



Denny Lee

(I talked with Denny at Ken Smith's mill one Friday evening. Also present were Ken, Sonny and Macka Fernance, John Curtis, and Ron Le Sueur.)

Bill: Have you lived in the valley all your life?

Denny: Yeah... Well, not all my life. I came here in 1947 from Sydney, where I was a paper boy on the trams. I came up here and went to Wyong High School for two years when it was first built. Then I started working for Jack Stackman digging tussocks out for a pound a day. I did that for about 6 months and I was getting a bit sick of it. They kept offering me a job in the bush, and they were scared they'd lose me so they ended up giving me a job in the bush for thirty bob day.

Bill: What were you doing in the bush then?

Denny: Signalling for Keith Fernance who was the bulldozer driver. We used to have 700ft of inch rope on it for getting the logs out of the gullies and you helped pull the rope down and that. The signalman was in between the bloke at the log and the driver, who usually couldn't see him. I did well at that, and we got to two pound a day, but we weren't getting wet and dry. When it rained we'd have to go to work in the rain with crosscut saws and cut logs in the rain so we still got our ten pound a week. Then I got offered a job in Wyong a couple of years later with Kenny Greentree for twelve pound ten a week wet and dry. That was a good job.

Bill: So that meant that if it rained you didn't have to go?

Denny: Yeah. You got paid wet or dry.

Bill: Is that the same Greentree who has the butcher shop?

Denny: He's a cousin... We were timber cutting there, with crosscut saws and axes - mostly axes. The only time we used crosscut saws was when you had to cut the log up. But if the log was across a gully or something and you had to make it smaller for the tractor to pull out, then you had to chop him in half with the axe. We'd be half a day sometimes cutting a fifteen foot girth log in halves. You couldn't cut it with

the saw because it would bind in the cut, and we didn't carry a jack around with us. But anywhere where you could use a crosscut saw and wedge it up you'd go down and saw it up with the crosscut while the tractor driver was doing something else. You might do two or three cuts to cut 'em into 18 foot lengths or something - whatever the tractor could handle.

I came back to work for H.M. Smith and Sons cutting contract logs then. Twenty five bob a hundred - all round the Watagans mostly. I did that for a while, and then I left there and went with Mitchell Fernance cutting poles and piles, and went to Putty, Bulahdelah... Bulahdelah for turpentine piles, no... for tallowwood poles and things. We'd camp there all the week. Go Monday and come home Friday. The same at Putty, where we used to cut turpentine piles. We always worked long days so that on Fridays on the way home we could spend a bit of time in the pub.

Bill: And when you camped, what sort of quarters did you have?

Denny: Tents. Sometimes, if there was a bark hut or something there you'd utilise that. At Putty we camped in a tent.

Bill: You'd have to take a fair bit of food. How many fellas were there?

Denny: Three of us mostly. We took corned beef, a meat safe... when we got more modern you'd take an Esky along. We'd have some steak and that in the Esky, and that'd last the first two nights, while the ice lasted. Then you'd cook your corned beef up about Wednesday with the vegetables, and away you'd go again. So that was pretty good. That lasted quite a few years.

When I was out with Keith Fernance and them up Yorkie Gully there, jaffle irons first came out. This was when I was on two pound a day, and I used to make spaghetti or baked bean jaffles. Tom Stackman would race around behind a shed and make out he was chasing Keith's dog or something - just to create a diversion. I'd take my eyes away from making the jaffles, and Tom slipped some Ford Pills into my baked beans! They'd all made sure they'd eaten something before, so they didn't have to have jaffles. They didn't get much work out of me the next day!

We used to ride horses to work when we were working out here, and at Plough Point and that. Me being a young bloke who used to like to sleep in a bit, I was always running late and I'd have to gallop to work to get there on time, so my horse used to need a bit more corn than the others.

Bill: What would they do if you were late?

Denny: They didn't worry, because you worked back late. We'd come home in the dark more often than not, so they never used to worry.

Years later I had a 1928 Dodge. I had the only car in the valley amongst the young ones - we had a younger set and that going here. And we used to cart everyone to town, or out to Long Jetty. We'd have about fourteen - some in the front and some in the back of this old '28 Dodge. No-one else had a car. When Governor Smith got a car he was heavily engaged to Patsy Smith, but we all never got into that car 'cos we couldn't all fit in the way we could in the truck, so he used to go courting while we all still went in the truck.

I was going to make my fortune in a sawmill, and started a sawmill up, at Ravensdale where Brian Anderson lives now. We were starting to do alright. I was in a partnership, but that didn't work out. I went back to work for Charles Lloyd Jones then. I used to do a bit of bridgebuilding and things for him before, but then I went back to work for him permanently, with the cattle, you know.

Bill: And you've been doing that ever since? (Yes). Are you sorry that the mill didn't work out?

Denny: No, no. Well actually it was working when we broke up. It was the partnership that folded.

Bill: Is it still there now?

Denny: Yeah. They don't work it now... I missed a bit in between - we started dairying, of course. 1960. We dairied while we still had jobs. But the biggest problem with our dairying was that it was all borrowed money buying the place and that, and we could never get ahead enough to get past paying the feed bill to make a profit. By the time you'd paid your feed bill and kept having to buy cows for your quotas and things like that... well we had an experience for a few years. We built a new dairy on the road for bulk pick up and all that. Then we went in with Keith Fernance and about 17 other dairy farmers - there was nineteen of us went into a thing with Milton Morris up in Beresfield - a twin Rotolactor. But it went bankrupt.

Bill: You mean Milton Morris who used to be Minister for Transport?

Denny: Yeah. We all lost our quota, and cows... got a small return back, but not much. So that folded up. All the dairy farmers who went into that had a bit of bad luck. Quite a few from the valley.

Bill: Was that the death knell for dairying in the valley, by and large?

Denny: Yeah. Brought it to its knees. A few kept going, like Joe Bailey...

Bill: How did it happen that you lost your quota?

Denny: Well, they went bad and they owed that much money, and it was in a concern where we had to sell it all up to someone in Sydney. That's why we both had to go back to work again. My wife Dot went nursing and I went working for Charles - he had a Murray Grey stud there and that. We've still got 'em, but we don't register them anymore because you don't get any more for your cattle registered or not really, these days. They only pay for what's on their back, so it's a waste of money registering them. We've still got nice cattle, though.

Bill: I'm interested in the technology that used to be around. With this mill you started, did it have reciprocating saws, or what?

Denny: No. Only a Canadian - a five foot, maybe six foot circular saw.

Bill: And did you ever use Hagen saws in the bush?

Denny: No I never used a Hagen saw. When the chainsaws came in we thought it was marvellous - once we learned how to sharpen them. But when they first came out it was a long time before we learned how to sharpen them properly - no-one knew how to sharpen them properly.

Bill: When did they come out?

Denny: Probably about (pause) when they first came out was when those Danarms first came out. They were English - they had a Villiers motor on them. You'd turn the motor round, press a button and a pin'd slip in. They didn't have carburettors with diaphragms in them - the carburettor had to be straight up and down. But they weren't a problem. We were young, and the fella I was in partnership with rushed in and bought a Blue Streak because there was an import restriction and you couldn't get Danarms at the time, but it was more like a Blue Duck. It was like having an O10 Stihl now, or something and trying to do what an 054 would do, you know. But when you're young you don't know these sort of things. But chainsaws revolutionised everything . Within twelve months of one-man chainsaws coming in you could cut your week's logs in a day! I'd be about 25, I'd say, when they first came in. That's about ...No, they came in when I was about 21. About 1956.

I think Solos were the first ones to bring out a diaphragm in the carburettor. Solos from Germany. They were the next best saws to Danarm. Then of course the Danarms soon brought ones out that you didn't have to turn round for a felling cut.

Bill: Did they have big bars on them?

Denny: Mostly 24". But they had funny chains. They had like a peg-tooth chain that you couldn't sharpen easily. When they brought out the ones that you could sharpen with a round file it revolutionised everything because everyone could sharpen them easily then. Before chainsaws we'd have to be up two pegs with an axe to fall a tree, where you could fall it down low with the chainsaw - saw it off at the butt. It just revolutionised everything. You never got any more per hundred, but you could still make much more money.

Bill: It was obviously hard work. Did you enjoy it?

Denny: Yeah. I always like working in the bush. Whenever you leave and go and do something else, you always like to go back to it, you know? (To Macka Fernance) Can you remember? Would it be about '55 that chainsaws came into their best, would you say?

Macka: Well Den, I think I might have had the first chainsaw in this area.

Denny: No, I had one before you. I had the Blue Streak. Me and Lance Cornish. This is before you were old enough to have one, probably.

Macka: Well I got mine when I was 16. It was a Danarm.

Denny: Yeah? When were you 16?

Macka: Er...1956.

Denny: Yeah, that's when I said.

Macka: Well, I took mine up round that shelf at Braithwaites there, it was the first saw that was there.

Bill: And did everyone rush out to get one?

Denny: Not everyone. It took a while.

Bill: Were they expensive then, compared to today?

Macka: Well, they weren't cheap. Like everything that first comes out. They weighed 561bs. Had a clutch in them like a motor bike. The oil went into the handles of them, and there was a little pipe that the oil got pushed out of by the compression.

Denny: The sorriest thing we ever did was not buying the Danarm first. Then I think the next saw I got was the Homelite, when I was with Andy.

Macka: The next saw we got was a Solo. Bloody good saw.

Bill: Wonder if there are any old relics still kicking around.

Denny: Well, some of 'em have still got them

Macka: We went into Homelites, but they wouldn't stand up to sawing out posts - ripping them down.

Bill: Do you sharpen the chain at a different angle for ripping?

Macka: No. I keep 'em on 35 degrees. (Digression).

Bill: ...Anyone know how Bumble Hill got its name?

Macka: It's named after an aboriginal bloke who had a club foot, called Bumblefoot. He's supposed to be buried up there somewhere, I think he used to travel over to Mangrove Creek, and back over to here... They used to take the cedar out over Brush Creek and down to Mangrove, before the trains came.

Sonny: All the cedar was gone out of here before any settlers were in here.

Macka: There's a road used to be... it's a hundred yards or so just up above Le Sueuer's gate. It goes up there and winds up past Johnny Russell's, then out onto where the road is now at Bowen's Pinch, then up onto the main ridge, and then down to Mangrove ...That's the way they used to take the cedar out.

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(*I spoke to Denny again at his home several weeks later. His wife Dot was also present.*)

Denny: When I was telling you about cutting the tussocks out for Jack Stackman for a pound a day, Toby Fernance offered me a job with him cutting poles, and I got two pound a day for that. They would have kept me on, because they said we can't chop much good ourselves - this is Barraba Fernance, and Toby was his mate. Toby had the bullock team. The idea was that I would cut poles with them, and do a bit of roadwork, and stop with them all the time. But I didn't know how long it would last, so I only stopped with them till we did the roadwork and did some blasting.

We used to use a jumper and a drill that you hit with a hammer, mostly they turned the drill and I hit it with a hammer - I didn't hit their hands - and we did a lot of that. We blew a track out that went from above Bunning Creek out to the Post Office at Kulnura.

Bill: That wasn't where the old Sliding Track was, was it?

Denny: No, the opposite side to that. It was up behind Bill Bailey's. There was never a track right through to Bill Bailey's, but when we put this one through it opened it up from the Post Office, which was round Hunts Road those days.

Bill: Is it still in use, that road that you put in?

Denny: Yes. The fire mob keep it open, and Albert George has got a track up to it now because Kenneth Smith put that in. Quite a few people have got tracks up there now.

Bill: This was early on, was it?

Denny: Yeah. That was when I was only fifteen, after I left school.

Bill: Was that the only way to keep tussocks under control, to dig 'em out?

Denny: Well it was them days, and it pretty well is these days too, only now they poison them with Round Up.

In 1966, when I was in partnership with Andy Fernance we cut the longest pile cut this century. It went to the Maritime Services, and was 123 feet long. A turpentine of course, being a pile. We got three pound ten a foot for it - that was big money those days. It came from just down below the Forestry huts at Cessnock. Andy and I were in piles then for a couple of years.

Another thing... when we were dairying, I should mention that it wasn't just us men that were doing the dairying. Our women did most of the work in the dairying - like Keith's wife, and my wife, and Kenny Fernance's wife. They did the dairying while we went out to our other jobs. They not only brought the kids up, they had to do the milking too. It kept 'em out of mischief!

And I also worked for H.M. Smith and Sons at the mill between 1960 and 1962. I worked there on contract with Macka. I tailed out and Macka was the middle man on the friction. Did you see it when they had the friction before Kenneth changed the mill?

Bill: What's the friction?

Denny: The middle man on the bench pulled a lever one way and he pushed the timber over against the

fence. So that was what the middle man did, plus he used to go around and help throw the long bits over.

Bill: You'd have to watch yourself wouldn't you? Tailing out's a bit dangerous isn't it?

Denny: It was more dangerous for the benchman, because if the tailer-out let something drop onto the back of the saw - I done it a couple of times when I was still learning, you know, and Governor'd be ducking into the little shed behind the bench out of the road because the timber'd be flapping up and down on the top of the saw, and if it caught you could get killed. It could go straight through you. And they weren't so fussed about having guards those days. Now they're a lot more careful with safety than they were early in the piece.

Bill: Of all the things you've done, which one did you enjoy most?

Denny: I used to like working in the bush the most.

Bill: What was it that you liked about the bush?

Denny: I think it was that you were sort of your own... not necessarily your own boss if you were working for someone, but it was something you liked doing... I dunno. It grows on you. People will tell you that. When they've been a bushman all their life they... they like the smell of the gum leaves I think. It's one of the reasons why when people live around here they don't like the idea of moving back to Sydney. I wouldn't live back there for a million quid.

Bill: Squatter was saying to me that given that so many blokes spent so much time in the bush with their hands under logs and that, that nobody seemed to get bitten by spiders much.

Denny: Yes, you'd think we would a lot of times. But we were taught early in the piece to shove a stick under first, 'cos you were always thinking that it could happen.

...We went to Melbourne once. I went in Normie Dixon's Chev blitz. Joe Bailey and Squatter had a diesel GMC and Neville Palmer went too - he had a GMC petrol. He took Mad Jack - Johnny Fernance, Big Mark, Uncle Mark, whatever you like to call him, that used to work with me in the bush with the Stackmans. Everyone called him Johnny, but his right name was Mark Aubrey Paul Fernance - Map Fernance.

Anyway, we went to Melbourne with this load of pipes for Stewart and Lloyds when it was too wet to work in the bush at the time, and we never missed a pub from Liverpool to Melbourne!

Bill: How long did the trip take?

Denny: A week! That was a good trip. Squatter will tell you - he was laying out drunk one night in the middle of the tar and George Waters from Gosford that's got Waters Cranes now told Squatter that a Foden had just driven over him! We slept under the pipes nearly every night, and camped most of the way down and back.

They used to call Johnny the Sheriff in those days, and he saw this kid in Eugowra with a sheriff's badge on. He was always big time with his money so he bought this badge off the kid for a few dollars. We were in Woolworths later and saw them in there for 20 cents!

When we used to go to Putty cutting piles we started taking half a gallon of wine that one of the blokes used to get from up the vineyards, and in the finish half a gallon wasn't enough and we ended up taking about three gallons. We had to give that up in the finish because we felt too seedy in the mornings. We still had to work no matter what you'd been up to the night before.

Tad Lammi used to cart the piles from Putty to the pole yard at Thornleigh, or to Sydney to the wharves. He had an old petrol GMC that he used to drive for Mitchell Fernance.

When I used to dress the poles down at Thornleigh you'd be out in the sun - there was no shade there, and the shavings off the poles were as bright as the sand on the beach, and I used to burn like anything.

Bill: I suppose you miss those days a bit, do you?

Denny: I don't miss that job. That was about the hardest work I ever did. They'd have those real dry poles and you'd be using a drawknife to take the sap off them...

Bill: You had to take all the sapwood off them with a drawknife?

Denny: They'd knock it off with a squaring axe first. I was never real good with a squaring axe, but they were really good at it. They could square girders, or make an octagonal pole. I'd round the top part of the pole off with the drawknife. They were telegraph poles mostly for Prospect County Council.

Bill: What sort of timber were they?

Denny: Tallowwoods and white mahoganies and ironbarks. (Digression)

...When we first started dairying my father dairied over at the old place - before I met Dot and that. My young brothers used to not always milk the cows out so well, and they'd stop on the bridge and put a bit of water in the cans to top the milk up! Dad was getting letters about water being in the milk and he couldn't understand it till he checked it out and found it was always on the days that they'd milked.

Bill: When you say the old place, where was that?

Denny: We had 46 acres over the creek that we sold to Charles Lloyd Jones. We bought this place from Reice Palmer when we went to bulk pick-up with the dairy and built a dairy over here so the bulk pick-up didn't have to go across the old bridge over the creek.

Dot: That was 27 years ago. (Digression)

Denny: I mentioned that we used to have a younger set going. We painted the Hall - the inside. That was a pretty big thing when we were only kids. I'd have been about nineteen then. Governor was the same age. The Yarramalong schoolteacher's daughters started it off.

Bill: Did you come from the valley, Dot?

Denny: No, she come from Blayney. I met her when she was living in Wyong and working at the Forestry Office. Dick Monnox was the main Forester there and he used to live next door to her Mum and Dad. He was a nice old gentleman.

Bill: And did the loggers and the foresters get on OK?

Denny: Oh yes. But everyone those days thought that it was alright if you could get a log off the Forestry every now and then for nothing, like. It sort of wasn't really stealing.

Bill: That sort of thing is almost part of the Australian tradition, isn't it?

Denny: Yeah, But we were only the workers anyhow and weren't supposed to know much... ...Another thing I did in between these jobs was cut pulpwood. We cut a lot of pulpwood up opposite you there where the iron gate was. Those times CSR owned it all, and we were cutting ironbark logs and...they cut beautiful logs into pulpwood. Cheetham had one of the first hydraulic splitting machines, and a brother-in-law of mine, Bill Mansell worked for them and so did George Watling. George Watling is the bloke who got his arm wound in the winch. They'd be winching logs out with a winch on the back of a Chev blitz. He got up to put the cog into gear instead of jumping into the truck and it wound his arm off in the winch - up past his elbow. I think he was back at work cutting pulpwood with one arm within two months.

Bill: How did he used to cut with one arm?

Denny: Well, we had Lin Hart there that owns that place at the Letter A, he cut more pulpwood than anyone, but he'd just go straight into the tree. He didn't worry about putting a belly in it or anything, a scarf, and they'd split up and everything and he'd just saw 'em straight down and saw 'em up. I think he made more money out of pulpwood than anyone, and everyone thought he'd end up killing himself but he never. He had no idea of placing a tree - though he probably does now, in later years.

Bill: It's ironic, isn't it, how the wheel's come full circle. Nowadays they say that the best way to manage the forest is the way you blokes used to do it back then - you know, selective logging, and in those days with bullock teams you did minimal damage getting in and out.

Denny: And we didn't have any blades in those days. Keith Fernance had 700 foot of inch rope on his winch and 1000 foot of five-eighth rope for piles. You'd go further down the gully for piles than you would for logs.

Keith'll tell you about when Jack Stackman sent me down - in my early days when I went from signalling to doing some of the roping - and I went well past this log I was supposed to go to and I pulled out the whole 700 feet of rope! And poor Keith had to wind this loose rope up all the way back up to where the log was. They didn't like that at all because it wouldn't be tight on the drum and could damage the rope.

Bill: You said that with the turpen piles you'd ringbark 'em beforehand. That was to keep the bark on tight, was it?

Denny: Yes. But if you got a bit of rain they could loosen up again too. And once they'd been rungbark for a couple of months you could find them again easily by the dead tops. Sometimes we'd fall 'em and leave the head on, and they'd stick that way sometimes. (Digression)

They used to wind you over cliffs of rocks on the end of the rope. They didn't have hobnail boots those days and we used to drive nails into the boots so you'd get a grip going up the hill, and grip on the rock when you went down. Mostly those three drum ropes didn't have a good handbrake on them, and that's why a signalman was good when they wound you down a steep bit. There's a lot of exercise in it. When the Lammis first started they were playing football and they thought it was great football training. (Digression).

...When the Queen came out here and was going through Wyong on the train a bunch of us from the younger set decorated up that old '28 Dodge I used to have, with a doll on the front dressed like the Queen, and we all went in to Wyong to wave at her as she went past. That's a lot of years ago.

Bill: And the younger set was just people from round Yarramalong?

Denny: Yeah. We just used to get together and put a dance on now and again. They started square dancing to records at one stage. It was pretty much like the Hall Committee, only we were young. Everyone didn't have a car so we all had to get together to go places.

Bill: And would most of the young people be in it?

Denny: Yes, all of the young ones from the valley. It was pretty good. For some reason Long Jetty was all the go in those days - probably because I wasn't a good swimmer and it was shallow there, and I was the driver!

Bill: Did you do much fishing in the creek?

Denny: No. Kenneth's a good fisherman. His Mum Rene used to love fishing, and I think Linnie did too, and I think it's just rubbed off on Kenneth. And they always catch fish. No-one's getting any fish and Kenneth comes up with these big fish out of the creek!

Dot: The creek used to be the main form of entertainment for the kids. You couldn't take time out from your work to take the kids to the beach, so in between milking if it was a real hot day you'd take them down to the creek - there was always a favourite spot down at the creek. When they got older the boys would go to the creek and take a towel and some soap and the girls got the bathroom.

Denny: They used to call it Rossie's Hole, our kids when they were growing up. It was the biggest and deepest hole around, over at Maisie's there.

Bill: People don't use the creek much any more?

Denny: Not much. When we first came here Mum used to have her copper down there because we didn't have that much water at the house. She'd put a clothesline up down there and do the washing down there. It was about 200 yards from the house. We had a draught horse and slide we used to take the stuff up and down for Mum with it. But this horse used to bolt now and then. We'd find the slide hooked up to a stump somewhere because it wasn't tied up and something'd frighten it and it'd take off.

Dot: Before we had electricity here, after a while we realised that it would be easier to bath down at the dairy than up at the house. I'd wash the kids there, then I'd strip off and get in myself. Sitting there I could look across at the road, but I was never really sure whether the cars going by could see me or not!

Denny: Yes, back before we had the power we used to have this old David Brown tractor with a belt on the PTO that went up to the milking machine motor. So the kids wouldn't get caught up in the belt while she was milking the cows Mum used to have a lead tied around them going to a post so they couldn't get near the belt - because it was very dangerous. We went from that to getting the electricity on to the dairy, and we thought that was pretty good.

Dot: It was heaven!

Denny: Then we built the dairy over here for the bulk pick-up, like I said. We only did that for a couple of years. Then we went into that scheme, and it didn't do any of us any good.

Bill: I wonder how Milton Morris came out of it...

Denny: Better than us. But they had a lot of property up there, too.

Dot: Yes, it wasn't his fault, really. If we'd had more money we could have had part of the property, and it would have been worth quite a bit now. (Digression).

Denny: Sometimes we wouldn't get down off the mountain till after dark, and there were lots of times I used to get a lift back along the road with Vin Earl, the baker. He was a character. He used to chat with people along the way and we often didn't get our bread till ten o'clock at night, when he was still finishing his rounds!

One night, after we'd had tea, we went back up Yorkie Gully and sawed all these tabletop logs up by lantern light!

Bill: What were tabletop logs?

Denny: Well, when you got a short log, or ones that were crooked, you'd get more out of them if you cut them up into tabletop lengths. You'd cut the bad bits out and cut short logs.

...Kenny Leslie took over from Edgar Fernance with the milk truck with the cans, and then when they went into the tankers Kenny Leslie carried on with the tankers.

Dot: That old shed looking thing on your left as you drive in our driveway was actually the back of a milk truck. We had two of them, and the other one used to sit just up the road and we used to use it as a feed shed. (Digression).

... When we used to grow the underground silage, we'd put it in the ground, we'd dig it out, put it in the feed troughs, and tip molasses over it and lime and stuff to make it palatable, but only some of the cows would eat it. We'd end up shovelling most of it back out again and throwing it away. It was a bit of a loss. I dunno what we weren't doing right, but...

Dot: It stunk!

Denny: Yes, but silage always does. But our cows didn't like it anyway. It was a bit of a Blue Duck. It was a lot of work. Kenny Fernance came down to help us and it was a big job, and to think they wouldn't eat it afterwards...

Bill: Did you only do it the once?

Dot: You only do these things once.

Denny: Yes. We found we were better off to buy good green hay or something like that, even though it took most of the milk cheque. That's why you needed another job, because by the time you'd paid the feed bill and the loan out of the milk cheque you never had anything left over. But if you owned your own place you'd have a bit more of a chance. It was pretty much the same for everyone. And that's why the women had to do so much.

Dot: Denny did a bit of milking, though. I remember, because it was a Tuesday!

Denny: Dot mows the lawn and does all the gardening here. I do the swimming pool, and what gets done to the fences. But you don't get enough time to do as much work as you should do around your own place, because we're seven days a week at Charles'.

Dot: We're looking forward to the day when we don't have to go to work. I think we'll really enjoy that.

Denny: And then we can fix our own place up properly.

Dot: You should get a photo of Denny's shed, you know.

Bill: It's pretty special?

Denny: I don't throw things out, Bill. I save things.

Dot: Ron Le Sueur sent a message home to Betty when he was here the other night. He said that if he didn't make it home he was lost in the back corner of Denny's shed!

There was a very old shed where the new one is now. Reice Palmer used to keep his car in it. He had an old Buick that he used to use to pick the schoolkids up in from further up the valley and bring them down here to the bus - that's how few children there were up there then.

Denny: They'd be standing on the running boards, wouldn't they?

Dot: When it came time to clear the shed out to make way for the new one, what we ended up with when we'd thrown all the rubbish out would have fitted in this little bit of the room. We had a party for the opening of the shed and that was the only time that we could get into it! (Digression).

Denny: ...That long pile we cut. We were mainly cutting 80s. In the deeper water they'd join 80s together at times.

Bill: Did they? How'd they join 'em?

Denny: They'd splice them head to butt and drive them both together. They'd have to metal plate and band them.

... We took a load of 55s to Stenhouse Bay in South Australia once when I was with Andy, down to where

the gypsum works was. To load the gypsum down there they have to have the boats out a bit, and in the rough water the boats break the piles off, and concrete ones break off easier so that's why they wanted the wooden piles.

We stopped at a siding at one of the silos, and there was a family there of country and western singers. Teddy Waldren the driver was a church singer, a real good singer, and we got in with these people at the pub, and they took us home afterwards and we had a great time there. We took three or four days to get down there - it wasn't quite as bad as the Melbourne trip. We got in a restaurant there one night at Euroa, down in Ned Kelly country there, and Squatter and Joe and Neville lined us younger blokes up to do the washing up because they'd told them that we couldn't afford to pay for our tea! (Digression).

Denny: We used to have the telephone exchange and the post office here once, you know.

Bill: Was this in Reice Palmer's time?

Denny: Yes. When we bought this we paid another 500 dollars for the post office.

Dot: Reice's wife had it for years when it was a manual exchange. The switchboard was out near our front door, and the little room at the end of our lounge room was actually the post office.

Denny: It's still got the little hole in the wall where people used to post their letters.

Dot: By the time we bought the place the exchange had gone and in those days you were paid by the amount of business you did. But people around here didn't use the post office much and it was a damned nuisance because you had to be here all the time for things like telegrams and money orders. And if you wanted to go anywhere you had to get someone to come and mind the post office...

Denny: For ten dollars a week!

Dot: So we eventually got rid of it because we didn't want it. But then people got up in arms and said how much they needed a post office, even though when they had it they hardly used it.

The bus used to go into town twice a day. Reice would go in with the children, then he'd come back with the mail. He'd bring the mailbag in and sort the mail here that was to go on further up to Olga's and up to Bebeah.

We did it for a couple of years, but it was no good to me because it tied me down too much, and we were dairying at the time. We had a friend living in the old place over there and she used to come and be here for a couple of hours a day while I was out working.

Denny: We still call it "the old place" over there, Bill.

Bill: Yeah. Those things stick, don't they?