

Monaro Group – Institution of Engineers, Australia.

Oral History Project

Annotated Logs of Tapes recorded by David Anderson on 10th March 1999.

Time Mins.	Tape Counter Reading	Content
Tape 1, Side 1.		
0-5	0-64	Family background; reasons for becoming an engineer; education; experience in Kenya; interest in Australia.
5-10	64-130	Marriage; return to UK in 1950; rebuff by Institution of Civil Engineers, London; application for job on the Snowy.
10-15	130-210	Interview with Tony Merigan; offer of appointment and acceptance; travel to Australia on m.v. "Cheshire"; arrival in Sydney; Cecil Court guest house; started work in Snowy office in Alexandria 19/12/50; warm welcome and Christmas dinner with James Anderson and his family.
15-20	210-290	Work in Hydrology Branch in Snowy office in O'Riordan St; contact with Ted Pender and other staff.
20-25	290-380	Ted's plans for Hydrology Branch; directed to take over stream gauging in Snowy Mountains Area from W.C. & I.C., and build new stream gauging stations; went to Cooma, met Ken Andrews; to Jindabyne, met Danny Collman, inspection of Spencer's Creek and other areas; got Land Rover and based myself at Island Bend.
25-30	380-485	Stream gauging stations and how they work; examples of stations we built – Dead Horse Ck., Windy Ck., and Club Lake Ck.
30-31	485-495	Number of stations built.
Tape 1, Side 2.		
0-5	0-64	Visit by Trygvie Olsen & Howard Dann; joined by John Clinch, Frank Millner, and Avon Long to help with construction; need for staff to operate and rate stations; possibility of using migrants.
5-10	64-132	Recruitment and training of migrants as hydrographers; establishing precipitation gauges and snow courses; moved family to Snowy house in Cooma North; Margaret's mother joined us from UK
10-15	132-206	Training experience with United States Bureau of Reclamation's Hydrology Branch in Denver; at Folsom Dam in California and Palisades Dam in Idaho with John Muir and Colin Campbell; and in estimating section in Denver. Value of the Bureau experience.
15-20	206-288	Coordinating field investigation; reconnaissance for the Alpine Way.

20-25	288-380	Appointment as Supervising Engineer of the Engineering Laboratories; concept of the Laboratories – Tom Lang and Tom Leech; latter's interest in staff training; interview with Commissioners about Engineering Laboratories budget as an example of Snowy method of management.
25-30	380-484	What the Engineering Laboratories did – hydraulics, geology, soil conservation.
30-31	484-492	Materials laboratory.
Tape 2, Side 1.		
0-5	0-64	Materials laboratory and staff training; physics and chemistry labs.; photography.
5-10	64-133	Still and movie photography; library; my concept of the role of the supervising engineer; National Association of Testing Authorities registration.
10-15	133-207	Cement testing.
15-20	207-288	Rock bolting developments; rock mechanics investigations; recommendation for laboratories to be commercialised -
20-25	288-378	above continued. Soil conservation activities. Safety belts in motor vehicles.
25-30	378-482	Safety belts – egg demonstration. Public relations activities.
30-31	482-496	Duke of Edinburgh's visit.
Tape 2, Side 2.		
0-5	0-61	Duke of Edinburgh's visit; organising the official opening of Tumut 1 power station.
5-10	61-119	Opening of Tumut 1 power station; steel testing for Murray 1 pressure pipelines.
10-15	119-192	Murray 1 pressure pipeline; 1961 Federal election and work with Tim Besley on future employment of Snowy expertise; my transfer to Civil Design Division as Branch Head, Tunnels and Aqueducts Design. Work on Murray 1, Murray 2, and Tumut 3 pressure pipelines. Left Snowy to join Electricity Commission of NSW.
15-20	192-272	Civil and structural design work for Liddell Power station, and for new units at Wallerawang and Vales Point power stations. Investigations of failures at Liddell coal handling plant and steel coal bins. Lecturing at Sydney University school of civil engineering. Appointed Chief Engineer, Hunter District Water Board.
20-25	272-376	Represented HDWB on a number of State committees, including appointment to Dams Safety Committee of NSW in 1979. Later was successively its deputy chairman and chairman before retiring in 1997 after serving on it for 18 years. Thoughts on my experiences on the Snowy Scheme, and the benefits my family and I gained from it.
25-30	376-480	To round out the tape - some further thoughts on the Alpine Way, Jacob's River country, and experience in decision making gained while working briefly in the Development and Project Planning arm of the Investigation Division.

Some further notes.

Tape 1, Side 1. – 20-25 mins., tape counter 290-380

A correction – the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens was Frank (not Len) Plumridge.

Tape 1, Side 2. 50-55 mins., tape counter 206-288

In the tape, I haven't referred anywhere to Ted Pender's efforts to educate his staff in effective management. Even in the early days in Alexandria, he used to get copied and circulate at his own expense extracts from books and articles which he thought contained useful information or thoughts on management. Some of it was as simple as proper telephone manners; others emphasised the need to realise your staff were your most valuable asset and treat them accordingly. He certainly got me interested in the subject so that I read quite a few books on the topic and I am sure it helped me in developing my style of management.

Tape 2, Side 1. 90-95 mins., tape counter 288-378

While I've talked about safety belts and vehicle safety, in which I was directly concerned, I should have commented on the Snowy efforts in the general area of workplace safety. These led the field in the construction industry at that time, not only in equipment, safety targets, and joint efforts with contractors and unions, but in such areas as facilities for rehabilitation after injury etc. Ted Pender also played a significant role in much of this. It is impossible for anyone commenting today who did not live through the time to realise how big a change in mind-set was needed from the risk acceptance attitude engendered by the war and its aftermath.

Tape 2, Side 2. 110-115 mins., tape counter 119-192

This section is probably a bit unbalanced, in that I've emphasised the large pipelines. Tunnels and joint tunnel inspections with resident engineers and geologists to decide on the extent and type of lining were also important. I haven't referred to a failure, which could have been avoided if I had taken a more conservative approach to the design of the rising main to the Jindabyne surge tank. Because the hydraulic analyses showed there would be no negative pressures, we didn't provide any stiffening rings. The pipe collapsed under testing. On a lighter note, when the guard valves at the top of the Murray 1 pressure pipelines were tested closing into flow, the vibration and apparent movement of the valves shocked everyone. We were out there one morning waiting for a party of commissioners, chief engineers etc. to arrive by plane to see a demonstration of this. It was foggy, and as we stood around the valves, we heard the two Beaver planes come over above the fog. Someone said reflectively "You know, if those planes crash in the fog, there'll be an awful lot of promotions going".