at a certain time. If you weren't there they would come and get you in a boat. The tide would come in that fast. Water is very quick there, extremely quick. I think you've just about got all the information I can give you.

John: I am sure there is something else. Were your parents Labor voters? Was that an issue? The children too?

Lance: My parents voted Labor, yes. The children have been more or less Labor too. I don't know why. I suppose you can never grumble much when you're getting 3 feeds a day and living alright, you can't grumble much as long as you are doing alright. Some people do better than others, some people have bad trots and have bad times and bad things happen during their lives but our family has been very, very fortunate in a lot of ways. They have all done fairly well for themselves with their marriages and all that type of thing so we can't grizzle much.

John: Did you know Donny Coles much or not? Don Coles? Joy's husband.

Lance: Yes I did have quite a bit to do with him. He was a very strange fellow. Very strange, he gave her a bad time but I couldn't understand him giving her such a bad time and then later in life when she got away from him and was down the South coast he used to run down there and chase her but he was a very strange man. Strange in the way he treated her when he had no need to because she was such a nice person. He was very queer in his way, because he went in the army too and that might not have helped him any. But even after they parted and everything he was still funny. The things he would do but he still chased her when she went down to Fisherman's Paradise, and he used to go down there and I wondered why she let him in. The things he did over the years. She is getting on in years now

John: What about Evelyn, did you know her, 'Ev', Edie's elder sister?

Lance: Nothing much to do with her because she never ever did anything much only rear her family and live at Llandilo but otherwise never went anywhere or did anything. At least we did try to go places, we went to Perth twice in the train, we went once by road, we flew over and another time we came back by ship. And we had 5 cruises around the Islands to Suva and Tonga and all those places so we had some nice trips and nice times but Ev never went anywhere. Because the poultry farm used to keep them home, they couldn't leave it but we used to get away and have our holidays and have our trips.

John: You never went to Europe?

Lance: No I don't like aeroplanes so I wouldn't go overseas so we had boat trips instead and then train trips to Perth and once I flew but I didn't like it then I went by bus another time and we came back by ship another time but I don't like aeroplanes. I flew home from Nola's the last time I was up there because I had pneumonia and I was crook but I've been up to Nola's several times by car and I've been there about 3 times by train but now if I had to go up there again I would have to fly because its too far and takes too long because you are all night on the train and then you are 4 hours to get to Maryborough from Brisbane, you have to wait all day in Brisbane then you get the train in the evening and get to Maryborough and then you've got $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour out to Nola's to Hervey Bay so its too far; so this year they are going to start flying direct to Hervey Bay. Up till now Nola's always had to come to Brisbane and then fly to Sydney well this year they are going to start flying direct from Hervey Bay so that will be much better. Not yet, they haven't started yet because she has to fly down in another couple of weeks for a week and then they are leaving here and going back to Brisbane and flying straight out to Perth. They are having 4 hours in Brisbane before their flight leaves but that's the way they are

going to have to work it otherwise they have got to go home and then drive 4 hours up there and 4 hours back so they are going over for Renee's wedding. I don't feel like going this time as much as I'd like to but it's just I don't want to.

John: What was it like on those South Pacific cruises?

Lance: Very good. The food never stops, you got breakfast in bed, then you got morning tea, dinner, you got afternoon tea and then you had tea and then you had supper at 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock. So you never stopped eating the whole time and in between that there is a picture show, deck games, there is swimming then at night time they used to have a cabaret thing all the Sydney artists.

At one time I bought a new 16 foot caravan and took it on a holiday to Ballina with a 8-cylinder Ford. But the motor got hot and the caravan would sway so much when trucks went past. I sold it when I came back, never got another one. Those pop top caravans are good, my sister Betty had a Mitsubishi manual pulling a Dreamtime pop top, changing gears hundreds of times! Betty cuts my hair, I bought her a new pair of clippers.

[Tape restarted here after phone call from Eileen Green] About 12 months ago Eileen's son died and he was only 57 and now she has just rung me to tell me that her other son that was 59 dropped dead 2 days ago. He had been out fishing and caught a nice lot of fish and stepped out of the boat and dropped dead so she is going up tomorrow up to her daughter-in-law's place for the funeral but 59 and 57 is young for them to pass off and she is 81 or 82 and she's lost her husband and two sons. She has one son left.

John: Grandchildren?

Lance: I think so, I just forget now. But sad isn't it when that happens at that age losing a husband fairly young and then her two sons at 57 and 59, too young.

John: Both of them from heart disease? It must be a family history.

Lance: It is. She just told me it goes back to his father and his grandfather who died at 57 so it goes right back. But it's sad for her now she has only got one son left and here she is 81 and 3 of them gone. I went to her son's funeral, the one that died before, one that died about 2 years ago, I went to his funeral at Bulli and she thanked me for coming because I hadn't seen her for years and she said "I thought it was ever so lovely for you to come Lance" and I said, "well I saw it in the paper and just turned up", so she said "well you were so good coming to the other bloke's funeral I thought I had better ring and tell you?" So I said "it's sad for it to happen for her,

so time is the only thing that can help you. Nothing else only time". I remember a lady across here that lost her husband before she came in here and for the first 6 months all she did was cry and go on and I said to her "Rita the only thing that is going to help you is time" she said "but we did everything together, we went on holidays, we did this, we did that" she said "and now I am left on my own". Well now that's 11 years ago and she has another fellow now living with her so time has helped her, she has got over all her grief and everything and she has found somebody else that she can enjoy a little bit of life with. But that is the only thing that can help you is time. Knocks people about when it happens but you've just got to wait and get back to normal and takes a long time sometimes. I know you often see everything that reminds you but you've got over it because it is 2 years and you've got over it and it doesn't hurt as much. It was nice of her to ring anyhow. She was a very good saleswoman but I had two men that were very, very good salesmen as well and they resented her being the saleswoman because when it came time to move fridges and washing machines they had to do it and it might be her sale, she might have sold it but they've got to help get it off the truck and they resented it. Used to play up and one of them was one of the best salesman I've ever seen or had the privilege to be with. He was an absolutely wonderful salesman, he used to have a car sales yard himself in the early days. Then he came to work with us at Pollards. We would be talking about those radiograms for sale and you would say there is so much dollars on that and the next day he would have it sold. He was good but he was ruthless he would stop at nothing to make a sale. You know there was another fellow, Harry Brewster, he was a gentleman and he used to go round like I did and find out first what people wanted and then be nice to them. But Peter would do anything for a sale. So he got word one day from Holden people to say that there was a franchise in Nowra that they would give him to walk into if he would take it without paying anything. So he took it and went. After a few years I called in there several times and had a cup of coffee with him after I retired and one day we went upstairs and had a cup of coffee and he was waiting for a helicopter. He had bought a helicopter and he had built a pad at the back of the business and he was waiting for the helicopter to be delivered. That is how much money he had made and then Harry went to work for him, that was the other salesman that I had, and Harry went to work for Peter and now for this last 6 or 8 years Harry is running the business and Peter has retired and Harry has taken over and paying Peter so much a week for this business, and he said to me the bloke that was making the most money is Peter, I am doing alright but Peter is making all the money. But Harry's got his own home on the Nowra river and a speedboat and everything else so he is doing alright as well. But they were two good salesmen. Now they are doing alright in life as well but Peter loans a lot of property and he is wealthy. All through walking into a job given to him and the business given to him. Holden just let him

walk into it and this other bloke went bankrupt and then Peter made two or three fortunes.

John: So you just had 3 sales staff when you were Manager, anybody else? Did you like managing?

Lance: No, I had 5 sales staff and 3 in the office. No, I didn't like managing. After I'd been on it for about 3 years I couldn't stand the strain, taking your work home with you and Police calling in the middle of the night with a break-in and windows broken and everything. I got in the car one day and drove to Sydney to the main office and the boss said "what are you doing here?" I said "I've come to see you and I want you to get a manager and put him in my place and put me back on the floor or get somebody in my place because I am sick of taking books home and worrying about it?" He said "oh well, can you hang on until I can find somebody?" I said "you haven't got to wait, the fellow that's on the floor now, you won't get a better man, he's good". So he took my word and he put him on as manager and put me back as Assistant Manager with still with the same money as I was getting as Manager. He said "I don't want you to go". I said "alright". So he said "I'll give you the same money to stay then". So I stayed there as assistant manager and no worries or anything else.

John: Did you get back into sales then or were you still managing?

Lance: No, on the sales stuff, but paid as Manager. That suited me so I had no worries. This other fellow took it on and he did very well with it. That lady used to work us and she was a good saleswoman too. We had good staff. Then it was only the four and then staff dwindled. But that's a long while ago, I was 65 and now I am 95 so that is 30 years ago. I've had a good life plus I've done plenty in my time besides being in different jobs and one thing and another I've done well at all of them and been a good sportsman so we've done well. Finished up with our own place and everything so couldn't do much more especially not having any big schooling leaving like that. I have bluffed my way through a lot of things. I think if you are pretty strong yourself you can bluff your way through all sorts of things. I did that job anyhow, I bluffed my way through because I wasn't any good at figures or anything else but yet I got through a job like that.

John: Were all your brothers and sisters like that, very self-confident?

Lance: No. Not as much. Lionel was – the other brother that made all the money – he was, he would go from one thing to another and do anything at all. He started off on a cake cart when he was about 16 driving a horse and cart door-to-door with a cake run. I remember going with him a few

times. There was a Chinese Vegetable Garden in Fairy Meadow next to Cabbage Tree Creek where the Fraternity Bowling Club is now. It was owned by the Dion family who became very wealthy, they are said to own half of Wollongong. They certainly own a lot of property, including several shops, eg Greens at Coaldale. A big family, about a dozen kids. Tommy Dion owns all the buses that run from Austinmer to Wollongong now, he just got a very big government contract. They got the buses after they left the vegetable gardens.

Lionel used to call in to the Chinese gardens on his last call. He would fill up a big basket with all sorts of block cakes he had left and he and Mrs Dion would barter and they always made a deal. That was his last port of call but I used to go with him, not all the time, but go with him occasionally when he was on the cake run.

Then he bought that ice run and made lots and he would have a go at anything. Tried everything and worked hard. Deserved everything that he got in his life. Finished up a millionaire over and over but he deserved it. Some people get it by sitting on their bums but he got it by working, he earned every bit, did very well. You have to be lucky too in a lot of those ventures, you have to be extremely lucky that they pay off and do well, because that brickyard was a gold mine. Now, that is a funny thing, here it is now about a week ago I heard it was going to close down and yet you'd reckon in these times you'd want more bricks than ever.

John: I think they use a lot more concrete bricks and besser bricks than they used to.

Lance: And they are starting to use steel too. Things have changed, times have changed.

John: But he never lost any money on any venture that he went into? People like that make at least one mistake.

Lance: Not that I know of. No mistakes, he tried everything. He had a mixed business run with horse and cart, sugar and butter, cakes and all that type of thing, door to door. He had a go at every, ice, everything. Then the big money came with bricks and investments.

John: Property?

Lance: That bottom of the harbour scheme when you give your kids \$60-\$80,000 something each out of just profit you must have some money.

John: He got out of it before ...?

Lance: He got out before he got caught, before the Government caught him. He told me one day when I was with him, he said "I've still got the capital, I gave the kids all the money, but I've still got the capital". So he did very well. Then later a million each to the kids when he died. I don't know what happened to his car but it was worth \$120,000. He used to help a lot of people he reckoned. But he used to have parties at his place and get an orchestra from Sydney, it went on an expense account and the Government paid for it. Then I asked him for a donation for bowling club day for Bulli Hospital and he gave me \$100 but I had to give him a receipt so he put the receipt in and claimed it off tax. So he was paying nothing.

John: So he had a good accountant. But he enjoyed making money?

Lance: Got it all back. He was one of the lucky ones. I don't know if he was one of the lucky ones because he worked too long and never enjoyed his life. I remember him telling me that he would like to go back to Japan again, so he had been overseas and made a couple of trips but not as much as he should have had. He was still working when he was getting up around 80 years old. Well, he should have been running all over the world when he was 60.

John: But maybe he just enjoyed working?

Lance: Well there are people like that, workaholics. All they want to do is work and make money but that has never been my idea, I always had the idea that if I can get enough money to get what I want when I want it I don't want any more. So if I can put my hand in my pocket, like I did the other day, one of my great grandkids sent me word and said she is going to have her first baby, so I sent her \$100. Well I can afford to do that now and it doesn't matter, because money is no good to me anymore, so I sent a young relative, but he is not as close but he is one of Nola's grandkids and I sent him \$50 the other day because he had a grandkid so things like that I can do and it doesn't matter. I want to do it because it makes me feel good plus it is not hurting my pocket because I've got more than I want when I put my hand on when I want it. It's a good position to be in I suppose but now I am too old. The kids will benefit by it at Xmas time, I hand them all out, like Xmas before last I gave Nola and Nancy a \$1,000 each for Xmas and then last Xmas I paid Nola's fare down from Hervey Bay and give them \$500 each for Xmas and I thought afterwards well I should have given them a thousand because I wouldn't have missed what is in the bank there and doing nothing. So I am a firm believer that you give to who you want or when you want before you die, not wait till you die. When mum died, the day mum died, I gave Nola and Nancy \$5,000 each. I said that's from mum so something for to help you both. So they are things that I like to do now not wait till I die.

John: Was Aunty Edie very sick before she died?

Lance: She was but not for a long time. She took a bad turn here in the chair and she said you better ring the ambulance. I knew she was crook because she would never ever let you get an ambulance so they put her in hospital and then she was in there for about 4 days and they thought they had her right, it was her heart and sugar, so then all of a sudden the kidneys went bung and then the sugar went up over 20 so they had to start giving her needles and then something else collapsed and then the heart went again, so they said, there is nothing we can do, everything has collapsed. So the liver and the heart and everything all collapsed at once, sugar, so there was no turning back they couldn't do anything for her. So they came in and spoke to us, they said do you want to be sedated and pass off and not know anybody, or would you rather not have sedation and know what's going on around you until you pass off. So we decided that she would know everybody. So an hour or so before she died she just was talking to us all and she said I love you all, love everybody, so she knew exactly what was going on and everything and we got her into a private room for an hour or so and she passed on. Sad times but we know it's got to come when you are getting old and I've always said, not always but maybe the last 6 years, I've always said well I hope that mum would go first before me because I would be stronger and I would hold up better but you're not really sure of that when it happens. You are not real sure that you're the strong one when it happens. But mum would have found it hard because she was not able to get around much, she used to sit and read all day and wasn't getting around very much. I used to take her out as much as I could, take her in the car and do what we could, but she wouldn't have handled it on her own if I'd have gone first because she couldn't have handled it on her own for sure. She wouldn't have been able to but when it does happen and you are left you wonder if you are the weak one or the bloody strong one yourself because it's not easy. It is not easy, every day you find something that you think about and you wonder if it is worthwhile doing the things you are going.

John: So she had all the grandchildren there too or some of them? At Bulli Hospital?

Lance: Nola and Nancy and Jim and Ken and I were there. We didn't have the grandchildren there. Yes, Bulli hospital were very good to us, exceptionally good, they tried ever so hard to help her but when you are worn out, you are worn out, there is nothing much you can do about it. When it gets to serious things like that and 3 or 4 of them go at once, well there is nothing they can do to help. They were very good, they tried everything and they thought they had her right but then all of sudden it all collapsed again. It's a bugger of a job sitting at hospitals day after day too when someone is very ill, sitting there day after day and watching them

deteriorate although she wasn't too bad. She knew everybody and could talk to everybody and just before she went Jim had walked outside and she looked around and said "where has Jim gone?" She knew exactly where she was. You have more on that tape than I've got in my book.

John: Talking is a lot quicker than writing.

Lance: I have a fair bit in other books about my life you know. I've got it all written into a book there about all my sisters and brothers and their lives and who they've married and everything else, I have written it all in books so some of the grandkids might read it later if they want to pass it down to one another. I've got one niece in Lismore, Sharon (married to Italian, Lou Menin) and she's very, very keen on that sort of thing so I sent her all these papers that I have here. She has got all of that, she loves all that type of thing, going back into the early days as the life has gone on and what has happened. She has all the old photos of my grandmother and she has even got my grandmother's sewing machine, an old peddle machine. She has got a beautiful home up at Lismore, it is up on top of a hill overlooking the whole of the valley and they have 5½ acres, fruit trees, and hundreds of banana trees and about 60 nectarine trees and a lot of others. They have got some mandarins and oranges in now so when he retires they are going to keep their fruit and they have a little fruit stall in the front, but its tax-free. No matter what they sell there is no tax on it, so at the moment they are making about \$200 a week on the stall so they will boost that when he is home full time. He is 61 but when he is 65 they are going to boost that

John: What about my father, mum said at one stage that he was chasing after Edie before you came along?

Lance: Wouldn't know anything about that. No.

John: But he was working at the railways wasn't he? He did work at the Steel Mill at one time I think, don't know.

Lance: The only time I knew him about his work was when he worked up at North Sydney there, I forget the name of the place and then he was out at Naranderra and that was the only two places I know. He was on the railway but other than that I don't know because we lost track of them then from there and the next thing we knew was that they got a place near Bribie Island. We went up there once and then of course they sold that and the only time we ever got to know them much at all was when they shifted down here and that's when they retired then.

John: You never visited them in Hornsby?

Lance: Yes we did at Hornsby. We went there, once I went there when I played tennis at White City and we went up there to stay and I travelled from there to White City to play tennis and we had 3 or 4 days there but other than that only about one other time at Hornsby that's about all.

John: Did you know she bought a fridge from you at one stage in the 1950's?

Lance: I think that was when she came down, when she shifted down here?

John: No before, there was one in Hornsby.

Lance: No, I forget, I don't remember that. He worked at Hornsby on the trains there but we lost track of them after that. The only time we had Judy as I told you for a long, long time when she was having another baby – Marjorie – and then only went once to the house near Bribie Island, only once. Then they sold it to the Publican that owned the Bribie Island Pub and then I did all the work about them getting the house down here. They were looking for a house in a price range you know, so I did a lot of running around for them so eventually they got there and I was there the day they moved and helped them move in.

I remember the man who lived next door to your mother at Hornsby, Mr Evans, he asked her if she would make hot dinners for him every day if he paid. She said she wasn't well enough. So the lady over the road, Mrs Hart, she done it and when Evans died he left his house to her! I remember Edie telling me.

John: You were never into fishing like my father was?

Lance: I was more into fishing than he was. I had three boats. I had an 18 foot boat in Port Kembla harbour and George went out in that; and I had two 12 foot boats and used to go outside fishing in them and George went with us to Bellambi fishing. I had an 18 foot boat I bought in the George's River and Georgie Mitchell and Lance Knobs sailed it down to Port Kembla from George's River and then I had a mooring in the Port Kembla harbour for it, it was 18 foot, half cabin with a mast and I kept it in there. We used to go out from Port Kembla every weekend fishing with it.

John: Deep sea?

Lance: Deep sea fishing yes. We did that for years. Eventually we sold it and then I bought, I had 3 boats altogether and I used to fish off Port Kembla a lot and fish at Kiama with a 12 foot boat. We used to take the 12 footer out on a trailer and got lots of fish off Kiama. Then we took it to Bermagui and had a whole day down there with it and then I went up to where your father and mother used to live. Nambucca, I took it up there

and we went out fishing off Woonona beach. We caught, I think, 18 squire out the front of there and then got chased in there was 2 of the biggest sharks I've ever seen in all my life circling our boat. The fin would be that high out of the water [demonstrates], we got frightened and we took off and went in. I have done a lot of fishing. Your father used to go fishing in the Hawkesbury. He caught a lot of fish there too at Hawkesbury, he used to catch a lot of those flat fish.

John: Hairtail.

Lance: Hairtail. He used to catch a lot of them there, a lot of fish, bream too.

John: Black fish.

Lance: Yes. I used to do all deep sea fishing. I've done a lot of it when I went up to Jim's too up at Hervey Bay, there is a lot of fish up there. We would go and get 200 whiting out there in a day. A lot of fish there, big fish there too. Jim just recently caught a flathead with his hands. The water goes back real quick there and this flathead got stranded and it was 10lb, caught it with his hands. He caught another fish 15kg out of the front of the pier the other day. Catching big fish there. Gave it away because he said some have a poison gland in them, not in all of them but it is in some that can poison you so he gave it away to somebody. They haven't all got the gland.

John: Which fish?

Lance: Spanish Mackerel, they have a poison gland in them that you've got to be careful with. You can take it out I think, they do in Japan they take it out and take the gland out and they know what to do. But there are some big fish at Hervey Bay. I have been out there a few times.

John: In Japan they eat the puffer fish, it is poisonous but it is OK if it is cooked properly. But you can be unlucky and if you are unlucky you're dead, you know. It is a great delicacy!

Lance: Well look at the big money that they pay for our tuna. I wouldn't eat tuna and they pay huge money for tuna but I wouldn't eat it. I've been down at Bermagui and I saw the boat come in one day and of course they come into the river there and go up into the mooring and there was semitrailers waiting to take the fish and the blokes were standing up to their knees in fish on the deck with tuna and they pole them in with big poles like this, and they would fill two semitrailers.

John: It is a lot of fish.

Lance: The boat had to wait and couldn't come in till the tide was high because they couldn't get in the river because they had too much fish in, and they caught them all with poles. We used to go down there quite a bit. I've seen us go down there and go out the front to Camel Rock and catch 3 flathead at a time, 2lb weights, and 3lb weights. Three at a time, now there is nothing there. The boats go with their nets and net it all and you can't catch a fish there. Done a lot of fishing in my time. I used to like going outside but I had to take a seasick tablet every time or I'd get seasick, but if I took a tablet I was alright. We used to go fishing with your father a bit. He had a little boat too and a little motor. It is beautiful out there in daylight or in the morning with the sun just coming up on a good day, beautiful outside. We used to go out off Kiama and just about 3 o'clock in the morning and daylight would come round and it was beautiful. But that is when you catch the most fish from daylight until about 10 o'clock and then after that nothing. George used to do night fishing didn't he?

John: Yes.

Lance: That's the time to get bream at night time. I remember one time I went fishing for a week with a mob, all the Nobbs family and we went down the coast and we went out to a rocky point where nobody lived there, there were plenty of kangaroos and everything but there was nobody within miles, maybe 14 miles before you come to the first place, and we were there this night and the Knobb boys said "tonight there will be 2 high tides in the one dark, so the fish will come up on the first high tide into the pools and stay there and then they will go back with the high tide before daylight in the morning". I said "you're mad". They said "you wait and see, we'll make some nets". So they made some nets and they made some spears and we went down at the time they said. And after the first high tide the rock pools were full of fish, we were standing and they were hitting us in the legs trying to get away because we had torches and here we are spearing fish and catching them with bags and one thing and another and I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't have seen it. It doesn't very often happen two high tides in one night so they come up with the first high tide and stay there and then go back with the next high tide before daylight. You wouldn't reckon it was possible but they do. There is shallow water in the rock pools and they feed off the cabbages and stuff and when the high tide comes again and covers them they go back.

John: So they knew the second one was coming?

Lance: Yes. I wouldn't believe it but I saw it. But it doesn't very often happen so you've got to watch the chart and you have to get the night where there is two high tides in the dark for it to happen.

And that same time I went with a bloke Keith down of a night with a torch and there were big crabs running everywhere, hundreds of them. The best groper bait is crab and at that time there were plenty of gropers. We went out on this rocky point and we are looking at these big groper and Keith said to me "I'll have this big bloke there" and he shot his line out like that right in front of it and the big groper took hold of the crab but he took his eyes off it and before he could do anything about it, it went over and put its nose on the side of a rock like that and he never got it. Couldn't pull it off, he could not get it off that rock. Put his nose against the rock and it stuck and he never got it. That is another thing you wouldn't believe, you would go down and pick the fish you wanted to catch, but we did it at that time. I am talking about maybe 65 years ago. So that's different to now, you couldn't do any of that now, all those places now have got piers or rangers or something else. I remember shooting a kangaroo while we were there and then they put the tail in a kerosene tin and we had kangaroo tail soup. They had vegetables and all in with it and it was on the fire for about 4 days. Every time you walked past you would take a dish of soup. Never hear or see any of that now but we were about 10 kilometres or more away from Bateman's Bay and right in the bush, where there is only bush and we had 3 tents there. It was a good life and good fun, you made your own fun of course and if you wanted anything you had to drive about 10 miles to go into town to get it, which we did. Good fish in those times, big fish and plenty of it. Now you go down and fish all day and you wouldn't get anything. The semi-trailers have bugged it all now.

When we were young we lived at Clifton when I was a year old, we lived at Clifton on top of the cliffs and there were 4 houses, no protection, all out in the open and my brother was born there and they called him Stanley Clifton. When the wind would come everything that was outside would be washed over into the sea. There was only the road between the houses and the sea. The houses are not there now, they're gone. Things have changed.

John: There was no rock platform there?

Lance: There was the road and then the cliff went into the sea and you were up on a platform. Four houses there were and a little road run on up to it. They called it Clifton, but the wind would blow everything away, you would go looking for your tubs down the beach the next day or whatever. Very high cliffs too, pretty hard to get down them. They are building a new roadway round there now, around those same cliffs and they are extending out over the water. It'll be ready next year some time, but it will be very scenic. It will be well worth going to have a look at and travelling over just for the sake of going round it. At the moment they've shut Stanmore Park and Clifton so you can't go through there. I remember coming around those cliffs one night from Helensburgh when I'd been up to see my cousin and

it was dark, pitch black about midnight and it had been pouring cats and dogs and we were going under waterfalls, a big waterfall was coming down over the road and we had to go underneath it to get through. There were rocks and everything all tumbled about there and there was always trouble there, it was always dangerous. But times change and life goes on and things have altered so much that with everybody and everything hasn't it? Plus we are getting more population now that there is no spare land much, only in the outback. Plenty out there, plenty when you get way back up in the Northern Territory and all up those places. Middle of Australia but down in these places and coast there is not much left.

John: They have just opened up some new land in Sydney I think in the northwest or something.

Lance: They are trying to keep people from going further back into the mountain range and I think they should too, because it is all slip area and anyhow you get houses into there and you get bush fires and they are all gone anyhow so I don't think they should let them go back up there now.

John: Much more economical from the Government's or the Council point of view to have people living in medium or high density because then you don't have to extend the roads and the railways and the services out into the suburbs.

Lance: Well that's what is happening now isn't it. They are putting them into high rises and they are high-rise too now. Gee one time little but now 20 stories and huge bloody things but it is creating slum areas in some parts.

John: It doesn't have to. Lots of those new ones are for students. The demand for high rise units is mainly students and young single people at one end and retired people at the other end. Working people mostly like to have their own house on a block or something, even though they might have to travel two hours each day by car to go to work.

Lance: That's what's beating us at the moment is traffic. Taking people too long to get to and from. Our roads are not built to carry the traffic that's on so I don't know where it is all going to finish. Now it's a nightmare to go into the City. I suppose Brisbane is getting the same.

John: It's getting the same yes, peak hours are getting bad yes.

Lance: Of course they tried to build roads and look ahead when they started up north and building all those roads up north but that's not getting away from the city is it? The traffic is still getting into the city and congesting up. Same in Sydney, now they are talking about putting more buses on. See their timetables are no good on the trains. People can't get to work on

time so if they don't rectify that well I don't know what is going to happen because the roads are getting too congested for people trying to get to work on time and you can't get there. The roads weren't built for the amount of traffic that we've got and of course the growth of houses now has stopped widening of them so we can't get much better unless they buy all the houses.

John: Which is incredibly expensive. Trains are the way to go, but they have got to spend money on them and they haven't been spending proper money.

Lance: Well they started off spending big money on trains up in Brisbane didn't they, that one that runs up North. They spent big money on that then one got wrecked. The trains in Brisbane are better than down here.

John: Yes but there is not enough of them. A lot of people still travel by car. The trouble is that Brisbane is set out like radially, it is very hard to go across the City, you have to go into the middle of the City and then come out to get to places because the river winds all the way through and there are only a couple of bridges.

Lance: The toll on them now is pretty high. They are going to build another one aren't they?

John: Yes, they are going to build another, a twin of the gateway bridge.

Lance: I came across the gateway when it was first opened. I'd been up north and we came across there and Edie said when he asked for the amount of money she said "you are going to get rich quick". She was going crook at having to pay the toll. But they are going to build another one I saw just recently.

It's very pretty in where that river is and running through Brisbane city. I've been up to the Koala Park there on a ferry and it is very pretty but it is very, very hard place to get in and out of. I think you can get lost there. Take one little wrong turn and you are in trouble, I did one day when I was going up north I took a wrong turn and I was a hell of a long time trying to find my way out. Old Joh Bjelke-Peterson up there now; he was a cunning old bugger.

John: Yes. He's pretty sick.

Lance: He had Parliament all tied up that so they couldn't get him out until they changed it but he had it that way that nobody could beat him. They had to get about 3 votes to 1 to get him out.

John: Gerrymander. Plus he was taking all his cash in brown paper bags.

- Lance:* And that other Police bloody bloke that was with him?
- John:* Terry Lewis ...
- Lance:* I remember one time one of them said on TV or something about he'll sack you or something but he said, "Don't kid yourself, he wouldn't be game". He openly said it on TV. Then he tried to get money out of the Government just recently but they wouldn't give it to him.
- John:* He did have a case though. They should have paid his legal fees because they did it for everybody else but he was very unpopular then.
- Lance:* He must be worth a fortune?
- John:* Oh they say not.
- Lance:* Well he might have done it all now in legal fees and fighting his cases but his missus walked into a fortune. She walked into Parliament straight on to superannuation, big super and just walks into it. And then of course he had all that land up there he owned all that land, he still owns a fair bit of land. His son is on land up there and then he got heaps money out of the Japanese for land that he let them have.
- John:* They say he spent at least \$1 million on legal fees and stuff.
- Lance:* He was very crooked. Do you know, I used to like peanuts, I still do and the best peanuts you can get is Kingaroy peanuts and I went into Kingaroy once and walked the whole length of the street and couldn't buy a peanut. I said "for Christ's sake what's wrong". They said "we export". You can't buy a bloody Kingaroy peanut in Kingaroy. They used to be the best peanuts you could buy too but you can't buy them. I don't know whether you can down here I've never tried. I've always bought in a bag or just recently I went to place at fig tree where he had a great big sack and he just cut them open and I bought a big bag full of them there, they were quite good but not as good as I've had, I've had better.
- John:* Were they salted?
- Lance:* In the shell. But I found you can't keep them too long either, you've got to hit them pretty quick while they are crisp otherwise they go soggy. They are better when they are first cooked. What part of Brisbane are you?
- John:* Highgate Hill which is just near South bank or just where the Expo was, just a little bit south of that.

Lance: Nola went to the Expo. I remember while I was up in Queensland when Expo was on and then I went through to try and get accommodation and I couldn't get accommodation anywhere. Right the way down to Ballina an everywhere was all booked out. Nola went to that. She had a lend of a room or a little cottage somewhere in Brisbane belonging to friends of hers and she went to the Expo and she left her cheque book in the cottage, went home and about 3 weeks after she got home she went to pay something and get some money out of the bank and there was money missing. She couldn't make it out. She found out that somebody had taken the last cheque out of cheque book and drawn money out while she was at the Expo so then the fellow that owned the unit she told him about it and he said "don't tell me, I know who's done it" he said "I'll give you the money" he said "a relative of mine has done that". This girl he knew had done it so he paid Nola the money and this niece of his had done it. She had keys to the unit so when Nola was at Expo she had got this cash out and done the money, so you never know do you.