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Part Time Open Foundation

Australian History, Tuesdays, 1pm - 3pm

Assignment : Local History Research Paper;
'A HISTORY OF THE POLICE IN NEWCASTLE'

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A HISTORY OF THE POLICE IN NEWCASTLE.

In 1797 Lieutenant John SHORTLAND sailed into the Hunter River in search of escaped convicts. Soon after, a small settlement was established. In 1804 after a convict rebellion in Sydney, 70 of the worst convicts were sent to Newcastle. Having already been transported to the colony for their criminal acts, banishment to the new, small settlement seemed the only appropriate action.

The new settlement grew with the addition of convicts who were being punished for their second and third crimes. They were supervised by a Superintendent and a small party of military. Captain James WALLIS, a soldier was appointed Commandant in Newcastle in 1816 and carried out his duties until 1818. A later Commandant, Major MORRISSETT, often carried out the duties of the Police Officer in the settlement. He met in the Police office with any complainant convict, hearing the versions of an incident. He would then adjudicate, deciding the guilt and the punishment. Only murder hearings were forwarded to Sydney for decision.⁴

To maintain order the Constables were selected from the best behaved of the convicts. John SMITH convicted of Stealing in England and transported to the colony became Chief Constable in the early settlement of Newcastle. In 1819 he had a troop of 17 men under his control.² He was later given a grant of land at East Maitland. On the 1st August, 1825 George MUIR was appointed Chief Constable and remained in that position until his retirement in 1830.

During 1810 a number of buildings were built for Police purposes. A weatherboard barrack for the Chief Constable, a watch-house for Constables adjoining the landing place and barracks for the Constables. The first gaol was built on a site that is now occupied by the Top of the Town Motor Inn, Shortland Esplanade.

In 1828 Lieutenant ROBERTSON helped with the formation of the first Mounted Police and in that year a troop was stationed at Newcastle. Their initial purpose was to combat the activities of bushrangers in the Hunter Valley area. The Police strength of the

area of Newcastle appears to have varied. Under John SMITH in 1819 there were 17 Constables.³ By 1830 the Foot Police had been reduced to 5.

Early records show that some of the Constables had difficulty in changing their convict ways. On the 1st July, 1819 Constable John MENSLOWE was given 25 lashes for 'seizing rum smuggled on shore and afterwards purloining it'. On the 16th August, 1819 Constable John GARSIDES was given 50 lashes for 'on wharf allow a boat to be taken away'.⁴ The commission of crime by Constables was treated seriously when one considers that a convict Edward TOBINS who was a consistent offender was given only 30 lashes in 1819 for 'Attempting to stab a Constable'

In 1827 a Police Magistrate, Samuel WRIGHT was appointed to Newcastle. As a member of the Bench of Magistrates he had control of the Police in Newcastle. The Police organisation was not a single operational unit. Police were under the control of Police Magistrates in each area. The Bench of Magistrates had control of the Police until a Bill establishing the New South Wales Police Force was given Royal Assent on the 1st March, 1862. New Police regulations came into force. The purpose of the regulations was to organise the Force throughout the State as one, with one set of rules instead of the fragmented Force pre 1862.⁵ The rules of management of the Police Force were made up of 399 rules covering 70 pages. The first 12 sections covered the general duties of the Force, both officers and men. Many old Police Officers either resigned or were pensioned from the old Force and each member wishing to join the new Force had to apply.

The rules of management divided the Force into various grades; Mounted, Foot, Water and Detectives. The men were also divided into ranks; Superintendents, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Sergeants, Constables and Aboriginal Trackers. The Depot, or Headquarters, was in Sydney and under the immediate supervision of the Inspector-General Mr FOSBERRY. The Detective Force comprised of Sub-Inspectors and Constables and were under the control of an officer in Sydney. The colony was divided into Districts and Sub-Districts with each District under the control of a Superintendent.

Potential Constables had to be under 30 years of age, of strong constitution, medically fit and would be taken in for a three day trial after which, if satisfactory, would undergo a 12 month probation. Constables were required to devote their whole time to the Police Service, serve and reside wherever demanded and not marry without the permission of the Superintendent.⁵

With the re-organisation of the Force, Samuel HOLT who had been the Chief Constable of Police for the Port of Newcastle 1844-1862 retired. On the 21 October, 1862 at a Testimonial honouring him he was presented with a Gold Watch and Chain by the citizens of Newcastle.⁸ Testimonials and presentations were common upon the retirement or transfer of respected Police Officers in the early years. One wonders how the Police Department would react today if a situation similar to that of Detective McHATTIE arose. At his retirement a testimonial was held on the 9th October, 1915 at which the Senior Detective was presented with a gold medal and 75 sovereigns by the citizens of Newcastle.⁹ The newspapers of the early years contain many reports of Testimonials for Police Officers at which they were presented with a money purse full of gold sovereigns.

After the re-organisation, Mr MORRISSETT was the Superintendent in charge of the North Eastern Police District with his headquarters at Maitland. The area of his control was from Nambucca in the north, Scone to the west and Gosford to the south.¹⁰ 123 men patrolled the District in 1879, In the sub-district of Newcastle the first Inspector was Mr HUSSEY. Between 1864 and 1868 followed Mr WONG and Mr HARRISON. There were many records found in the Newcastle Chronicle and Herald of representations made by responsible citizens for the Headquarters of the District to be transferred to the more populated Newcastle. On the 1st August, 1921 the Headquarters of the North Eastern Police District was transferred to Newcastle under the control of the Superintendent CHILDS.

Police in the sub-district of Newcastle and then later the District Headquarters were housed in a handsome building located at 90 - 94 Hunter Street. The building was erected between 1859 - 1861 by the builder John SCANLON at a cost of £1,925. In 1893 an

extra storey was added, sleeping accomodation for 16 men as well as improved working conditions were provided at a cost of £1,742.¹¹

In 1879 there were 123 Police Officers in the North Eastern Police District stationed at stations at Newcastle, Hamilton, Waratah, Lambton, New Lambton, Wallsend, Stockton, Bullock Island (Carrington), Wickham, Tighes Hill and Charlestown, all of those stations being within the inner area of the District.¹²

Many representations were made by concerned citizens and were reported in the newspapers of the 19th - early 20th century about the lack of sufficient numbers of Police Officers. In 1868 the residents of Lambton complained that they ought to have a Constable. Sub-Inspector HARRISON agreed and he said,

"a place where there are four public houses ought to have a Constable."¹³

An editorial in the Newcastle Chronicle, 28th October, 1869 supported the call for more Police in the colliery townships of Wallsend, Lambton, New Lambton, Waratah and Pitt Town, an area of 10,000 people, 30 public houses and yet only two Police, one at Waratah and one at Wallsend.¹⁴ Citizens were hopeful when it was reported in the Newcastle Chronicle, 11th November, 1869 that,

"in ten days time a Constable will take up duties at Lambton."¹⁵

Nothing further was reported until a report in the Newcastle Morning Herald on the 3rd May, 1876 that the authorities were shamed into appointing a Police Officer at Lambton.¹⁶ In 1886 a new Police Station was built at Lambton.

In 1886 the Newcastle Borough Council made a formal request to the Inspector - General for more Police. They claimed that for the population within their area from Nobbys, Wickham Bridge to The Junction there was a large population and 63 public houses. To Police that area there were 16 Police including the Inspectors. The response from the Colonial Secretary's office has a familiar tone,

"The Inspector-General considers more Police are required in Newcastle and will endeavour to meet."¹⁷

In 1899 the Police launch 'Nemesis', a sixteen year old steam

launch with a speed of 8 knots was brought to Newcastle for patrols of the water ways. On board there was sufficient space for prisoners and accomodation for the crew.¹⁸ In the year 1900 Police at Newcastle received a Prison van for the purpose of Prisoner transport. Reporting its arrival in the Newcastle Morning Herald said,

"After many years of waiting, Newcastle Police have at last risen to the dignity attaching to the possession of a genuine 'Black Maria'. The new vehicle which was put into prisoner transport service yesterday is neat, stylish and apparently comfortable, but it is not large enough for a city of Newcastle's size and importance, as it will accomodate only about six passengers, a mere flea bite on an "after pay day" list. The vehicle resembles a presentable mourning coach and has emblazoned on the side in gilt and scroll the mystic letters "V.R." which are sometimes described as an abbreviation of "virtue rewarded'." ¹⁹

Police of today will have little difficulty in relating to the problems of the Police of yesteryear. The activities of hoodlums on the street and the confrontations with them appear to have changed little. In 1877 at the Naval Brigade Hotel, Watt Street four Police without any assistance from a large crowd that had gathered, fought with 14 drunken seamen.²⁰ In 1889 a lone Police Officer had to confront a large group of railway workers at Adamstown.²¹ Newspaper reports of the Court Lists show that street crime similar to that of today was occurring. Statistics of the crime going before the Police Magistrate at Newcastle for 1870 show that anti-social behaviour existed then as it does now. For offences against the person there were 270 persons arrested, for offences against property there were 253 persons arrested and 496 persons were charged with drunkenness.²²

Police Officers saw action in a number of wars. As far back as 1885 when the Inspector-General Mr Fosbery asked the local Inspector to seek volunteers for military service in the event of hostilities between England and Russia.²³ There does not appear to be any records of Police serving in the Military until the World War 1. At the instigation of Constable J. CHANDLER, at Newcastle

on the 25th July, 1918 a Roll of Honour was unveiled by the Superintendent GOULDER in memory of those who served in World War 1.

In 1921 the first Conference of the newly formed Police Association was held in Sydney. The Association became active in campaigning for Police Officers. Sergeant J. BELL became President and Constable O. PALMER the Secretary of the first Newcastle branch of the Association.

In 1925 there was some concern that the Police Station at Newcastle was inadequate and the question was asked whether it should be removed or remodelled. Prior to the Headquarters of the District being moved to occupy the Police Station in Hunter Street there was a residence for a married man attached and the married Constable's wife was paid to act as the Police Matron, used for searching of female prisoners and matters relating to women and children. With the transfer of the Headquarters the residence was turned into office accomodation for the Superintendent and staff. There were suggestions that the property be sold and one central Police Station be built on another site for the City's purpose, at less cost. The corner of King and Darby Streets was the suggested site and the argument was that the value of the Hunter Street Police Station site, £28,300 and that amount of money could provide more adequate facilities elsewhere. It took until 1977 until that was finally done and in that year the new and present city Police Station commenced to be built on a site at the corner of Watt and Church Streets, Newcastle, the site of what was previously Police residences, 66 and 68 Watt Street, and the Police stables which were later converted to become the Police garage. It is interesting to note that when the demolition of the residences first commenced newspapers reported the start of work on the new \$6 million Police Station. Upon the official opening of the same building in 1983 the newspapers reported the opening of the \$10 million building.

Some other interesting buildings owned, occupied and sometimes left disused by the Police were the Newcastle West Police Station, located on the north side of Hunter Street, east of Union Street

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which was closed as a Police Station in 1935 but continued to operate in other ways for some time. It has been a call box/residence and lockup for females. It has also been used by the Vice Squad and Licensing Police. The original boat shed for the water Police was situated at a site about 50 metres west of the present Water Police Station. The present Water Police building was built in 1957 and has been used as a Morgue. The buildings which are still situated at the corner of Scott and Pacific Streets, circa' 1890, were built as residences but later had life as the Police Traffic Branch. There was a call box at the intersection of High, Bingle and Anzac Streets, Newcastle, another near the corner of Zaara Street and Shortland Esplanade above Newcastle Beach. There was also a call box/residence on the western side of Darby Street between Bull and Parry Streets. The buildings that previously occupied the site of the present Police Station, circa' 1875, number 66 was built as barracks for unmarried Police and number 68 as a residence for married Police. A stable that later became the Police Garage was built at the back of the residences and each of them was demolished to make way for the present building.

Police of the 19th Century and early 20th Century seem to have been little different to those of us of today. They suffered from a shortage of manpower, inadequate working conditions, doubts about their promotional system and they considered that they were lowly paid. They had to deal with men and women of violence, street hoodlums and a wide range of demanding duties. They like the Police of today were able to put that all aside and still carry out their work in a professional manner, still arresting and convicting person for all types of crime, keeping the streets safe for the law abiding citizens to frequent.

FOOTNOTES.

1. J. W. Turner, 'The Evidence Before J.T. Bigge in 1819 - 1821' in J.W. Turner ed., Newcastle as a Convict Settlement, Newcastle, 1973, p.p. 72-73.
2. J.W. Turner, 'Lecture on Convictism - Newcastle', Newcastle University, 7 September, 1989.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. Newcastle Chronicle, 6 January, 1864.
6. ibid.,
7. ibid.
8. ibid., 25 October, 1862.
9. Newcastle Morning Herald, 11 October, 1915.
10. ibid., 17 October, 1879.
11. ibid., 11 February, 1893.
12. ibid., 17 December, 1879.
13. Newcastle Chronicle, 24 September, 1868.
14. ibid., 28 October, 1869.
15. ibid., 11 November, 1869.
16. Newcastle Morning, 3 May, 1876.
17. ibid., 12 March, 1886.

FOOTNOTES.

18. ibid, 25 July, 1899.

19. ibid, 17 January, 1890.

20. ibid, 27 August, 1877.

21. ibid, 17 July, 1889.

22. Newcastle Chronicle, 28 January, 1871.

23. Newcastle Morning, 1 May, 1885.

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J.W. Turner, 'The Evidence before J.T. Bigge in 1819 - 1821' in
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University, 7 September, 1989.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN GLENN CROMPTON, DOUGLAS LITHGOW AND KEITH PARSONS ON SUNDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER, 1989.

The interview is one between Glenn CROMPTON who is a Detective Senior Constable in the New South Wales Police Force, attached to Newcastle Police Station, Keith PARSONS who is the son of retired Sergeant First Class Ewen Grant PARSONS and Douglas LITHGOW who is the son of retired Superintendent George Malcolm LITHGOW. The interview was conducted at the home of Douglas LITHGOW at 18 Hillcrest Parade, Highfields on Sunday, 3rd September, 1989. The interview was conducted along the line that both Keith and Doug were sons of Police Officers and would be able to offer their views of their fathers' occupations and also the effect that the Police Force had on their own lives.

Superintendent George Malcolm LITHGOW joined the New South Wales Police Force in 1927 aged 23 years and served until his retirement in 1964. For many years up until 1957 he served as the Chief Prosecutor, Newcastle, having charge of the Police Prosecuting Branch, North Eastern Police District. Ewen Grant PARSONS joined the New South Wales Police Force in 1939 aged about 27 years and he retired at the rank of Sergeant First Class in 1974 whilst attached to the Prosecuting Branch, Newcastle. Mr Lithgow came from a rural background, moving from the family farm at Gilgandra to join the Police Force. Mr Parsons came from Metropolitan Sydney and worked as a piano tuner prior to entering the Police. Despite their contrasting beginnings both men found themselves specialising within the Police Force in Prosecuting. Each of them progressed through the fields of General Duties in the Sydney area to their positions as Prosecutors, with Mr Lithgow progressing with promotion to Commissioned rank and positions as an officer at both Wagga Wagga and Newcastle.

Both Dough and Keith spoke of the difficulties and unfairness of the promotional system. The system particularly disadvantaged Mr Parsons because he joined the Force at the age of 27 losing eight years in seniority to those who joined at the earliest eligible age. Both did progress to senior ranks and Mr Lithgow was appointed Superintendent, Assistant

Officer, North Eastern Police District. During the interview they both spoke about the childish type situation of favouritism within the job. How, depending on whether or not one was a Mason or a Catholic, a sportsman or a non-sportsman, those being necessary attributes at different times if one sought promotion of a favourable transfer.

Both Superintendent LITHGOW and Sergeant PARSONS whilst stationed in Newcastle as Prosecutors resided in Departmental premises, situated on the site of the present Police Station, 66 - 68 Watt Street, Newcastle. Co-incidentally when the Lithgow family vacated the residence the Parsons family moved in. Years later Keith and Doug met each other under different circumstances and are now good friends. Keith and Doug spoke about the problems encountered in living in Police residences and the uncaring attitude of the Department to the families who resided in them and to the condition of the houses in which they lived. Keith spoke from his experience and interest in old buildings and his knowledge of old Police Stations in the Newcastle area. He spoke of how a number of Police Stations in the Hunter Valley were designed by Mortimer Lewis Junior and were built of similar appearance.

Dough and Keith spoke of their years growing up as sons of Police Officers and both agreed that there was an expectation on the part of society for children of Police Officers to behave in a manner above that expected of children from other types of families. They spoke about the wages of their fathers and indicated that wages were low, but at least for Mr Lithgow, during the depression he was grateful that he at least had a job, accepting a pay cut as many employees did during the depression. He recalled that his father had told him that he was the only person in his street with a job.

Doug related some incidents which involved Police and civilians. He spoke about the scandal of the 'yellow socks mob', yellow socks being the identifying feature of homosexuals who frequented the Newcastle area, particularly the Newcastle baths where there were regular meetings of them. He also spoke of a young Police Officer stationed at Hamilton who shot himself in the foot after being accused of stealing.

It was later found that the accusation was wrong and some other person, a non-Police Officer admitted the offence.

Police and the camaraderie within the Force were discussed. The social life of Police and the sometimes neglect of the women in their lives stood out. The effects of any tragic loss of a fellow Police Officer who might have died whilst on duty was another point covered and both Keith and Doug spoke of the grief felt by their parents when Police died in the execution of their duty. Doug spoke of the Police wives, living in remote locations and how despite not receiving any recognition from the Police Department, they performed duties as unpaid, unofficial Police, maintaining the station whilst their husbands were absent performing his duties.

It is clear from the interview with Doug and Keith that they are extremely proud of their fathers and the positions held by them. They indicated the love that their fathers had for the job that they were part of and the respect that they had earned from others within and outside the Police Force. They were typical of Police who served before and after them in that despite the conditions that they were working under they were still able to perform their duties to the satisfaction of the Department and the community.

INTERVIWEE	Keith PARSONS and Doug LITHGOW
INTERVIEWER	Glenn CROMPTON
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW	Police Force in Newcastle
DATE	3rd September, 1989
<u>DOCUMENT AVAILABLE</u>	

OPEN FOUNDATION

LITHGOW, Douglas and PARSONS, Keith

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

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I, KEITH. PARSONS give my
permission to GLENN CROMPTON

to use this interview, or part of this interview, for
research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
these if required) and for copies to be lodged in
the Newcastle University

for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed [Signature]

Date 3/9/89

Interviewer [Signature]

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE

198

I, Douglas Lithgow give my
permission to Glen Crombie

to use this interview, or part of this interview, for
research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
these if required) and for copies to be lodged in
the Newcastle University Library

.....
for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed D. Lithgow

Date 3/9/89

Interviewer Lithgow

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN GLENN CROMPTON AND DOUG LITHGOW AND KEITH PARSONS ON SUNDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1989.

CROMPTON Interview between Glenn CROMPTON, Keith PARSONS and Doug LITHGOW. The interview is for Glenn Crompton's research paper into local history on the subject of Police in the Newcastle District 1862 to 1989 as part of the local history section of Australian History Open Foundation. The interview takes place on Sunday the 3rd of September, 1989 at the home of Doug Lithgow at 18 Hillcrest Parade, Highfields.

My name is Glenn Crompton. I am a student of Australian History in Open Foundation at Newcastle University. This interview is between myself, Doug Lithgow and Keith Parsons. Doug and Keith are sons of retired Police Officers.

First of all Keith, could you outline for me some of your personal particulars, date of birth and so on?

PARSONS Right well I was born on the 22nd November, 1945 in Sydney. I came to Newcastle to live in 1957 when my father was transferred up here. I've lived here basically ever since ah I'm not married, I'm a teacher and I've been a teacher since 1972, a High School teacher ah is that about all you want to know.

CROMPTON That's fine, and Doug could you as well?

LITHGOW Well I was born in July, 1933 and ah I've lived mainly in Sydney ah Wagga, Gilgandra and Newcastle really.

CROMPTON Right, and Keith could you ah, on your father, could you tell me his name, date of birth if you know his date of birth?

PARSONS Yes his name is Ewen Grant PARSONS, born in Enmore in Sydney 9th October, 1912.

CROMPTON Right, do you recall when he joined the New South Wales Police?

PARSONS It was just on the eve of the second world war. I think August 1939 or thereabouts.

CROMPTON and do you recall the year or the date that he retired?

PARSONS yep, it was October, 1972.

CROMPTON and the rank that he retired at?

PARSONS he was a first class Sergeant.

CROMPTON Are you aware of what occupation he had before he joined the Police Force?

PARSONS Ah yeah, the main one, he had a number of jobs but he ended up being apprenticed as a piano tuner/repairer or piano mechanic whatever you call it, that was a trade that he went through working for the company Beale and company that made pianos in Sydney. I think that was what he spent most of his um pre Police career in.

CROMPTON Have you any knowledge of where he was first stationed?

PARSONS I should have asked him but I've got a feeling that it was number two or number three. I think it might have been Clarence Street in Sydney.

CROMPTON Number two over the last few years has been Regent Street and number three was Darlinghurst, so it was in Sydney.

PARSONS So it was in the city, it might have been Regent Street.

CROMPTON Do you have any knowledge of his history or transfers from when he first joined until when he came to Newcastle?

PARSONS Ah I know that um he did a lot of, he did the normal general duty stuff when he joined in his early years then he worked in Plain clothes for a while in Sydney, I think he worked on the gold buying squad, I remember him telling me that once, I know tha he used to go around all the pawnbroker shops and ----- and things um I think in the late 1940's he joined the Court staff as a Court Constable, in those days it was sort of a prelude to training to become a prosecutor and virtually all my my life that I can remember he was always a Prosecutor so your looking from the late 1940's almost until the time he retired, he was on light duties for about 12 months before he retired, but most of his career was spent in the Prosecuting Branch.

CROMPTON right

PARSONS in Sydney until 1947 and the from the I think -----

CROMPTON well 1957 he arrived in Newcastle.. Do you recall what rank he was then?

PARSONS Well he's always had that, in those days you were given the rank of Sergeant Third Class no matter what your rank was. Probably a Constable.

CROMPTON Probably an acting Sergeant?

PARSONS an acting Sergeant, so he was probably still a Constable but Dad didn't join the Police until I think he was twenty eight years of age which meant that um, and they werevery long periods between ranks in those days with the seniority system, no he was probably still a Senior Constable something like that but he was as long as I can remember he has always been Sergeant.

CROMPTON Yes and the reason for his transfer here was that only to take prosecuting duties?

PARSONS Well, he was at the Prosecutor's staff in Sydney and I think that there was basically two reasons, one was that my parents were living in a flat and had no, very little income and it was a chance to live in a Government house at 17 and 6 a week rent which meant that they might have a chande to get on their feet and save some money to get a house, the other reason was that I think there were only 30 or 40 prosecutors in those days and

he spent something like three months out of every twelve away in the bush relieving in Country Courts so after 5, 6 or 7 years of that that was getting to ah wear him down a bit. I think the, and also he was suffering, he suffered from asthma and ah he felt that the job would have perhaps less pressure in Newcastle and actually the asthma did disappear when he come up here along with the all the relieving work, ah as I say being away from his family three months of the year certainly had its toll on Dad's health, so that was one main reason he came up.

CROMPTON Thanks. Doug would I ask you the same, your fathers name and date of birth?

LITHGOW George Malcolm, George Malcolm LITHGOW, ah, he was born in 1904, I just can't recall the actual date, at Gilgandra, he worked on a farm mainly or his Dad was in daiying actually and so most of their after school hours or before school was looking after the dairy running the milk around the town. He did try to start do a bit of share farming. I don't think it was all very unseccessful and in those late twenties and the he went to Sydney and joined the Police Force.

CROMPTON Yes but do you know what year, you may have told me?

LITHGOW 1927

CROMPTON 1927

LITHGOW Yes

CROMPTON What year did he retire?

LITHGOW ah, 1964 I think it was, 1964

CROMPTON and the rank that he retired?

LITHGOW he was Superintendent second class I think it was.

CROMPTON IN THE north eastern Police Districe?

LITHGOW yes, yes.

CROMPTON do you remember or do you have any knowledge of where he was first stationed on joining?

LITHGOW Oh yes, in Sydney, he was always involved in Sydney and when he took up prosecuting fairly early in the early 30's and he was mainly doing the Sydney circuit although I can recall him being going to say up the coast here to do some special prosecuting on some forestry matters you know he was, there were, he was pretty mobile around the State actually.

CROMPTON Yeah

LITHGOW On specific jobs

CROMPTON It sounds like in those days there were a lot less prosecutors than what there are now?

PARSONS Yeah there was I think I remember 30 or 40 being the number and thats probably more like a hundred there I think.

LITHGOW I think that's the, what did they call it, the Police Prosecutors and the Criminal Investigation Branch, 1947 and there's 24 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 of them.

CROMPTON Well yeah, that might explain a few things. So he worked mainly in Sydney or only in Sydney prior to coming here was it?

LITHGOW Yeah, but he went to Wagga, prosecuting in Wagga

CROMPTON but as a station, or being stationed though, that was on a relieving thing was it?

LITHGOW No, he was Prosecutor there at Wagga. His district went I think it might have gone out to Wentworth, you know it was a pretty big area where he was prosecuting and you know he was often up, I think from Batlow out and then he came to Newcastle as Chief Prosecutor North Eastern District or something like that.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW Now that I think that post actually disappeared when Dad went from Newcastle, now its interesting, Keith's father came in straight after didn't he?

PARSONS Yeah, well my father took the place your father left but Dad came in as the junior of the three people there and of course I think Jim MARTIN was then became the senior prosecutor of the three.

LITHGOW Right, O.K.

CROMPTON So from Senior prosecutor did your father then go into commissioned rank in Newcastle or did he go, was he transferred to get commissioned rank?

LITHGOW No he went to, he went back to Wagga as an Inspector and I think he came back to Newcastle as an Inspector and then was and then became Superintendent.

CROMPTON Was he in charge when he became Superintendent or was he 2.I.C?

LITHGOW Well I really don't know, I think that he was for all intents and purposes.

PARSONS When would that be, early 60's?

LITHGOW Yes that was up 'til when he retired.

PARSONS I think the chief guy then, I think, the Superintendent who ran the District always lived next door to us.

LITHGOW Yes well that's

CROMPTON Yeah, well an extract from this article on Saturday the 31st of October, '64 says "the young Constable became Superintendent George Malcolm LITHGOW, Assistant Officer in charge North Eastern Police District.

LITHGOW Right well that -----

PARSONS I can't think of the guys name that was living next door.

LITHGOW So you had two Superintendents.

CROMPTON Yes, it changed, it varied over the years. We call them the second in charge of anywhere the bumper upper.

LITHGOW Yes right.

CROMPTON and he was the bumper upper at the time, but sometimes it would have been an Inspector I guess.

LITHGOW I can't even recall the other chaps name but.

PARSONS Yeah I can see his face but I can't think of his name, a Col

LITHGOW See

PARSONS Yeah, it doesn't matter

CROMPTON So, so we might talk generally now, we've covered both fathers, the um, when you first came to Newcastle were you living in Police residences or were you living independently of the Department?

LITHGOW Well you've already said that.

PARSONS Yeah, well we came, that was one of the motivating reasons for Dad coming here to Newcastle so we lived in that residence in Watt Street for something like, over nine years.

CROMPTON Is that where the current Police Station is?

PARSONS Where the current Police Station is and in

CROMPTON I think that was in 66 68

PARSONS 66 something like that. Dad was a fairly, only a year or so short of retirement then and then they put a deposit on a house at Hamilton, that's the house they're living in now, so most of those years were spent in living in that Police residence in Watt Street.

LITHGOW Well we, when we were in Sydney Dad was first living in a place in Crows Nest then we bought a house in Raven Street, Gladesville where we lived there until we went to Wagga. Actually um, that was 47 or 48 and at Wagga we rented a place there, it was, and then up here we went into that residence that you came into there on the corner of Watt and it was always

CROMPTON So for a while you lived next door to each other?

LITHGOW Yeah, no, no we moved out and he came in

CROMPTON Oh right

LITHGOW See we never met one another at all, but you know we've become quite good friends, it was just incredible it was.

PARSONS Well I remember coming to Newcastle when I was about eight Dad was up here for a week relieving your father and brought Mum up just to give her a sort of a little holiday and we had week off school and ended up coming up and one night your father showed slides, I can just remember. I can remember you mother because of the way she did her hair in platts, in this big old house and little did I know that five years later I'd be bloody well living there.

LITHGOW It was a strange house, I mean because the wind used to blow and all the carpets used to lift up off the floor.

PARSONS That's exactly right.

CROMPTON Things haven't changed in Police residences they tell me.

LITHGOW It really was a strange

PARSONS It was a magnificent old house but it was really run down and neglected by the Department, it was fairly typical of what people were expected to put up with.

CROMPTON So there were two houses there and

PARSONS Well there were two houses and four residences, there were two double storey buildings and both of them were divided into two one sort of on the basis of left to right and the other on the basis of an up and down.

CROMPTON So this is basically on the corner of Church and Watt Street. I think the numbers were 66 and 68.

LITHGOW and 68.

PARSONS that's right and there was a lane between them and it went down to the Police garage which was the original stables.

CROMPTON and was there a morgue there at that time?

PARSONS Yes the morgue, oh actually was down by the Courthouse.

LITHGOW In the courthouse.

PARSONS it was a single storey building behind the courthouse, the building that's there now, the 1950's building that's there now, um, and they used to drive up the laneway.

LITHGOW The morgue only went very recently I think.

CROMPTON Well upon the building of the present building.

LITHGOW Right.

CROMPTON The morgue went, because the morgue is now around at the hospital where it should be.

LITHGOW Yes its, the M wasn't very far away because I remember there were things that often had to be done around the morgue.

CROMPTON Yes I remember, I've heard some funny stories about the morgue, do you remember any experiences at all?

LITHGOW Well mainly we used to hear a lot of stories about the Court mainly from the old retrobates that used to be around the Court you know.

CROMPTON The morgue that is.

LITHGOW Oh well, I think the people that were brought in as drunk and disorderly there always seemed to be a Saturday morning Court or something for all the ods and sods um the things like that, but ah we ah we were very fascinated with the place when we came down here because it was really old and interesting although I wasn't into historic buildings or anything like that it was obviously a very interesting old place but it had been subdivided, its been partitioned in a very slipshod way because you could hear the people next door you know, it wasn't very private.

PARSONS I actually did a bit of research on the history once. I know a little bit about its background, it was, they were built in 1875 and they were single storey and then in the 1890's they added the top storey on both buildings, thats why if you think about it its sort of odd looking in many respects and the one that, the, 68 was only the Inspector's residence, it was always the Inspector's residence, our one was the barracks for single Constables and um I'm told it was that until the 20's or 30's it was actually the Traffic Police Office and then it became in the 30's or 40's a residence again and it was a residence for two Police families and often the Inspector had one of them didn't he and ah, the Prosecutors probably had one for a long time too or the Superintendent.

LITHGOW Well when Dad was Superintendent he was out, he was, had a house out at Wallsend the Wall, which was just the back of the Wallsend Police Station.

CROMPTON Oh yes 'cause, see he would have been Superintendent for the District, yeah.

LITHGOW Yeah, and it was, the other interesting thing was that um, the old convict stone wall down the side you know.

PARSONS Yes, which wasn't a convict wall.

LITHGOW Wasn't it?

PARSONS No, but it was very old, 1840's I think.

LITHGOW Oh yeah.

PARSONS and they always ---- it was very weathered and it always, it looked very frail but it was actually a double thickness of stone wall wasn't it and it ah whilst it looked frail it was, it took them --- and they used that as the excuse for tearing it down at the time it took them months and months to pull it down, it was, it was really part of Newcastle, the inner city's old character wasn't it, it was a shame to see it go really.

LITHGOW It was before it was um before um cement was oh developed, you know.

PARSONS When my Dad moved in I remember that Dad, they were pretty quickly appalled by the, um, by the condition of the place and ah I think Dad stuck his neck out and put in a report to them --- the Superintendent about the fact it was really it had been neglected for decades and just lacked all the some very basic things for instance, Doug will remember the big kitchen block at the back which was a seperate building ah which was actually where the bathroom was the then the middle of winter you sort of had to go down this uncovered alley way with, to,,to have a bath in this, this seperate type, quite seperate building so after a lot of ah reports went in, eventually they spent a lot of money on it, they built an interior kitchen, sorry, an interior bathroom, they built a sort of seperate building and attached it to the side of the house and they spent a lot of money renovating it, and some of the things they did of course weren't very, when I think of it now weren't aesthetically com, compatible, but they certainly upgraded the building and make it fit for um, fit for, for fairly reasonable living standards, where as, I think that, it indicated to me how, just how badly in fact Police were accomodated by the department, and the, the rent was cheap but you certainly put up with

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS As Doug said, literally the floorboards had great gaps between them and in the middle of winter you, the bloody carpet would lift off the floor, and that's no exaggeration.

LITHGOW No, No.

CROMPTON Well the Police news, your father may still get it, it regularly has an article on what they call the dum of the month, sometimes its a Police Station whoing the conditions that the police work under in various places and somethimes its a residence. So things haven't really changed...

PARSONS No.

CROMPTON that much

PARSONS if somebody...

CROMPTON Money's not spent.

PARSONS ...if they could have sold the house to somebody with a half a million bucks to spend you could have made a magnificent residence out of it, but it was, it was like that wasn't it Doug, it needed a lot of money spent on it.

LITHGOW Well the bathroom was, was this old kitchen building, it was an out house you see, so you walked across, ah, a Court-yard and all the people in the houses opposite...

PARSONS Yes.

LITHGOW ...could see you go into the bathroom

PARSONS that's right.

LITHGOW They had the most extraordinary bath heater with, you had a direct flame...

PARSONS that's right.

LITHGOW ...that used to heat the water

PARSONS an old chip heater

LITHGOW used to, the water would fall and the flame would just heat the water as it was falling, and it, I'd never seen anything like it before.

PARSONS I can remember my mother being in tears after about a week there and just said, you know, do we, do we, why did we come to Newcastle.

CROMPTON 17 and 6 rent.

PARSONS Yeah, it just wasn't worth it, but ah, well, yeah, I think they were paying about 2 pounds 10 or something in Sydney for a flat so it was cheap but ah, what, you know.

LITHGOW We liked it because it was close to the beach you know its had a lot, you know, you could peddle down town.

PARSONS Although Doug, I can recall it being a very isolated place because we, we came from a sort of a Sydney suburb situation and there weren't many other kids around the area and there weren't many other families.

LITHGOW Thats right.

PARSONS and it was really, we were literally in the middle of the commercial district of the city and sort of normal sort of family life was pretty limited in that area.

LITHGOW Alright, so you were younger and I was working when I came so I didn't have a lot of the free time, be mainly weekends, um, however we really liked it.

PARSONS I think it was more my mother ----- my father that felt that, because as far as my brother and I were concerned it was the baths and the beach and they were sort of great attractions

CROMPTON Yeah.

LITHGOW Mr Grebert the ah, Superintendent of Traffic who lived next door to us, a very dry wit, very dry.

PARSONS Yes, that, it was actually he was

LITHGOW The minister for gloom they used to call him.

PARSONS Yeah well, vinegar they called him. Myfather actually went and approached him as a lowly Sergeant and said will you support me, you know in terms of getting some decent repairs done to the house and he refused. I can recall Dad saying

CROMPTON They're not doing anything with them, they don't know much about them.

PARSONS Thinking about it, no your right, no that building was actually built I think when we were living there, at the back of the courthouse.

LITHGOW right, yes thats right.

PARSONS and there was a guy called the morgue keeper. I thought or he might have been the, there was also a courthouse, a guy that actually lived in the back of the court too, remember that, and he may have, he may have been the morgue keeper as well, he may have been the guy that opened the morgue up when they came around.

LITHGOW Well we didn't have a car for instance, so when we came to Newcastle, I remember Dad bought this old Ford prefect, well if you've ever driven in a ford prefect you wouldn't, the steering you know it was very direct steering, but we, there used to be lots of places to go in Newcastle, you know, we used to go out just about every weekend for a drive in the country.

CROMPTON your fathers though being prosecutors would have worked the 5 day week too wouldn't they?

LITHGOW Yes thats right

PARSONS thats right

CROMPTON thats compared with the shifts that the General duties police would have worked

PARSONS Yeah thats right, it was sort of 8 til 5 I suppose, 8 til 5 I think

CROMPTON so where were they actually based, where was the police station at that time, would that have been in Hunter street?

PARSONS the police station was in Hunter Street.

CROMPTON were they based there?

PARSONS Dad was based, no they were based in a big room in the court house, Newcastle court I think they are still based in the same room

CROMPTON well now they're actually in the new police station in the..

PARSONS are they?

CROMPTON prosecuting offices and they then just go over to court because its so adjacent.

PARSONS well as you go up Bolton street and you look at the old court building you would have looked at their room, would have been, there's the main entrance

LITHGOW On the left

PARSONS and it was immediately to the left on the, I suppose it would have been the first floor level that was the prosecuting room.

CROMPTON on the same floor as the entry to the courts?

LITHGOW yes, thats right.

PARSONS then I think they were going to move that upstairs later when my father, well after Dad retired.

CROMPTON right

LITHGOW but thats the main room just there

CRCMPTON upstairs now is a, they just use it as a tea room and there is a, there has been a photograph, its disappeared now, they tell me someones taken it, I think Don Geddes may have taken it to get it framed and it was a photograph of prosecutors the retirement of somebody and a whole lot of old solicitors

LITHGOW right

PARSONS I've seen that one, its a bit like that one there

CROMPTON its a bit like the other one but its, thats not the one

LITHGOW right

CROMPTON so do you recall the other police stations that were operating at the time in the newcastle area?

PARSONS well I can recall a few that aren't now, from my vague sort of memory of the, being one at Adamstown for instance that was condemned and pulled down

CROMPTON Do you remember where that was?

PARSONS I'm just trying to think, was it near the school, I think it might have been near the school

CROMPTON because there's still one at Adamstown

PARSONS yeah, I think thats a new station, but, I can recall also somewhere along Glebe Road there was a Merewether lockup or police residence

CROMPTON There was a residence, yes there was a call box down there somewhere

PARSONS I know there's one in Wickham because I've often run past it, the old, it might be a private home now but its obviously an ex police station and there was one at Union Street I think

CROMPTON Newcastle west?

PARSONS Yeah, I'm not sure who was there then, I think it was a licensing or something like that, it might have been back in those days.

CROMPTON They have used it for licensing over the years.

LITHGOW I can remember when Dad was Superintendent they were talking about the new buikding, the new building they---seemed to go back way way talking about this new building they were going to build, and also I can remember the, a bit of a schemozzle about, about say Charlestown, because Charlestown in the 50's

was just a bit of a village really but it was obviously developing, and it was, he was trying to get a police station at Charlestown but they ah, the politics of the situation was that it had to be built at Dudley so they built the police station, lockup out at Dudley. I can remember very much argument -----

CROMPTON well thats still there

LITHGOW Its still there I know but the

CROMPTON only just operating

LITHGOW Yes but you know when it was obvious that Charlestown was growing and needed a, I mean I'llbet that Charlestown is bursting at the seams now.

CROMPTON it is.

LITHGOW eventhough its got a new one

CROMPTON What about, was Hamilton, was that operating at the time?

LITHGOW Yes, yes.

PARSONS Yes, not, thats any way different, same building

CROMPTON and I think thats typical of what the old residences were, its a dump of the month

PARSONS A lot of them look the same, like there's one at Stockton that looks the same, they were all designed by a

LITHGOW I'll tell you that story about the Hamilton police station where some old retrobate came along and pinched the money out of the police safe at the old, no one knew that at all, and so that there was this inquiry you know and all the Police at Hamilton they all told stories that didn't quite tally up because and thm finally there was a young Constable, no, I don't know how young he was who agreed that he'd, that he'd stolen it, he even took them out to show them where he threw the money over or threw something over the bridge and all the rest of it, ended up shooting himself in the foot at the police station.

PARSONS well I remember that.

LITHGOW You know there was some very odd thing about it, but any rate it finally came about that this old retrobate talking to his, to the priest or something, he ended up coming along owning up, he saw the police station open and the, and the ah safe

CROMPTON who'll guard the guardians

PARSONS the safe door, the door was completely open when he walked in the police station, took the money out of the safe just like that

CROMPTON yeah, who'll guard the guardians is how it should be

PARSONS one aspect of that, Dad's job too was they used to have to do the Hunter Valley courts but that was only something might have done one every two or three months like Dungog --- Stroud I think were two courts that were open in those days

LITHGOW and Maitland

PARSONS Maitland had a prosecutor didn't it, Ted Cahill wasn't he there?

LITHGOW I know Dad used to be up at Maitland a fair bit

PARSONS Yeah, I was sure Ted Cahill was there but anyway I might be wrong

PARSONS --- Dad had a friend that, a guy that joined the police at the same time as he and he actually came to Newcastle as one of his first stations in the early 40's and apparently back in those days that was, it was a place sent for punishment sort of thing where you...

CROMPTON Newcastle?

PARSONS yeah, if you did the wrong thing you went to Newcastle and this guy actually left the Police, he only stayed in five or six years and left, he was very bitter about the treatment he received up here but I know he, he wasn't sent up here as punishment but he was just a young Constable sent up to this where apparently there must have been a lot of, and the morale must have been pretty low because it had this reputation and the Police back in the 40's, now whether how long that lasted.

CROMPTON Up to even more recent times, I've been in since 1974 around that period of time, to be sent to the country was punishment, you'd be threatened, you'll get Broken Hill or you'll get somewhere else

LITHGOW well thats qutie true

CROMPTON that's changed now, the demand for coming, for going to country areas is, no one wants to live in the city.

LITHGOW But I remember that Newcastle was really regarded as being amongst Police that were here as being a great place to be, but when we went to Wagga for instance we'd, it was, Dad was sent there on condition that he'd keep quiet, you know, because he'd had the trouble with the Police Commissioner as, as um an officer of the Police Association, he was Vice-president, I think, you know, Commissioner Mackay was pretty tough sort of fellow who would just transfer people off or even give them rank just off the cuff.

PARSONS talking to Rex LADKIN, I believe he told how he got an instant transfer to some Country town because he wouldn't join the Police Athletic club, then he decided to join and he got an instant transfer back.

LITHGOW Yes.

CROMPTON Well the story goes, the Commissioner you're talking about was that Mackay?

LITHGOW Yes Mackay

CROMPTON Well the story goes, I might have related to you was that a future Police Commissioner Fred HANSEN he got his promotion, his commission rank because

PARSONS could fly a plane

CROMPTON he was flying an aeroplane one day and the Commissioner was, was one of his passengers and he said 'thank you very much Sergeant' and someone turned to him and said he's not a Sergeant he's only a Constable, he said 'he's a Sergeant now'

PARSONS Yes I've heard that story

CROMPTON So the story goes, ... Well with your father being a vice president in the Police Association would he have been still active in the Association when he came here because he came with Commissioned rank didn't he, and

LITHGOW yes he was

CROMPTON these days someone with Commissioned rank isn't part of the police association, they are part of another, public service officers union.

LITHGOW He was always involved I think in the association matters as much as he could be, or well he was vice president, he might have been president of the local branch here when he retired, but he was very much involved with -----

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START OF SIDE 2 OF TAPE 1

LITHGOWthe gift of the gab I suppose you might say an, so that he, and you know, he was the first Policeman to give talks over the radio for instance, I can remember as little kids running up and gluing our ears to the ABC we only listened to the ABC and our friendly Policeman I think it was

PARSONS I remember too when Dad joined back in those days Mackay gave a preference to Policeman who were good sportsmen so if you were a footballer or if you were a rower in those days because in 1936 there was a Police, the Olympic eight from Australia was actually a team of Policeman, NSW Police, soon as they found out, he found out that Dad was an ex champion rower he was put in the Police eight and he got all those favourable sort of shifts and the footballers were the same, I think that's probably still, maybe that's still true, I don't know, also the athletes like Rex Ladkin who was there the other day, they got very favoured treatment because, simply because, didn't Mackay want to foster the image of good sportsmen amongst the Police.

CROMPTON While we are on that point, do you recall any outstanding Police sportsmen in this area, I know of course there were all through the State but in this area in the time that you were here or perhaps had heard of from this area?

- PARSONS Um, I think, to be honest I'm not a football fan so I can't, but I know that a lot of Police, a lot of Police up here were sort of, you know in the local first grade Rugby League teams but I can't remember any of their names, all I can sort of remember was that Merv Wood was the Olympic Sculling champion in the late 40's and of course Murray RILEY of course.
- CROMPTON Well he became famous for his Olympian and became famous for his..
- PARSONS drug habit, yes.
- LITHGOW I can remember more, or Dad, I think being more involved in social games like bowls against the, the um, Solicitors or something like that, but there used to be cricket matches and things such as this.
- CROMPTON Would they have been fund-raising days?
- LITHGOW I think they were just sort of fun really, you know, they were, I think my old man really enjoyed his job, he had a lot of fun, he really loved that Courthouse and he was really very depressed when he was taken off the Court in the, in that about 1947 when he was sent to Gladesville for general Police duties because the Commissioner didn't like him and then later on he was sent off to the country provided he kept quiet.
- CROMPTON Yes
- PARSONS That's an interesting point because I can remember my father actually, the last year of his service which he spent on light duties and I think it was fair to say that he was fairly dedicated to his job and really lived for that job and because of the, of the sort of odd structure of the Police where there could only, where it was s.... sort of military, sort of rankings, once you reached the rank of Inspector you could no longer be, be a prosecutro, in fact they only had one or two Sergeants First class so that, people who had probably spent 20 or 25 years gaining a particular expertise in a branch of law, and you know were regarded rightly or wrongly as a sort of an elite group in the Police in those days, very experienced at their, at their art, craft, profession or whatever were suddenly thrown into general duties at some obscure Police station simply because they had reached a certain rank.
- CROMPTON Somebody with less experience replaced them.
- PARSONS That's right and it just didn't make sense and I know that Dad was very depressed about that, you know, that was, ah, was a totally con caring thing which was the numbers game I suppose, they had this perametal structure of promotion and people who had the respect I think of the legal proffession in Sydney and Newcastle suddenly, you know they had all those years of experience was just shot down, the shoot so they could get given a job as an Inspector at some obscure district somewhere or other.
- CROMPTON Yes, promotion was then on seniorority.

PARSONS Strictly, and Dad was I think 17 years a Sergeant 3/class because of that promotion system, ah, you know he just sat in a queue and waited.

CROMPTON Yes. Bid ah, did either of your fathers speak of any of the old cases that they did in the Prosecuting, any stand out within New, within, in this area?

PARSONS The answer's yes but off the top of my head I can't think of any of them but Dad was always at the dinner table talking about, you know, what he did at work.

LITHGOW Oh yes, that was the

PARSONS ----- some of the more interesting murders and that sort of thing, um he's mentioned names in the past, we've sat down at Christmas and birthdays and things but I, I, if you'd asked me earlier, If you'd asked me to prime him up this afternoon to mention a few names I probably could but, no I can't think of anything ---- of my head.

CROMPTON The same could probably be said of some of the old criminals?

LITHGOW Yes, oh you know there's been some very funny things, I mean that created a bit of a stir in the community here, like the, what there was the yellow tie mob or something like that they called it, they

PARSONS well before Dad's time, but I remember that yes.

LITHGOW Well I mean~~d~~ it was an unfortunate, really a very unfortunate thing, but I know

PARSONS Yellow socks wasn't it?

LITHGOW Oh might have been yellow socks, something like that, but ah, you know, homosexual people.

CROMPTON and that was how they were identified was it?

LITHGOW Yeah.

PARSONS -----the story I heard was they they had a club down at the Ocean baths and that the manager of the baths was in on it, and ---- a lot of professional and business people in the city/

LITHGOW Oh yes.

PARSONS It was a real bloody scandal apparently.

LITHGOW Oh it was a real scandal.

PARSONS I don't think that anyone would bat an eyelid today.

LITHGOW No, yes, a terrible scandal really, but the thing was there were, that once the, once informations been laid ---- those people well the wholeweight of the law really came down and there, it caused a bit of a, I can remember that as being a bit of a scandal, the other one was that Policeman shboting himself in the foot and getting all, that was a really odd case, um, there must of, there were lots of other things that Dad, I remember going away on, like this timber fraud

business up the coast, I mean that was an incredible thing at the time but I'm, I'm just trying to think of, there were a lots of, there were murder case and so on I know that were pretty frightening, I know.

PARSONS They certainly had an, they certainly had a wide range of area of things that they had to be involved with, I mean I can remember Dad again when he went to Country for stock, stock thieving and things like that and then you had the sort of traditional traffic matters, sort of Criminal matters in the city and they were always, they always were the assistant to the Coroners in the coronial, Coroner's court.

CROMPTON ----- yes.

PARSONS and, I can remember him going to sort of, um, bedside court hearings in the hospital and things like that when people were dying and ah.

CROMPTON Yes, you were talking about the yellow tie, the yellow sock mob, I spoke with Keith's Dad just recently, 2 weeks ago, and whilst I was there a fellow by the name of Rex Ladkin came in, who is a retired Police Officer, he retired well before due date of retirement, he left the job early and he was an old Consorting Squad member and he was one of the two Police Officers that came up and broke up the yellow tie mob.

PARSONS Did he?

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS I'm going to see him tonight, I must ask him about that.

CROMPTON He spoke to us about that.

PARSONS Did he?

CROMPTON Ask him about that.

PARSONS Actually I know one of the names of one of the people in that but I won't mention their name.

LITHGOW I mean, it would have been lovely to actually have a couple of little prompts her of a few of them interesting cases because we would have really

PARSONS Well there was one of a woman with a headless body in the harbour, remember that and don't think they ever solved that one.

LITHGOW But I can remember little things, you know its funny how little things stick out in mind, um, at Wagga for instance going out to Batlow to, on a stock problem where they'd have thieving and the black tracker was up there to meet us and you know I can remember going up in the utility truck, thats all they had and with Dad and ah, its ah, the Detective ----- at the time was the chappy, and the black tracker emerged from this trough in the middle of this paddock you can imagine how cold it is up there and here was this black tracker, God they lived a terrible life, they were living in this wooden, in a wooden trough out on the farm, ah and, and looking at stolen vehicle, you know, you wouldn't, its funny how you'd go all the way to look at a stolen vehicle, and ah, take fingerprints

and things like that and today you know there'd be that many stolen vehicles.

CROMPTON Well that's right yeah. Continuing on from that as well, um, did they speak to you about or do you recall any of the famous old Police in this area, ah, it used to be that the Detectives were the, in those days, that were the more active Police because they were more involved in the more involved matters, do you recall any of those?

PARSONS Well I could, a couple that immediately spring to mind was Ray Kelly was one, a name that Dad...

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS One, um Fred Krahe he was another one, because Fred Krahe was in Dad's class, and I can remember -----

CROMPTON They were Sydney Detectives though weren't they?

PARSONS Yeah, yeah.

CROMPTON But I think Fred Krahe came...

PARSONS Up here.

CROMPTON Actually retired, or left the job and came up here

PARSONS Did he

CROMPTON and your Dad mentioned that he was something to do with South Newcastle Leagues.

PARSONS Was he, right.

CROMPTON at the time, but ah

PARSONS Well I'm just trying to think, names of people, I don't know how famous they have to be to be famous, they're probably, anyone that was in the Police at that time were names that I'd probably be familiar with, like that photograph you showed me there, 1947 in the Prosecuting everyone of those I can remember my father mentioning, but I'm not sure, ah, how fam', ah well we had any up here that were all that, ah, famous, ah.

LITHGOW That's a Sydney, a group of debaters that went across to Melbourne, but a fellow by the name of Brownette was a chap that I ... remember quite well, and Parmenter and...

PARSONS Yeah well Jim Milne I remember was the Chief Prosecutor when---

LITHGOW Right.

CROMPTON There's a photograph here of um, of your Dad, Dad Doug's retirement and...

LITHGOW Oh yes

CROMPTON and there's, its a...

PARSONS Well all those names are names that I can recall Dad mentioning excepting the two women, I don't remember them.

CROMPTON All the Detectives there, Pat Cahill?

LITHGOW Well.

PARSONS I don't remember this fellow.

CROMPTON Thats, yeah, so Pat Cahill he was.

LITHGOW Pat Cahill was really and Dunipace and..

PARSONS He was the Chief of Detectives wasn't he?

CROMPTON That's right, yes.

LITHGOW Yes.

PARSONS George Dunipace I think, my reco, his son was in my class at school, I think he, um, he used to work for ASIO I think he was the undercover person for ASIO up here, but that's something I learnt years later.

CROMPTON What, whilst he was in the Police Force?

PARSONS Yes, I think, you know that was his _____ but _____ I might be wrong.

LITHGOW No, it could have been Special Branch.

PARSONS Yeah.

LITHGOW See, see.

CROMPTON Well we still have a Special Branch.

LITHGOW Do we, right, see the thing is we'd, that, ah, my old man used to be a bit of a larrikin like that, you know the ASIO would come across and they'd be saying, ah, he'd have a bit of a joke ah, you know, what do you call yourself today Fred, you know the ASIO bloke'd go in, you'd know, oh do you, sh sh....he used to love the ... they'd send little old ladies around to meetings and listen to somebody talking and take down their names and reckon they were communists or something like that and then they'd, it would go right through the, an, and come to onto Dad's desk and they'd, he'd have to say, of you know he's a decent bloke or whatever, you know.

CROMPTON Yes, well what about Bob Shepherd, his Photos in there, do you recall him at all?

PARSONS I, I do, I remember that D, I remember him, ah, working with my father and also actually I taught one of his sons at school when I first started teaching so I remember him coming along to a parent..

CROMPTON Well Bob Shepherd was stationed here and he ah,...

PARSONS He did a B A when he was up here and in those days it was unusual for a Policeman to do a part time University degree and thats something thats stuck, probably not now but it was then.

CROMPTON He became more infamous with the Police Force for his alleged involvement, I don't know what, whether it was in involvement, with the, ah, the Age tapes, because he was in charge of the Bureau of Crime Intelligence at the time that that came about.

PARSONS I think he was in the Scientific Section up here wasn't he, ah?

CROMPTON I think you're right, yeah.

LITHGOW Yes, well thats, ho that, ah, yes I

PARSONS To some extent, my fa, my memories of Dad's work, working colleagues was much oh, the people in the Justices Department, the CPS, the magistrates and the, and the lawyers, there names are as familiar to me as, ah, say as Police.

LITHGOW Thats right.

CROMPTON Yeah.

PARSONS Because they probably spent as much time working with them.

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS ..as he did with Police.

CROMPTON what about, did, do you have any recollection of, of brave deeds by Police in those days at all?

PARSONS Um, um, no I can't think of anything in particular, I know that one guy that Dad worked with and his name was Joe Jones, he won the George medal, but I'm not sure...

CROMPTON Was that here or in Sydney?

PARSONS When he was stationed up here, but I'm not exactly sure what he, how, why he won it but, ah, I thought, thats a decoration they don't give away very freely so, ah, but I cant remember why he won it, but I can't think of anything in particular.

CROMPTON Yeah.

LITHGOW I can remember Dr Hilmore you know and he was quite a, ah, a person, a respected person you know, ah, law society and so on.

PARSONS Hm, hm.

LITHGOW ah, and whats this chaps name here?

PARSONS Thats Freddy Hill, he was the ah

LITHGOW oh yes, yes Sgt Hill.

CROMPTON This is a photograph of

LITHGOW Yes-----

CROMPTON Superintendent Lithgow's retirement

LITHGOW yes thats right.

CROMPTON no, farewell of Sergeant Lithgow from the prosecutors

LITHGOW thats right, when we went to...

CROMPTON 1957.

LITHGOW he went back to Wagga, well the fellow that I remember most when I came here was a fellow by the name of Bully Hayes, thats who he used to, I think he might have been an Inspector, Inspector Hayes, and he was a real character, he was a very big solid man and the first thing you'd, he'd give you a kick in the backside, that'd be the first thing, that'd be the first greeting you'd get from Bully.

PARSONS Was that, was he the fellow that had the reputation back in the thirties of cleaning up the sort of, the west end of town he'd go down and give the ----

CROMPTON The old Bank Corner boys.

PARSONS Bank corner boys, exactly.

LITHGOW Oh, Oh, I think, Bully 'd be

PARSONS Theree was, a, there was a Policeman I heard, he was apparently famous for generations in Newcastle.

CROMPTON I must ask my Dad because he was a Bank corner boy.

PARSONS Was he, right.

CROMPTON I'll ask him about that.

PARSONS I'll tell you one thing, its a, I know its inconsequential but its always stuck in my mind, my father telling me that when he joined the Police he was 5'11 $\frac{1}{2}$ which is not exactly short and he was considered originally, initially for the mounted Police because thats where they put all the shorties.

LITHGOW Yes, thats right, yeah.

PARSONS One thinks things have changed a lot since those days I mean when 5'11 $\frac{1}{2}$ was the short end of the, of a Police, ah, of a Police class, you know after their coming out, ah, another thin that sort of sticks in my mind, him telling me about, there couldn't have been too many Police patrol cars, ah cars, in Sydney in the war but they used to drive around in the, I Think he called it the Western wireless car, no their couldn't of been too many of them, in pitch black in the blackouts of Sydney with, without any lights on, you know, ah, sort of belti around at terrific speeds.

CROMPTON Well, the yeahm the wireless cars were the night Detective car

PARSONS Were they?

CROMPTON in those times.

LITHGOW Yes.

CROMPTON and whereas during the day they may have Detectives working at each station a wireless car could have covered a much larger area, they'd probably, either cover a district or a number of districts, for instance here a wireless car would have gone right up to Singleton, right down to, to Toukley.

PARSONS right.

CROMPTON and almost down to Windsor, so, you know, that sort of, that was the sort of thing that a wireless car was.

PARSONS mmm

CROMPTON So Keith, can I ask you, I know you've got an involvement with old buildings, can you tell me what you know about old Police buildings?

PARSONS In this area?

CROMPTON Yes, in the inner city, especially, Hamilton in

PARSONS Well the only ones I know of, there's the Police Station that's now the Hunter Heritage centre, was, I know that was built as a single story lock up, ah, between 1859 and 1861 and then it was added to, you can see it when you look at the front of the building, it's widened on the ground storey in the late 1880's and then they built a, an upper storey around about the same time, um, and on the, a lot of other additions have been made over the years too, to build, sort of the out buildings but that was a, ah, and that's a very important heritage building associated with the Police, ah, there's the lockup down the west end, I think it was just a typical Police station come residence, come lockup in its day, ah, but it managed to survive in the inner city somehow, um, a lot of the Police station lockups around the lower Hunter Valley were designed by a Mortimer Lewis Junior who was the son of a famous architect and he lived in the area for 30 or 40 years and he designed many of the government buildings in the Hunter Valley and some of them have his own particular sort of design characteristics, you can pick them and I know for instance the police station at, ah, there's one at Stockton, I think and I've seen another one at Hinton which if you looked at, if you put the two together side by side you'd say obviously they were designed by the same fellow and he was responsible for quite a few of the lockups and that in the, sort of, Newcastle, Lower Hunter Valley area over a long period of time.

CROMPTON The one at Stockton, do you know where that was located because it's a newer Police Station there now?

PARSONS Ah, ah, isn't it still there, ah, it might be a private residence now. It was there ten years ago, I remember driving around and finding this, no I don't, I'd have to go and have a look around, I just assumed it'd still be there.

CROMPTON It may be that they operate out of a new Police Station.

PARSONS Do they, right.

CROMPTON What about the Scott Street residences, ah, Police Station or was it a Police Station, were they residences?

PARSONS Oh yes, well that, well that was built in about the, I think circa' 1882 it was a pair of buildings I think for the water police and again in my time one of, as you go up Scott Street ah, towards the baths, the first one you come to was, ah, was the Traffic office, the Police traffic office and the second one was a residence and it was alwa', a Constable lived in, lived in there, ah, I think, ah, well of course they've all been turned over to the community use but that was another Police residence, um, I'm just trying to think of any others, um, there's one in Tighes Hill I know because if you go up Elizabeth Street there's one thats almost identical in design as the one in Albert Street, Wickham.

CROMPTON Thats now a Police residence.

PARSONS Is that a residence now is it?

CROMPTON Yeah, thats a residence, yeah, Alec Wightley who, whose family used to live in the old residences 66 68.

PARSONS Right.

CROMPTON His father was a Police officer.

PARSONS Right.

CROMPTON He lives at the Tighes Hill residence.

PARSONS ah, ah.

CROMPTON He's presently a Police officer in the time, the same as Wickham, theres a Police officer lives in there.

PARSONS Is that right?

CROMPTON Yeah.

PARSONS Oh, so ----- right.

CROMPTON That's a Police residence.

PARSONS Um, there was one at, there is one, in Lambton way, over Lambton way, um, and I think, I've got a feeling that may have had a Court attached to it originally, there was a Lambton Court, um, back in the last century but its been a Police residence because I know a kid I taught a couple of years ago, he's, he lived in the house. I don't think its a Police Station anymore but.

CROMPTON It is.

PARSONS It is still is it?

CROMPTON If its the building you're talking about, the build', they've still got a Lambton Police Station.

PARSONS Yeah, right, well its up towards the, ah, behind the shopping centre.

CROMPTON What about Waratah?

PARSONS Well I, my only recollection of Waratah is that there's a wireless station, a Police wireless station there, um, was there another residence, residences there?

CROMPTON Well my reading from the last Century is they're talking about a Police Station at Waratah.

PARSONS Right.

CROMPTON and I think the one that, where the wireless station is, the, even though its an old building its more recent that..

PARSONS Yeah.

CROMPTON than 1870 or 1880 whatever it was.

PARSONS Right.

CROMPTON So..

PARSONS Well thats..

CROMPTON so there must be another one there somewhere.

PARSONS Somewhere, right, um, gees, I can't think of any others, um,

CROMPTON Was there a Police residence, or did you mention it before, down in Darby Street?

PARSONS There was, again my recollection of exactly where it was is a bit dim now but there was a residence down there, somewhere in Darby Street I think, um.

LITHGOW There was a place at Merewether, is it still

PARSONS Was it Merewether?

CROMPTON Llewellyn Street Merewether, that's still a Police residence.

LITHGOW Right

PARSONS Is it.

LITHGOW Now, a bit of the old lockup was still visible there for many years.

PARSONS Maybe I'm confusing those two things because its going back a long time ----

CROMPTON Alright, um, do you recall the salaries of your fathers in the old days, you know, as compared to workers in other fields.

PARSONS No, all I recall is, I don't think Police were all that well paid ---- and again you've got this problem of the seniority system which meant they were stuck on the one salary for a long time, but, but, I've got a feeling that Dad retired ^{on} about \$7, 000 a year in about 1972, um, I know that now, that became, that he's, he retired on I think 73 or 75 per cent of his salary when he was at, ah, it was over 70% and with indexation I think he's now getting, somewhere now about \$20,000 a year so, um, 20,000, 22,000 a year represents $\frac{3}{4}$ of a, of a, they must've be getting more money since then 'cause that doesn't equate with that'd be less than 30,000 a year now.

- LITHGOW I don't know, but I'm sure that the, that Dad was on a reasonable salary when he, when he retired, but I can, you know, during the depression --- actually took a cut in salary.
- PARSONS I, I think probably a lot of jobs did, but..
- LITHGOW In fact, ah..
- PARSONS I think in the 50's though Dad always, I think Dad and Mum were always fairly struggling in the 50's, they weren't all that, Police Constables I don't think were all that well paid.
- LITHGOW No, no, they didn't get much at all, and I can remember, you know it was always travel in the back of the tram, you know, ah, you, you didn't sit in the tram.
- PARSONS Well, I, you know, all the kids I went to school with had 1950's cars and I remember we had a 1928 Chev' and that, Dad got a 1947 Vauxhall, so..
- LITHGOW Oh..
- PARSONS So if that was any indication of how well, sort of relatively well off compared to sort of, ah, people, sort of, sort of lived.
- LITHGOW Well, when in the, during the depression, I mean, I wasn't, I was born in 1933 but, ah, for instance Dad was the, at one stage there, Dad was the only person in the whole entire street working so he felt he was lucky in that sense he always ----- he was overworked, ah, however they did take the cut in salary, but the, there wasn't much, there was never any, I mean we would have been living a different sort of life if there had been money around.
- PARSONS Actually, one thing that he, that Dad's always been disgruntled with, that was the fact that when he retired on Superannuation he couldn't take a lump sum but I've always, he and I have had many arguments about this, I've always maintained that he, if you can compare the superannuation we get, I'd get, I'd retire on about 59% of my salary and I'm paying, I'll be paying a very large out', output of superannuation out of my fortnightly salary and I think Dad was paying a maximum of about 3 or 5% or something and, ah, retired on 75% indexed for life of his salary which I think was a pretty reasonable deal for what he put into it, but mind you now I think the widow of a Policeman gets, I think there's a big cut there, I don't know how Mum would survive on ---- I think 62%% of Dad's super, I think thats not so crash hot.
- CROMPTON 62½ and ½ of his 75%---?
- PARSONS Yeah, yeah, um, but as I say I think we've got a sore point amongst a lot of Police that they couldn't take the, a great lump sum.
- LITHGOW Well Mums still alive and her salary, her Police pension, it just, it doesn't quite cover the nursing home really, I mean its just, she's a little bit of income from a house that she was, has been --- her house, ah, and so on, you know, its pretty tight.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW It really is, so there's no great, ah, no lot of money in it I can tell you.

CROMPTON Yes, your father still alive Keith, does he still associate with old Police?

PARSONS Well until he got, he's been very ill for 6 months but until that time he would be a reasonably regular attender at the monthly meeting of the retired Police association.

CROMPTON Yeah, yeah.

PARSONS I think as much out of, um, as a soc', mainly as a social thing and he's kept associations over the years with people, you know, even back from the '40's that he, that he's been working with, I know since the time he's-----

CROMPTON Like Rex Ladkin for example?

PARSONS Rex, well Rex is an interesting co-incidence because he's, his daughter is a friend of mine and thats how they've come to meet each other again I think. Dad would see Rex over the years and say gooday to hime every now and again but they weren't sort of, acquaintances more than friends, I think.

LITHGOW Well I've talked with your Dad you know and he has such a fund of stories you know.

PARSONS Yeah.

LITHGOW But he's interesting.

PARSONS Yeah.

CROMPTON Do you, the death of Police, acting, active Police, do you remember any or the effect that it had on other Police around the area when a Police officer died on duty?

PARSONS I can remember one that sort of sticks in my mind from the 50's, a guy called Allan NASH who was in Dad's class and he was shot ah, he went to a house to answer a, a call and some crazy person shot him, so he was a, and of course people killed on duty, and that were pretty rare and I can remember that had a fairly traumatic effect on Dad even years later he would, you know, thats a name that, occasionally it'd get mentioned in conversation, so.

CROMPTON Was that in Wollongong?

PARSONS I think it was down that way.

CROMPTON I think he died in Wollongong.

PARSONS Yes, I think it was that one, um, I think the more you, you occasionally hear of Police being killed in traffic accidents.

LITHGOW Yes.

PARSONS That sort of thing, um.

LITHGOW ----- a very nasty traffic, bicycle accident at, ah, out near Hexham somewhere.

CROMPTON Neville Jury was his name.

LITHGOW Jury, thats right.

PARSONS Thats right, well he was a good friend of Dads and I, thats a name I can remember when I was...

LITHGOW Yes.

CROMPTON Constable First class Neville Jury.

LITHGOW Yes, thats right.

CROMPTON September 15, 1957, died after his motor cycle was involved in a crash near Mayfield.

LITHGOW Yes, yes we were very sad about that, you know.

PARSONS I think when that, a Policeman died on duty it did have a very, a serious effect on both my Mum and Dad in terms of, you know, they felt a, a personal loss, a, because, not just because --- because I think there was that comraderie in the Police, ah.

CROMPTON Yes, yes.

PARSONS and probably still is and, ah, and as I say it didn't happen all that often and, yeah, I think it had a fairly profound effect, I mean the fact that years later Dad would bring those things up in conversation.

CROMPTON Did either of you ever attend any, any Police funerals.

PARSONS ah, no, I can't think of any, no, no.

LITHGOW Well I was always working, I think, ah, when there was a ---- like that.

PARSONS I can, I think I can recall seeing perhaps, I remember somebody being, ah, being buried from Christ Church cathedral and there was a police funeral because there were Police lined up on the side of the road and that sort of thing, but sort, I don't even remember who it was now, there was sort of almost like a military funeral.

LITHGOW I know, with my own, own Dad's funeral there were lots, lots of police, lots of policeman.

CROMPTON Did he have a police funeral?

LITHGOW No, it wasn't a police funeral but there were lots of police at the church service and it was, ah, I know it was very touching.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW Um, yes, ah, Dad didn't live long after, you know he only lived three years after he retired, ah, had the massive heart thing, but he used to love the social life, you know, in the bowling club and ---- meeting the old crew.

CROMPTON Well there's certainly comraderie, even these days

- PARSONS Well it had a social club I can recall when they had an annual ball, I can, I think Dads got some glasses and that from the annual ball.
- LITHGOW Oh yes the ball, yes, yes.
- PARSONS You know, ah, ah, of course I suppose its a touchy topic but suppose I can, I, I, I don't know how you would feel about this while brought up in the era of, um, Police, the Masons and the Catholics, I think that was a very interesting, ah, I think somebody should write a history about that sometime. You were either one or the other or you sometimes flitted from one or the other in order to get promotion, thats, thats looking as an observer, relatively, looking from the outside, who's not particularly interested in neither, and I think thats an era behind us now, I think its an era that you and I grew up with and, ----- it was particulary strong in the Police, this business of Masons, being a mason or a catholic.
- CROMPTON Yes, well in my service, ah, I'm neither, I'm not part of either, I've heard the same thing and in fact I've heard that its still going on, but I don't know where, um, but they tell me that there's still an active protestant..
- PARSONS Yes, well there was the, there was a club called the Oorana club, if you were a mason you would join the Orrana club and that was sort of a, a social club of people, of Police that were masons.
- CROMPTON Its still operating, the Oorana.
- PARSONS There was the Guild of St Christophers I think was the catholic equivalent of it.
- CROMPTON Thats right and theres one of those in Newcastle.
- PARSONS and, ah, oh, you know back in those days I think the story was that they were always, sort of the, Commissioner was a Catholic once, one time and a Mason the next, I don't think so much protestants versus Catholics but you had to actually be a mason, I think probably a lot of protestants weren't masons but there were people...
- LITHGOW Yes, dad was a great mason.
- PARSONS and there were people I can recall Dad talking about that actually changed allegiances to get promotion and, ah, you know, it was an era I think, where it was not just in the Police, that you, it was an understood thing, you either joined one or the other and..
- CROMPTON Was your father one of either?
- PARSONS Yeah, he was a Mason, ah, I don't thibk it got him anywhere.
- CROMPTON Was your father one of either Doug?
- LITHGOW Yeah, oh he was a Mason, yeah, very active.

PARSONS and I think there was a lot of Dad's friends in the Police were Catholics and the, and the, they would socialise together and they'd joke about it together, my mind you I think probably, you know, at the same time there would be, there, I think they sort of learned to live with the fact that there was a them and us thing up to a certain point that they weren't, you know, at the same time that wasn't going to ruin, ruin friendships but I, you know, it seems to me that, ah, if that sort of nonsense did go on and it, well it did go on but it was, ah, there was, ah, both, both sides were responsible for continuing what was a bloody ridiculous situation.

CROMPTON Yes, yes.

PARSONS Where promotion depended upon that sort of allegiance.

LITHGOW Yes, but then, then the promotion by seniority would have, ah carved that down to a lot of extent but I can imagine, ah, ah, these, ah, cliques developing when you've got, ah..

PARSONS Transfers and things like that.

CROMPTON Yes, probably would have been more affected than, than the promotion.

PARSONS The Fire Brigades I'm told is, and the Railways I'm told is----- as I say it was just part of the 50's, 60's, '40's 30's I suppose era, I think its died, sort of died a bit of a natural death in many areas in society.

LITHGOW But, ah, theres no doubt, ah, living as a Policeman's son, you know, you had to be very much on your mettle, you always were there as a...

PARSONS I can recall subtle discrimination from, about being a Police-man's son.

LITHGOW You, you had to be very very careful that you didn't get involved in anything that was, ah, at all...

PARSONS Yes, tell your father and all that

LITHGOW You know, goodness me absolutely, you know, you, so damn, you know, you, I know my father it was so scupulously honest you know, just couldn't allow, couldn't stand anything that, that, that was at all, ah.

PARSONS That's something in my father still feels very strongly about, he went through the police force doing the right thing, we all know that the S.P. betting and all those sort of things that, you know, that people-----

TAPE NUMBER 2. SIDE 'B' used as side '1'

LITHGOW ...the ah, the Police vehicle left the station, the, the S.P. bookies knew.

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS and I would, I think being on the take is the expression that they used to use and I, as I say I know that Dad like your father was a person who went through the, through his job with a very sort of, almost puritanical, sort of moralistic attitude

LITHGOW Yes very much.

PARSONS ...about that sort of thing....and very bitter about cops who were on the take and yet I think Dad knew that a lot of his friends and colleagues were, or some of them anyway, were probably, their the ones I think that retired and went on a world trip a couple of years after they retired while Dad was sort of still paying off his house, but, um...

CROMPTON Yes, could I ask you in finishing, um, what your memories of being a son of a Police Officer was like?

LITHGOW Well, you know, I'll, I'll, I'll speak first being the oldest...

PARSONS Sure.

LITHGOW Well I, I think that we had this puritanical regime that we had to live under and it was just, ah, I can remember some, some time taking some damn stupid little thing from Coles once and being made take it back, you know, some little, some stupid little thing, it might have been a tin whistle or something and, ah, but you know we were, ah, always, ah, I think that was Policemen was very much looked up, looked up to in the communities, I don't, I don't feel that we were, were ever discriminated against as far as that was concerned but you had to always be at, seen and act in a certain way.

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS Yeah, well much the same, I, I think that the particular job that our fathers did too, and that commanded a fair amount of respect in the community, it made things difficult when, occasionally my brother and I were, behaved like larrikins and made, I can remember once being, not the baths, the Manager of the baths ringing up the local Inspector of Police and saying...

CROMPTON This wasn't the one with the yellow ties was it?

PARSONS No, no it was the other guy actually, he'd left by then, and that's, and being caught at school doing a ----, you know, and the headmaster had rang Dad up and the attitude was because we were Policeman's sons we were supposed to be above reproach which we were anything but that, but, ah, I think my memories are that it was, yeah, Dad, I think, that sort of disciplined sort of, um, semi military sort of life of a Policeman had its effect on Dad, Dad sort of did grow up believing that you, ---- obeyed, you did what you were told and you accepted that even things that you disagreed with personally and, um, I think, I sort of remember Dad having a sense of vocation about his job really, um, retiring with that, he felt that he'd, that he'd had, you know, a vocational sense about his job, um, there was, I think there was was a subtle discrimination, I felt that, you know, that were even with teachers that taught me, I can remember one Primary school teacher who made, who made the odd jibe about cops and that, so you did actually put up with that sort of subtle anti Police thing from time to time.

LITHGOW Yes.

PARSONS I think my mother then did too, um, mind you it was, a, we all went through, it was just an in----, it was an in----, I suppose everyone, the job that everyone's father does has some sort of effect on them, ---- it was an interesting job, it was,

I suppose the fact that we've sat here and talked about it for the last hour means that it had a bit of an effect on us hasn't it.

CROMPTON And could keep going.

LITHGOW Yeah, I only wish we had a few of the prompts from old newspapers because there would be a lot of things that, ah, came up, names and so on that, ah...

CROMPTON You've just shown me a photo Doug of your father receiving a cheque for the Police Boys Club, was he, ah, the President of the Police Boys Club, because I know over the years the, the Superintendent of Police in the area was always the, either the patron of the president of it or whatever.

LITHGOW Yes, he was always very active in the Police Boys Clubs, I know at Wagga and here, and there was the big fundraising to get the Police Boys Club started in Newcastle.

PARSONS He was the President of the A.H.A. wasn't he, he was the local publican?

LITHGOW and the...

CROMPTON Do you remember who the big tall fellow is?

LITHGOW Was it, be a bloke by the name of Savage.

PARSONS No thats not Charlie Savage.

LITHGOW Not Charlie, I just, ah, he's a, he's a big man isn't he.

CROMPTON He's got a United Nations medal on.

PARSONS No thats his 15 years one, or 23 years I'm sorry, with the blue and the white, the United Nations has all the, half the, another couple of stripes.

CROMPTON Thats right yes. Did either of your fathers serve in the United Nations Corps.

PARSONS No.

LITHGOW No.

CROMPTON They'd have been a bit older than that.

PARSONS No.

LITHGOW No, see.

PARSONS In fact, they'd have been too old for that, In fact when Dad joined the Police he wanted to leave the Police in the early part of the war to serve in the Army and the, and I think he made several attempts to do it and in the end he was reprimanded and told he couldn't, so he had, he served, I think that was a source of regret for Dad in the early part of his Police life but I think in the end, in about 1944, 45 they were actually letting some Police out to join the Air Force and the Army but by that time he'd changed his mind.

LITHGOW Yes, I can remember hearing stories during the war, it was very rough Police justice you know, you had the Provost from the Army, American, American Army was very hard on the, their black troops.

PARSONS That, well that's an interesting, you say that because that's often, that's the story my fathers told me about the, the, the discrimination that was shown towards Negro serviceman by the, by the Military Police.

LITHGOW Oh yes, that..

PARSONS One of the first times I think Dad actually had to draw his gun was on a drunken, a drunken negro serviceman, he was threatening somebody with a knife or something in some servicemans club in Sydney and, I remember Dad saying that, you know, the guy would have, when the military guys got him that would have been the end of him, Christ knows where he would have gone but he wouldn't have lived too long.

LITHGOW No that's right, there was very rough justice----I can remember Dad talking about one, that the military picked up the, the American military Police just picked up this bloke and just drove him into the ground head first.

CROMPTON Was that, was there that sort of trouble here in Newcastle?

LITHGOW Ah, this was in Sydney.

PARSONS Yes, in Sydney.

CROMPTON -----

LITHGOW Yes, ah, you know they were, and there was one time I think Dad had this, ah, see there was a lot more street crime in those days, you know, when they had this fellow and he, trying to, trying to arrest this bloke he had his, had him, ----- handcuffed to a telegraph pole was trying to, ah, to get this other chap and the mob were really going to lynch him, you know, and he was only saved by a, by a Taxi driver who drove his Taxi straight through them all, and things like that.

PARSONS Mention famous names in that period, Bumper Farrell was a name..

LITHGOW Yes.

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS ---- my father mentioning a few times and there was one cop who used to get the drunks and sort of, sort of almost peel them out of the black maria head first in the, yet all the cops would have to turn their heads the other way while this guy sort of..

CROMPTON Bumper Farrell was he...

PARSONS Might have been Bumper Farrell.

CROMPTON He was, still a, a, ah, Police Officer in my time.

LITHGOW Was he?

PARSONS Was he?

CROMPTON and I recall him being the night officer one night in Sydney and, ah, when I was stationed at Randwick and Bumper Farrell used to come in and he'd call everyone Mick and the fellow I was working with his name was Mick and Bumper Farrell came in and he said "G'day Mick, how ya goin'?" Oh thanks Sir I didn't realise you knew me.

CROMPTON He called everybody Mick and you'd always have to have a drink there for him, and, or a cup of coffee and he'd sit there and chat with you.

PARSONS Its a pity in a way that you hadn't met Dad six months ago because Dad does have a million stories about, you know..

LITHGOW Yeah.

PARSONS basically about the conditions of Police and some of the old characters in the Police Force, some of them go back from the 20's and 30's in those was years and some, their bloody carrying ons that went on, a lot of those stories that sort of went in one ear and out the other.

CROMPTON Yeah, yeah.

PARSONS I need some prompting from Dad.

CROMPTON Well, now the unfortunate thing is we're restricting you to Newcastle and, and of course most of the life was in Sydney wasn't it, in the, ah..

PARSONS Yeah.

CROMPTON ..in the, ah, in the old, um, the old days, the crime, the major crime was there.

PARSONS Mm.

CROMPTON and it was unusual for something to happen here.

PARSONS ----- get the odd murder here.

CROMPTON Yes.

PARSONS ..and that sort of thing, and there was, I remember in, ah, the 60's, do you remember Max Stead, remember there was ah, the great controversy over, um, some one putting an Aubrey BEARDSLEY print in the window of a shop and they, all the cops went out there and, ah, arrested this guy for this obscene, dis', disgusting, um, pornographic portrait which is, you know, you can find in any book, you'd go into Angus and Robertson..

CROMPTON and Max Stead was he a Detective at the time?

PARSONS Yeah, I thought you might have known..

CROMPTON I don't know him, I know the name, yeah.

PARSONS and the cops would ride the bicycles raiding this bloody shop over a, a totally innocuous, ah, Edwardian print showing some, oh it must have shown a male or a female in the nude.

LITHGOW: Yes, and the other things like, ah, as I was saying earlier the, ah, S.P. bookying, they just couldn't, you just couldn't stamp it out you know, at, ah, I, I can remember my Dad'd say at Wagga there they knew the, where the place was over at South Wagga but the moment the, the car left the Police Station they'd, they'd have the thing whatever, the telephones gone or whatever, you know, you just couldn't crack 'em, he reckoned the only way to crack them was to put the principals into the taxation department and they'd go through the, ah, bank accounts.

PARSONS: Yes, well actually I could, I could, I can remember Dad making some indiscreet comments about S.P. bookies and who was involved with it and I won't, but, ah, perhaps a lot of those people are still around, so..

LITHGOW: Yeah.

PARSONS: So obviously---

CROMPTON: Yeah.

PARSONS: there were some people that were receiving -----

CROMPTON: Can I ask you, can I ask you this about, ah, because Margaret HENRY would kill me if I didn't ask, ah, about women in the Police Force?

PARSONS: Ah, right, well actually I was going to mention that because my recollection of women in the Police Force was that, ah, Dad had very little contact with them, I think there was, ah, one Detective stationed down in Hunter Street ----- a woman Detective, ah, and they occasionally come up to the Police, up to the Court house as witnesses for different things, um, but they were very few and far between and most policewomen I can remember, you know, as a child at school you'd see the ones that used to come out on that very mundane sort of, ah, sort of school lecturing duty obviously that was the, that was considered all policewomen was good for and, ah, ah, also they used to do a bit of traffic control too I think at school crossings, but, um..

LITHGOW: We didn't -----

PARSONS: I can remember in the 60's ----- up to, around about the time Dad retired I think they had, accepting the first women prosecutor, ah..

LITHGOW: Yes.

PARSONS: ---- probably quite a few then ---

LITHGOW: Well in my time you didn't see many women although women played a very important part with policing, I mean in the country you, you could imagine a Constable out in the middle of nowhere, you know, the wives really ran the station and he was...

CROMPTON: ---- that hasn't changed, its..

LITHGOW: Hasn't it?

- CROMPTON ..still the same, yes in fact they're now paid, a pittance but they're paid, ah, for answering phones and while the husbands out.
- LITHGOW People coming, feeding prisoners and all the rest of it. You know Dad, you can imagine with a station there's a hundred and one things that come up and you know, you never know when theres going to be an accident. One of the things, one of the little stations where they were very busy I remember at Tarcutta, Tarcutta, Dad used to say, well with the, it was the most dangerous place to live in New South Wales was Tarcutta because there used to be more people died in the whole, the whole, ah, population...
- CROMPTON Yeah.
- LITHGOW ...every year at Tarcutta.
- PARSONS One thing that's worth mentioning about women in the Police is the fact, I think that, ah, wives of Police were, the Police was a bit like the Army I think and it was very male, not just the fact that it was 99% of Police were male, but social life and everything sort of oriented around, around the male, and I think women really suffered a bit, ah, the wives of Police suffered from the fact that they were sort of, um, were not really catered for in terms of, ah, you know, what went on in terms of Police social life excepting the odd Ball that the --- the annual ball and the thing it suited the Police to invite their wives along to and a lot of their socialising was very male orientated I think.
- LITHGOW Yes.
- PARSONS That may still be the case too, I don't know but, ah, I can remember my mother and other Policeman's wives and that, friends of Mum and Dad they were always complaining about that sort of thing.
- CROMPTON I can't comment on that because my wife will probably hear this tape afterwards.
- PARSONS Well it was just, I had an uncle who was a Colonel in the Army and in many respects the bloody Police wasn't all that much different you know, its very...
- LITHGOW Well I was always surprised, you know, my Dad was always a very gentle soul at home and, ah, you know, whenever you went with him anywhere it was yes sir, you know, and yes sir, so it'd come as a bit of a shock, you know, to think that these people stood to attention and ...
- CROMPTON How did you feel Doug being the son of someone who was saluted regularly?
- LITHGOW Well I just thought it was, it was just amazing, I couldn't believe it.
- CROMPTON Yeah.
- LITHGOW You know, just, it came as a bit of a shock, but um, oh you know, you just tried to ----

PARSONS It was the typical, of the service type situation wasn't it.

LITHGOW Not look embarrassed thats all ----, embarrassed about it.

PARSONS You did as you're told 'cause I can remember the Constables sort of standing at attention with my father who was a mere Sergeant and same sort of, same sort of thing, yes Sergeant, no sergeant.

CROMPTON Well I really, personally don't think its, um, like that, a Constable if the Superintendent walks downstairs, well wont snap to attention or anything like that, but I knowm hot that I've been in that long but 15 years, ah, as soon as a Super' comes near me or somebody of Commissioned rank, stand, stand still and stand upright and acknowledge and, ah, ---

PARSONS -----

LITHGOW I wanted to correct something I said earlier about Dad being involved with the, the, ah, with the Police Association, he wasn't involved as a Commissioned Officer because he was still a Sergeant when in 1957, when he was President of the local branch.

CROMPTON Right, yes, the Commissioned Officers probably even in his time would have had a seperate association.

PARSONS Yeah, I think there was a Commissioned Officers for the Police Union then, like in teaching, the Inspectors Institute, that, ah, thats something I actually, you know, I'm very active in my Union but, ah, I couldn't say I grew up in a family that was very Union minded, not that they were anti-union, but its just that, I wasn't even aware that the Police association was a trade untion until I became involved with the teachers federation so I think it'd be fair to say that, it must have been a very conservative union, my father took the view that, I think, that you know, you, you, well he didn't like a lot of the conditions but you, you had to accept it and that was part and parcel of being in the Police Force so I, I would imagine that the, it would not of, for the majority of Police probably they wouldn't have been very active in the union and it would have been a, I, a union that I think, that was fairly conservative.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW Yes.

CROMPTON We, we consider that its still fairly conservative although it, its a hard working union but its probably conservative compared to most.

LITHGOW I think though the main problem in Dad's day was trying to get promotion by seniority, rather than this, ah, just ah, off the cuff promotion and now what was the thing that was really..

CROMPTON Merit, merit based promotion

LITHGOW Yes, no, they wanted to get away, oh well, merit in inverted commas, you know, merit based, ah, promotions nonsense, because its, ah, usually merit for those people that have been brought to the notice, who count.

PARSONS I think, well I think Mackay killed the concept of merit based promotion.

LITHGOW Yes.

PARSONS Because it was so scandalous but on the other hand, the fact, the fact that my ... joined the Police six or seven years older than most of the other people in his class meant that he was denied any chance of ----

CROMPTON He was at a real disadvantage.

PARSONS and he would have obviously made it, ah, without any trouble, and again it seemed to me that even those who got to be Inspector; they, they would be a Sergeant for almost twenty, perhaps a third class for 15 years, second class for 5 or 10 years, third class, sorry first class for a couple of years but then all the commissioned ranks would all, you might get three or four promotions in a couple of years, you get people sort of, they get Inspector 3rd class when they are 57 and then they might be a Superintendent third class when they were fift', fifty nine perhaps.

CROMPTON In readiness for retirement.

PARSONS Yeah.

LITHGOW Yes, yes, its just like headmasters at schools, but, ah,

PARSONS But I think after 59 you couldn't actually get, accept promotion.

LITHGOW ----- well there was no doubt that Dad had a very interesting life and loved every moment of it.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW In the Police Force.

CROMPTON Yes.

LITHGOW But I only wish that I kept some of the stories, I could remember them because it was always a laugh, you know.

CROMPTON We've covered so much.

LITHGOW He was really always a, he was a, he was a fellow, he used to tell such, you know, stories, I can remember him telling a story about all his kids, you know, he's got two sets of twins in the family and one in the middle and he told this story to the, he must have been skiting somewhere or other over a beer or something and you know, about all his kids being born on the same day, you know, two sets of twins and five kids, so some bloke in America got hold of this and, ah, you know was always writing letters trying to get, ah, copies, because he kept the oddities.

CROMPTON Yeah, well, well I'll finish this interview off, so thanks very much to both of you. Its, its been a real pleasure, I, I wasn't sure how things would go.

PARSONS No I wasn't either.

CROMPTON and its been great fun, so...

LITHGOW Thanks a lot.

CROMPTON So thank you.