



ACT Heritage Library Manuscript Collection

Interview with Barney McHugh - Timed Summary

BARNET (BARNEY) McHUGH -TOPICS	TIMELINE (END)
Intro – born 1923 in Glasgow – migration to Australia – worked as electrical fitter – worked next door to Powerhouse - shift electrician one day a week at Powerhouse – looked after meters and switchgear	2:58
Blowing the whistle – personal description of clock used and process he would use to turn on steam to whistle about 15 min early – various opinions about origin of whistle	4:34
Synchronising the generators – talks of generator room and the equipment in there – use of NSW power -	7:12
Cotter Pumping station – trouble with pumps – did not know how to ‘sweat’ bearings on to shaft – other maintenance issues – need for earth strap on bearings – memories -	10:28
Boiler room – did not go into room much – story about one worker whose wife would sometimes not let him come home from work – he had to sleep on top of one of the wagons – recollections of expansion pipe – good ventilation – not too hot or cold inside – not very noisy -	13:26
Other parts of complex includes economiser room – copper bus bars – draws diagram of three phase arrangements -415 volts difference between each phase – but 240 volts to neutral – cable arrangements – stray cats would sometimes get electrocuted on the cables or drown in open pits nearby -	18:26
Condensers – no recollection -	19:35
Shift electrician – one day a week – took over as head of “Kelly gang” – special skill was cable jointing – describes process of jointing a cable – used to sell the copper left overs for scrap but police investigated and confiscated copper	25:59
Switchboard – switchyard – power supply from NSW – transforming high voltage to Canberra low voltage – (had photos of Ainslie Avenue switchyard) – description of tunnel	30:50

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under Wentworth Ave -	
Ash disposal – can't recall – description of coal pilfering by workers and local residents -	32:26
Crack on floor of building – different vibration on each side of crack – eventually covered over	33:39
People descriptions – Tom Trevillian – Bill Brown and son Bert – Mick Ozerskis -	36:49
Accidents – no recollection	37:48
Industrial disputes – no recollection	38:20
Socialising – Hotel Wellington – and stories – chasing women was main pastime for him	40:36
Powerhouse status – no real comment – but talks of hostels – getting married 22 Dec 1952 – reception at Hotel Civic – honeymooned in Manly (Sydney) – talks of promotions and feeling satisfied with pay	44:11
Closure of powerhouse – no real feelings – but felt sad the materials were being sold for scrap – that was a waste – wants to revisit site -	46:11
Other matters – climbed inside one of the transformers – wooden electrical gearbox jammed – Frank Dunshae watched outside – took gearbox to Sydney for rebuilding – took 12 hours to there and back with repaired gearbox -	50:24
Relation with NSW power – no recollection – but talks of cottages for NSW linesman who checked the overhead lines which brought power to Canberra	51:25
Pie seller (Wilky's pies) – very rough old bugger – swore at customers -	53:59
Powerhouse chimney and smoke – can't recall smoke being intrusive -	55:07