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Full transcript of an interview with

KEITH EASTON

on 29 September 1997

by Rob Linn

Recording available on CD

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TAPE 1 - SIDE A

AUSTRALIAN RURAL HISTORY PROJECT.

Interview with Mr Keith Easton at St Marys, Adelaide, on 29th September, 1997.

Interviewer: Rob Linn.

Keith, where and when were you born?

KE: On 2nd July, 1914. The year of the big drought actually.

And just before the outbreak of the First World War?

KE: Yes, and just before World War 1. And by the time it ended, I remember the boys coming home in khaki.

Can you?

KE: Oh, yes, I do. Oh, yes, I remember that.

And who were your parents, Keith?

KE: Syd and Marion Easton. Sydney. And Marion, my Mum.

Were you the eldest in the family?

KE: No. I was the third of our family. Clarrie, Edna, me, and then Olive, then Ron, and Douglas. They were both in the Army. And then Muriel, Myra, Gordon, and little Geoffrey.

So quite a clan, Keith?

KE: Oh, yes, yes.

Now, you were born just out of Clarendon, but in the Clarendon district.

KE: Couple of miles on the Grants Gully Road towards Chandlers Hill actually. That's where I was.

Now, what are your first memories of that area around there, Keith?

KE: When I was young it was mostly people were living on smaller blocks. A few cows, orchards, vineyards and the like, that kept them mobile. That's about all.

Course, when I went to school and started school in '22, and my Dad had one of the last teams of bullocks in the area. On 28th January, 1923, I was on top of a load of hay - no, a load of chaff actually - and when the bullock waggon hit a bit of gatepost, and took me down underneath it, and it went over my right leg. I got carted off to Hospital, with a leg that was run over by a bullock waggon was no mean thing. And Dr Newland and Dr Rischbieth were the doctors and surgeons at the Childrens at that point of time, and I always say that old Sir Henry Newland was knighted for the job he done on my little leg afterwards, because he was knighted as a bone specialist.

Yes, he was.

KE: Yes, that's right. But they treated me and took care of me for the best part of two years actually. And eventually I got back and got to school, and walked up to school. And then in 1928 I sat for my QC. I had lost a bit of school through my leg but, never mind, I got my QC in '28. And then I went driving - for the next six years I went driving bullocks with my Dad carting wood to the wine cellars, mostly at Morphett Vale. Emu Wines, which later became Wirreanda High School, when the Vales area at that point of time was vineyards actually. Not concrete jungle.

So, Keith, were you hauling logs out of the stringy forests, too, as well?

KE: No. No. If you have a look at the Clarendon area, you are not quite into the stringy area. You are in gum country. That's one thing that these people that plant trees, they don't look and plant trees where they originally belong to. Because in the Adelaide Hills, especially around up the old viaduct, or Belair/Blackwood, is a Black Box, or Peppermint as we call it. You get over the ranges to the next valley and you get the gum country. And to the left and around Ironbank, down in through there, you get stringy. And so it goes on.

Well, Keith, you were telling me earlier that you used to haul through the bottom of Almander there. What would you have been hauling then? Timber at that time?

KE: Some of the bush fires burnt out the bridges, and Dad having a team of bullocks, the Council got him to go over there and drag in big, long, stringy logs to rebuild the bridges that had been burnt out with bush fires actually. And that's my first impression of going down Almander Hill - down through there.

That must have been a pretty steep go with a bullock team.

KE: Oh, yes, that's right. That's right. But there's not many places you can't go with a bullock team.

I've never actually spoken to anybody before, Keith, that's managed a bullock team. So how did you prepare them - into harness?

KE: Usually got them about three years old - a bullock. Of course, you pick your steers. What you think would make a good worker. And you get him in with the other team and yoke him up and gradually break him into working. Of course, then you drive - you carry a big long whip, of course, but they become very intelligent. And you can talk to them and tell them what to do, and which way to go and all this caper, and drive them along. They drive quite well.

Now, the yoke system across - they normally did in pairs across, didn't they, Keith?

KE: Yes. Yoked together in twos.

Wooden yokes, were they?

KE: Yes, oh, yes. There's an art in making the yokes. And of course, even the bow that fits around the neck is - you pick the bow to fit the animal's neck. Whether they've got a narrower neck, a broad neck or a bully(?) neck, whatever. You pick your yokes, and your bows, to fit your animals. Otherwise you'd choke them down actually.

Well, how long would it take to get a team ready to go?

KE: Oh, take half an hour I suppose to yoke up a team of ten. Five pairs would take you a good half an hour I suppose actually. About half an hour I should say.

So were there ten in your team?

KE: We often used ten. Ten as a main, but at times we split them and worked four and six in two different waggons actually. But any heavy pinches, of course, you'd put them altogether actually.

So the timber you were carting down to, say, Emu Winery, was that cord wood or what was it?

KE: No, we didn't - most of those wine cellars had their own weigh-bridge because of the grapes that were carted in, and it would be weighed. But we have carted - when we carted wood to Mount Malvern(?) Mine that was all sold on cord measurement actually.

So Mount Malvern(?), that's the one above Aberfoyle Park there, is it? Is that the one?

KE: Yes, that'll do, yes.

More or less.

KE: It can go in off Chandlers Hill Road, or you can go in off the Clarendon/Coromandel Valley Road. Up around there.

So that was above what would've been Saubier's place originally?

KE: Above Saubier, yes. Above Saubier. You know why Aberfoyle Park is called Aberfoyle Park, would you?

After the Aberfoyle homestead of the Saubier, was it?

KE: Well, during the First World War, it was a dirty word to have a German name, and old Christian Saubier went to town one day Christian Saubier and came home Christian Aberfoyle.

Oh, I see.

KE: Hence, Aberfoyle Park.

No, I didn't know that.

KE: Well, that's how he come to be called Aberfoyle. Aberfoyle, of course, is Scottish, isn't it?

Yeah.

KE: That's right.

Now, Keith, that Clarendon community you grew up in, was it a very close-knit community?

KE: Oh, I would say, yes. Yes, fairly close. We didn't go very far. You didn't move very far because there was only two means to go. Either go horseback or push-bike or walk actually. So you didn't move very far. You could say that most things stayed locally - very locally.

Was the Methodist Church an important part of that community at the time?

KE: Oh, yes. The Methodist Church would've been a very important part of the town. Of course, even for our Sunday School Anniversary and picnic and so forth, even the primary school would stop. We were fortunate that our old Headmaster, Mr March, was also a very staunch Methodist, so we - it was an asset. (*Laughter in voice*) But it did form a very important part of this community, yes.

Now, how did you come to join the railways, Keith?

KE: There was two things. I met my wife in 1935 but early in '37 - on the same day that I had my first accident, on the same day, the holiday Monday of January, I was gored by a Jersey bull and almost killed. And I went to Port Augusta to recuperate in the end of April, early May, and I got a job in the railway up there. And never returned.

How did this accident with the bull come about?

KE: Well, Dad was trying to get him in to yoke him up. A Jersey bull, to yoke him up. And he didn't like that at all. And he broke free and had a go at me, but Dad and my young brother they got him off me. I scrambled under a fence but I got bruised all down the right side again. That took care of the next three months actually. From then till - I did no more work in the hills after that. When I got well enough I went to Port Augusta.

What age would you have been then, Keith?

KE: Oh, I was almost 23.

How did you find Port Augusta in those days?

KE: Oh, very good. Very good. Smaller town. About three or four thousand people. Mostly railway, of course. Long before ETSA came about. It was also a seaport at that point of time. Quite a lot of boats would call in there, including the old weekly boat *Moonta* called in there. So a lot of activity centred around the wharf. And of course, all the coal for the engines came via the boat actually.

In those days the *Moonta* was still doing the Gulf trip, wasn't it?

KE: Yes, that's right. £6 I suppose it'd be, a week. That's right. The old *Moonta*.

That must've been a lovely trip really. I never took it but -

KE: I never ever got around to taking it but it was very popular. It was quite an event. Came in Tuesdays. Well, it might have even berthed Monday night but Tuesday was *Moonta* day. There was a bus to Quorn from the *Moonta* and a lot of the stores for Port Augusta came on the *Moonta*. And they ran a Ball every Tuesday night to entertain the people off the boat actually.

Keith, what was your first job with the railways? This is Commonwealth Railways, isn't it?

KE: A cleaner. I got the job in Quorn from Port Augusta and started in Quorn on 8th June, 1937, as a - the first three months there was not much work in the actual locomotive section so I got a job that relieved all the trades helpers,

which did prove to be very helpful because I was very raw on railway work. And of course, helping all the various tradesmen I got to know their section of the loco from boilermakers, fitters, whatever. I did their relieving for most of the Quorn staff actually.

And then in October I started in cleaning and, of course, when you start cleaning you clean engines, deliver advice notes to the crews that are booked off, or go off, go and call crews, advise crews in the middle of the night - whatever - and then you start lighting up engines, getting them under steam for when the crews come into work. And that took care of - in early '38 we moved on to - in early '38 I started firing.

Now, firing, is that terminology mean as a fireman?

KE: As a fireman, yes. Oh, yes, I started firing. In fact we had some major washaways on the north line and, of course, I got a job firing. And at that point of time you had to do five years as a fireman before you could be eligible to sit for a drivers ticket. But of course, the War years came upon us, and Quorn went from just a few trains a week to about eight or nine trains a day each way to Alice Springs. And men came from all the States in Australia. Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, New South. In fact, I would say we had well over 250 men came to help us man the trains to Alice Springs actually. And that formed a very important part of the Quorn depot.

Could you describe that northern line to me, Keith, in those days? Where did it stretch from?

KE: Quorn, of course, was a rail junction. You could go back down to Port Augusta - 25 miles - or you could go down to Peterborough - Terowie/Peterborough - that way, about another 90 miles. North to Alice Springs was 747 miles actually. And that's the one that I was mainly engaged on - that one to Alice Springs. 747 each way.

And what were the stopovers or stations along the way? Marree was one, was it?

KE: Yes, one of the main ones. Well, the north line, you could just about say it was cut up into three sections. Quorn/Marree, Marree/Oodnadatta, Oodnadatta/Alice Springs actually. There were no big towns. Of course, when

they put the standard gauge to Marree, Marree became a big transshipping place actually. And then for a while it was a quite important part of the situation.

What did the railways mean to the people of the north in those days?

KE: Oh, the railway would've been the lifeblood of the whole situation. It all revolved around the railway. That's what it was all about actually.

So it was the main means of supply. The main means of communication.

KE: Everything revolved around the railway, yes.

And in those days for Alice Springs, was there a thought in those days of the line going on up to Darwin? It had been promised for a while.

KE: The line had been promised to go from Alice to Darwin in about - Federation actually. My wife's Father came from Sydney over into Port Augusta in - one of the foremen - in '27, and he was sure that it was almost going next day. But so far it hasn't as yet gone.

Although looking more likely. We hope.

KE: Yes, yes, I suppose. I suppose. I suppose.

So all through those War years, Keith - you were a driver by this time, were you?

KE: Yes. Early in the War years I was - because us local lads knew our engines, knew this country and we were pressurised into driving, whereas the interstate drivers they were strange engines, strange country, everything. And we coped a lot better than they did. And blackout conditions. And believe you me, when you're talking about blackout conditions, you're sent in dust storms and blackness, it's not very friendly.

No, it'd be tough as hell.

KE: It's not very good. You do that for four or five years, night and day, you're very pleased if you get a trip on a moonlight night.

Was it pretty wearing work in those days, Keith?

KE: Oh, yes, yes. Even when I was firing, I've had as many as three men opposite me towel it. See, when you get the interstate firemen, they weren't used to relay work. They weren't used to the heat and they'd just towel it. But I stood me - the old trousers and singlet were white with the salt of perspiration but you had to keep going. Our boys were on the firing line north of Darwin, you had to keep - you expected it was your duty to try and help keep them going.

When you say towel it, does that mean they - what? Collapsed, or what?

KE: Stopped. Give up. 'No, I can't go any further'.

So you were based in Quorn those years still, were you?

KE: Yes, I was in Quorn.

Was that a lovely little town then?

KE: Oh, yes. Quorn was a good place. My word, it was.

Very friendly locals there?

KE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Quorn was very self-contained and very friendly, yes. My word, it was. We still have our Quorn reunions actually twice a year.

Well, what were your main memories of that place in those times, Keith?

KE: Oh, Quorn - in the place, of course, was predominantly railway. Around Quorn you have a farming community. Wheat growing and whatever. Wheat and sheep all found on the outside of Quorn. Right around at Quorn is wheat and sheep. In fact, I have seen in good years 70 to 80,000 bags of wheat bagged, back in the bag days, stacked in the Quorn yard actually. A lot of wheat used to come there.

That's a big stack.

KE: Oh, yeah. Well, that's right. Oh, no, a lot of wheat came into Quorn. A lot of wheat. Even from down on the SAR side, north of Orroroo and across the

Willochra Plain, would all come into Quorn, and then eventually be railed down to be loaded at Port Augusta. As I said earlier on, Port Augusta was still a very important port - boats.

In a town like Quorn, which was an important railway headland, if you like, were the railway people highly thought of in the community? Welcomed?

KE: Well, they were different. That's rather a dicey one. But they were different by virtue of the fact that their work was so irregular, and they couldn't mix in socially. You might be expecting to go out to a social evening or a dance - whatever - and the call boy come with a note to say you've got to go to work immediately. So your wife had to get a tucker box together and away you went. So it did restrict your social activities a lot, yes.

You were married by the time you got to Quorn, were you, Keith?

KE: No. I wasn't married until the end of '39 actually. And we lived in Quorn then.

Where did you meet your wife?

KE: On a train as a matter of fact. *(Laughter)* On a train going to Brisbane to an Endeavour Convention actually.

Was it?

KE: Yeah, back in '35.

Was she a South Australian, too?

KE: Well, at that point of time she was, but she did come from Sydney. As I said earlier on, her Father came over in '27 - a boiler foreman in the Commonwealth Railways.

So were women like your wife very important to railway men in those communities like Quorn?

You said she got your tucker box ready earlier.

KE: Yes.

So they were absolutely an essential part of the community I guess for people like yourself working on the railways.

KE: Yes. During the War years especially, your note to go back to Alice Springs would often be home before you were and your wife would be packing the box, or cooking for it, before you got back - before you went there. I'll show you a note. They're here somewhere. I've got notes of the - that's the type of note you would get.

So you'd get this little pro forma -

KE: It says 'drive east -'. What's the foreman's name on that one?

Kittel.

KE: Kittel, yes. What were we going to do that time?

Stirling North.

KE: Kevin (*couldn't decipher name*) was my foreman.

Yes.

KE: We were to book on at - where are we? - 12.40 pm, and rest(?) out on relays 741. Continue from Marree on 1111. Return on 362 and 528 from - was again - from Alice Springs to Quorn return actually. And that would take about nearly a week.

**So your wife knew where you were going to be for the next week.
(Laughter)**

KE: Yes, she would know - that's right. And of course, that's the type of thing you would get to proceed with. There you are. Oh, that's a Stirling North. Oh, that train was 701. That's proceed to Wilkatana. Take the main line, and then go to Neuroodla, Cotabena, and so on. That's what we'd get.

And what type of engines were you driving at this point?

KE: Mainly NM's, but during the War years we got bogged down with locomotive power and we had to get engines from Peterborough. In fact, we were supposed to get - when MacArthur came back from the Philippines, I saw

him when he came - that famous saying of his when he was chased out of the Philippines - remember that?

Yes.

KE: He said, 'I'll be back'.

Yes.

KE: That did actually happen. And I saw him actually. I was going up to Alice Springs at a place called Mount Dutton actually, and he gave us three months to upgrade the railway. Put in extra crossing loops, get rolling-stock engines, manpower, a road from Alice Springs to Darwin to get to Darwin, and he gave us three months. And he said, 'I shall return', and he did. And believe you me, the push was on. A trip to Alice Springs was recognised as a fortnight's work, but at one point of time there I left home on the fifth time in a month. I went every week - just over every week. Up and back, up and back, up and back. 747 every trip. 747 each way actually.

That was carrying both people and goods?

KE: Yeah. Well, one train was soldiers. One train was aviation fuel and petrol. And we dumped that about three miles south of Alice Springs at a place called Heavi Tree Gap.

Oh, yes, I know that.

KE: The petrol tanks were in the hills at Heavi Tree and it was siphoned out to the airport actually. And we put a train a day into there. And the other train, that would be material, guns, ammunition, all sorts - whatever. Bombs. Bombs about this big. We'd cart everything. And there was always four trains each way, each day, seven days a week, plus, plus, plus.

It's a single line though through there, isn't it?

KE: Yes.

With loops. Is that right?

KE: With crossing loops. When MacArthur came back we had to have one every ten mile. Every ten mile.

TAPE 1 - SIDE B

So, Keith, the War years, going up to the Alice and back. What about after the War? Did you move on from Quorn?

KE: Yes. As a matter of fact in '46 the whole thing - the traffic fell through. Went from busy back to normal, and I was transferred to Tarcoola on the East/West line. Out there on express trains, goods trains, water trains. Whatever had to be done, we had to do it.

Tarcoola was pretty much the back of beyond then, wasn't it?

KE: Plus.

Plus. (Laughter)

Somebody called it the end of the earth and more, once, but I won't even say how they described it.

KE: And yet we had six good years at Tarcoola actually. Yes, we had six good years at Tarcoola.

Pretty hot?

KE: Yes, very hot, and cold. Tarcoola's a hot place and cold. Can be both. In fact, we arrived there on the fast goods end May '46, and there was a black frost that morning. On the fast goods we got there just after sun-up, and believe you me, it was fairly cold.

So were you actually going over the border then into the West?

KE: Normally, no. We worked from Tarcoola/Barton, from Barton to Cook. But once I was at Cook and a mate of mine, his wife took sick, and the Superintendent from Port Augusta said, 'If you can get somebody to go for you - Easton's in the barracks over there. See if he'll go down to Reid for you'. So

(sounds like, Chummy Hillman) came over and said would I go to Reid and take the express(?) down there. So I said, 'Oh, yes. Go straight down and straight back. The line *(couldn't decipher words)* goes straight down and straight back. There's no curves'. So I went - took Chummy's train to Reid. That's the only time I ever went over the border on a train I was driving.

I was going to ask you, Keith, were there other times when you had problems on the trains? Not major disasters maybe but real problems. Like that, where things were changed at the last minute?

KE: Oh, you'd have derailments or washaways and whatever, and they'd cause chaos. In fact one Christmas time, I went to Alice Springs, and there'd been a derailment by Abminga, which is near the South Australian/Northern Territory border, and I had to take the front part of that train back to Alice Springs and then return back home. But we had our washaways and derailments, and that caused a bit of problems actually. You'd know when you went but you weren't too sure when you were going to get home. *(Laughter)* You always carried your iron rations, or tin dogs as they called it, for an extra couple of meals - whatever. And if that run out, well, of course they'd drop bread and meat from a light plane. Or tighten the belt up a bit. *(Laughter)*

So you were at Tarcoola for six years. Where to then?

KE: Back to Quorn. Back to Quorn, and back on the Alice run. By that time Leigh Creek coal trains had almost - were just starting. At that point of time, the Leigh Creek coal was coming down to Peterborough, or Terowie, to be transhipped to Adelaide. And then when they opened the power house at Port Augusta, and built the new line the other side, we went that way - to Stirling, for the last sixteen years of our railway life.

That's when you were working that line, were you? The Leigh Creek part.

KE: Most of that. We were still working in Quorn a little bit. No, it would be the whole lot. Occasionally went back to Quorn to work a train but not very often.

So initially that would've been coal fired trains, would it? Steam trains? On the Leigh Creek line. Or was it always diesels?

KE: Diesel. Yes, diesel. All diesel at that point of time, yes. The diesels came in when we were still on the Quorn narrow gauge side, yes. Until the Hookina bridge got washed away. They had inches of rain up east of Hawker and it washed a big railway bridge down at Hookina, and so they started then all of a hurry going the other side.

What was the difference in driving the steam or the diesel?

KE: Oh, there's no comparison really. The steam engine's alive. The diesel's a mechanical contraption. Simple as that. But steam engines are good. Diesel is, well, fair enough I suppose. No comparison, of course. One you're moving around and the other one you sit there and use your arms.

So quite different skills in both?

KE: Oh, I suppose to a certain extent. Your knowledge of the road and so forth is the same but the diesel, of course, is a lot different. You've got all your lights in front of you. Flashing if things go wrong and so forth. They're in front of you on your dashboard (*couldn't decipher words*) It's different altogether on a diesel-electric.

What would the biggest changes have been in the railways over the years that you worked?

KE: That I worked?

Yeah.

KE: At that point, five and a half thousand ton was the biggest ones we used to work actually.

The biggest trains were five and a half thousand?

KE: Yes, five and a half thousand, but since then they've been almost doubled, or even doubled. But at that point of time, five and a half thousand ton.

What would've been the biggest alteration in your work over that time, Keith?

KE: On the diesels you worked almost twice as far actually because you didn't have the stops and so forth with the coal and water and oil and maintenance for your steam loco actually.

So right through your period of driving with the railways, picking up work or was it beginning to tail off towards the end of your time?

KE: Oh, it'd be hard to say because when we started, four or five hundred ton would've been a fair load. And when I finished they took a thousand ton. A stock train would be a thousand - different altogether. So if they'd have still been using the small trains that would've been a lot of them, wouldn't it?
(Laughter) That's what it amounts to. You just imagine, the original coal trains - double header coal trains - sixty ton over Hookina - double headers, of course - double header coal trains - narrow gauge. And as I say, when I finished, that's five and a half thousand ton. Well, of course, if you multiply that, you'd have about seven or eight - nine trains instead of one. And you'd have a very busy service. So really it would be hard to gauge. But, of course, with the new line to Alice Springs it did pick up a lot - the traffic. Course, Alice Springs and Darwin grew like every other place. And I tell you, that by Alice Springs there - and you know Alice Springs now?

Yes.

KE: And they've got to be fed, and they've all got to be watered - fed and watered - so you can just imagine yourself.

Was road transport beginning to make its inroads by the time you finished, Keith, on the trains?

KE: Only just because they hadn't - oh, just almost completed the Stuart Highway, so it would've only just been safe. And of course, even the semis weren't hauling the loads that they are now, at that point of time.

And when you were living all those years in rural Australia - oh, you were born in it, too - did you think that country people were different from city people somehow, or were they much the same?

KE: No, there's no comparison. There's no comparison - city people and country people actually. I don't think so.

Why do you think that, Keith?

KE: Well, it's hard to define and put into words but they are different. A lot different.

Do country people have more of a sense of community, do you think? Or belonging together?

KE: Yes. Yes. Well, yes, that's right. I'll agree with that, too, because city people are more individuals. Like, you barely know your next door neighbour. But in the railway, at one point of time, you'd know all those in Quorn to Alice Springs.

So the railways community was a big community in those days?

KE: Oh, yes, yes.

Did the Commonwealth people know the SAR or the other States as well, or not so much?

KE: To a certain - those you come in contact with, of course, in Quorn where we dealt with the Peterborough boys, and that was quite good. And we knew quite a few of them. But we didn't have a lot to do with them, even that.

So would you count all that country service as very worthwhile years, Keith?

KE: Oh, yes, quite good. Yes, quite good. Oh, yes, very good.

And just coming back again - I've got to get this right - Quorn was your last posting before you retired?

KE: No, I was at Stirling.

Stirling?

KE: Stirling. Yes, that's right. Stirling on the western side of the hills. Yes, Stirling for sixteen years. Actually I said earlier on.

Yes, that's right, you did.

That's a much smaller settlement than Quorn though, isn't it?

KE: No. The Commonwealth, they levelled out the sand hills and put in 100 houses, and that was it. And they built a hall, a butcher shops, Post Office, community hall, tennis courts. We built a little Church there. And then they made a golf course actually as well. That was fairly self contained, too, really.

They sound like good years, Keith.

KE: Oh, yes, my years have been good. My word.

This is Quorn, is it, Keith?

KE: Yes. And the country women gave all those soldiers going up and coming back - prisoners of war or whatever, all sorts - every train, they gave a hot meal. And, of course, as I say, there was well over 200 men. With all those strangers, I was telling you earlier on, we had at least four each way each day, plus a lot of other extra trains. And, of course, all those trains, when they sent one to Alice Springs, they wouldn't be rostered again for about six or seven days, so they had to man those trains each day until the next train(?) came back again.

And Quorn was the last place they visited really on their way out, or in.

KE: The soldiers, the last place where they had - with these country women. In fact I've got a big story there about Quorn. The country women gave them a meal. Quorn was a big place.

They must've been very memorable years.

KE: Ross, he was a traffic man. He knows all about Quorn. *(Laughter)* They had all these trains and all this rolling-stock, all had to be looked at, and reversed, because in Quorn the trains come in from the south and go back to the north, so they had to reverse them, which caused a lot of work actually. Would be quite usual to have a train on each end coming in - one from Alice Springs, one from Peterborough and one from Port Augusta, all whistling on -

getting on the shunters backs to come into the yard, and they're struggling to get the work done in the yard, and all these other trains are on their back.

Weren't they, Ross? *(Laughter)*

Voice in background: Three coming in, three ready to go out.

KE: That's right.

Voice in background: You had to shuffle one -

KE: That's right. You can't miss the north/south line and by-pass the Quorn effort - War effort. And all those dozens of - hundreds of railway men that came from the four corners of Australia. Oh, a few from Tasmania, too. We had a couple. Old Jacky Clark - Schooner(?) Clark - was a Tasmanian.

This would've been under manpower they brought them over, did they?

KE: Everybody was manpowered, including us. Including us. We were all manpowered. And the last thing they'd say to you, 'Get back on your engine quick and smart. That's where you ought to be'. And anyone in the Army that happened to mention they'd had a ride in a train, they were sent then to Quorn, too, to work in the railways - if they knew anything or not. *(Laughter)* Is that right, Ross?

Voice in background: Yes.

KE: A lot of them had only just had a ride on a train. That's how experienced they were. *(Laughter in voice)* But, no, that's a fact. A lot of them were sent out of the Army, because we were desperate for men. We were desperate for men actually.

Well, your transport had to function.

KE: That's right. We had to keep the tucker and ammunition - guns, bombs, you name it - up to the south west Pacific. It had to be got. All went through *(couldn't decipher word)*.

Well, thank you very much for talking with me today, Keith, about your memories.

KE: Okay.