

ACT Heritage Library Manuscript Collection

Interview with Ron Hourigan - Timed Summary

RON HOURIGAN - TOPICS	TIMELINE (END)
Introduction – born 1920 in Araluen – story of asking Trevillian for job – first job was ashman – then learned boilers – most of time spent at Dairy Farmers after Powerhouse closed	2:24
‘Ashman’ very hot job raking ash and shovelling into conveyors into hoppers – then Government trucks would come two or three times a week to haul the ash away – description of level where ash fell – division of boilers between ACT and NSW boilers –	6:07
Then graduated to ‘fireman’ which was a boiler attendant -12 hour shifts 3 times a week – Powerhouse would close at Christmas time – maintenance would take place once a year – description of the fireman’s work routine – 200 psi – feeding coal into boiler -	12:12
Coal supply – some problems with Berrima open cut mine – would leave big lumps of burning ash – very dusty conditions in boiler room - no protective clothing– up to 20 barrow loads of dust each day – did have a strike one day over the conditions – got a new shower room starting construction the next day!	16:15
Noise – was not a lot of noise – only when coal was dropping into bottom hopper – some pump noise from pumping from Molonglo River -	18:30
‘Trimmer’ for each boiler attendant – kept place clean and lubricate pumps – at lunch at the boiler – no lunch room – cleaning firebox at night – extremely hot -	21:16
Ventilation – description of sources -	22:06
Staffing – 8-9 per shift – description of who was doing what – comments on supervisors and other workers – Ashman were mostly new Australians -	29:46
Accidents – big clinkers came down the chute from PWD boiler - hit Italian (Calabrian) chap in face – ambulance came – no recollection of Alf Farrer electrocution -	32:41
Comments on nature of job – 12 hour shifts were very tiring – but had few days off to	35:01

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make up for it – pay – could not recall -	
Socialising – all at Hotel Kingston -	36:07
Swimming in outlet waters – status of Powerhouse – very ordinary – he left before station closed (owing to Snowy Hydro Scheme power coming in) -	38:18
Whistle – times it blew – distance it could be heard was great because Canberra was a quieter place then -	41:02
Talks about period working at Dairy Farmers for 30 years as boiler attendant – was not very happy about being sacked after 30 years -	44:35
More on staffing at Powerhouse -	46:10