

The Institution of Engineers, Australia

Engineering Heritage Australia

National Engineering Oral History Program

INTERVIEW TAPE LOG

Interviewee: Donald Fry Tape Numbers: IEA. EHA: LJ 1, LJ 2,
LJ 3.

Interviewer: Lesley Jenkins Number of Tapes: 3

Place of Interview: Institution of Engineers Building, 447 Upper Edward Street, Brisbane.

Date of Interview: 27 August 2004

Restrictions on Use: None

Log prepared using Marantz CP 430

Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 1, Side A

Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000	Provides date and place of birth. (16/1/1940)	Cairns
010	Names and occupations of parents	Celia Muriel Fry (Mother) Richard George Fry (Father) Accountant -Prompt Printery then Electrician Co-founded NQEA with Don Ryan
033	Origins of the name NQEA & their early work	North Queensland Engineers & Agents
066	One sibling; Raymond Alfred Fry	Born 1947
084	Moved to mother's in-laws in Charters Towers during the War years until 1944.	War Years – reunion with his father Clayfield
108	Began school at Southport – then Charters Towers	Southport SPS - (1945)

151	Sausage making in Charters Towers Sheet metal working machines	Interest in machinery from age 5
190	Interest in aircraft located at Charters Towers	World War 11 American servicemen
236	Teacher that took an interest in Don's drawing & design skills	Jack Careless
245	Rare praise from father when, at a young age, Don erected a Bauxite Plant at Weipa.	Weipa Bauxite Plant
254	Finished school and took an apprenticeship with NQEA as a fitter & turner (completed 1960)	1954 finished junior school Night School in Mechanical & Electrical Engineering
296	Difficulties related to fathers industrial accidents.	Fathers working accidents at Cairns and Weipa
314	Don was the only one to complete the course at night school. Views on the worth of the course.	Completion rate at Night School
349	Benefit of learning from Frank Lonning in electrical engineering on an individual basis. Maths tuition by Jim Borner	Frank Lonning ASEA Barron Falls Hydro Scheme Jim Borner?
370	Continuing thirst for knowledge	Structural Engineering Course by correspondence
381	Fixing equipment at the hospital (orthopaedic) Don wished that he had studied medicine and worked as an orthopaedic surgeon.	Cairns Base Hospital
End Side A, Tape LJ 1		

Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 1, Side B		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000	Outline of work developing tools for the orthopaedic surgeons at Cairns Base Hospital	Orthopaedic surgeons
034	Don outlined NQEA's work for the community	Cairns Combined Schools Band Cairns Youth Centre Methodist Ancillary Buildings Good Samaritan Home- Cairns Salvation Army National Committee on Homelessness
094	Don's capacity to think outside the square	National Committee on Homelessness
100	Don outlines his religious upbringing	Anglican & Methodist

		roots
124	Don describes his beliefs and how they mesh with those of the Salvation Army.	1958 -Salvation Army Toowoomba
175	Don outlined his work at NQEA as a fitter and turner	Steam Driven sawmills Roll and Weld Pipes Structural Steel work Bulk Sugar Terminals
205	Don outlined the time when contracts were sealed on the shake of the hand	Contracts Frustrations with current requirements for onerous documentation.
234	Don discusses the quality of the pipe making work undertaken.	Irrigation channels behind the Tinaroo Dam
249	Design of formwork for the underground powerhouse and installation of the overhead crane. Mentors in negotiation and contract development	Barron Falls Hydro Scheme John Pennitzer? Franco Bellgiorno
267	Don outlines the construction of the first bauxite plant Controlling a workforce	Weipa
318	Don outlines the first successful tender to the Royal Australian Navy.	Landing Craft
338	Don outlined how he was going to building the craft undercover in a production line.(1 every 5 weeks)	Trade Unions Royal Australian Navy
	End Side B, Tape LJ 1	

Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 2, Side A		
Time/Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
008	Don outlined in precise terms the involvement of the Metal Trades Union in the industry.	1964-1974 Trade Union Evans Deakin Shipyards Painters & Dockers
137	Don describes his management role and the termination of 400 employees.	Industrial issues Management role 1985 – Patrol Craft Tender
189	Don outlined trust and integrity in business	Documentation
196	Don describes his marriage to Lesley Ann and his three children	Mark (current managing director) Leanne (former receptionist at the company) Glen (former apprentice to the company)
241	Don describes the dissolution of his marriage	Marriage
250	Don describes his design work and leaving the operation of	Denmark

	NQEA to a manager	Large passenger ferries Hull forms Wave cancellation
317	Don describes boat design and the challenge to come up with the right blend of ratio of water plane area, displacement and skin friction.	Wave action and hull displacement Engineering challenges
351	Don describes his system of automatic docking which he had put on the Brisbane River and which was used by others.	Automatic docking system Dredge and barge Denmark
368	Don returned to his business to find that it had not been well run.	Poor management Rebuilding the business
393	Don describes the importance of aesthetics in design	Design aesthetics Marketability Balance Fit for purpose
	End Side A, Tape LJ 2	

Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 2, Side B		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
010	Don describes his view of art and his eye for balance	Aesthetics
060	Don describes the services provided by Fry Design and its links with NQEA	Fry Design & Research NQEA
074	Don outlines his work in producing a report to government about the Fiji ship repair industry	Fiji ship repair industry
088	Don expands on his role in NQEA and his work with Fry Design and Research.	Chairman & principal shareholder
091	Don outlined the 'exhausted roosters badge' and his work with JAYCEES.	JAYCEES Cairns Coast Guard Cairns Trade & Industries Fair Development of personal Christian ethic
146	Don talks about the extensive nature of his overseas trips and the Methodist Central Hall Church	Methodist Central Hall Church Benevolence
186	Don outlined the high cost of tendering and the recent lack of success in this area.	Tendering Lobbying Prime Minister John Howard
256	Don outlined his view on maintaining a defensive capability and his role in building patrol craft.	Winston Churchill Naval Vessels
283	Don describes his philosophy of life and leadership and some of the figures that have guided and developed his views.	Margaret Thatcher Lee Kwan Yu Winston Churchill Abraham Lincoln
335	Don described playing the Cornet, the flugelhorn & the French horn and his musical interests	Cornet player(age 8) Cairns Civic Orchestra

		'The Messiah' Choir interests
381	Don outlines how he manages his day (diary) 'to do' list, schedules, managing time, car office, exercise and early rising, delegating	Programming interests Work Family life
	End Side B, Tape LJ 2	

Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 3, Side A – 27 August 2004		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
008	Don spoke about retirement as being a change of direction	Clearing land mines Cambodia University of Qld Professor Ray Stalker Professor Allan Paul
050	Don spoke about his work perfecting low wash & no wash boats.	Low Wash Boats Sydney Harbour Thames River
085	Don outlined the difficulties the successful tenderer for the 'City Cats' encountered.	City Cats -Brisbane
119	Don further outlined the problems with tendering	Tenders
126	Don outlined his role in the Institution of Engineers in Cairns for the last 30 years.	Institution of Engineers - Cairns
145	Don spoke about the Northern Engineering Conference in 1977 and Ray Roberts as guest speaker.	Institution of Engineers -Chairman 1977 Ray Roberts Weipa Waste conversion into electricity Nuclear energy
174	Don spoke about his role in developing rules regarding maritime craft.	Det Norske Veritas Denmark
195	Don described his advisory role with the Lloyds Register of Shipping	Lloyds Register of Shipping
214	Don described his role as a financial investor/shareholder in a German company called Schiffco?	CSIRO 1984 German Marine Exhibition
239	Don outlined the work involved in a hydrographic ship which also took him to Russia.	Schiffo – Germany Hydrographic work James Cook University
256	Don outlined his appointment by the Borbidge Government to the Board, which was revoked when the government changed.	Marine Board of Qld
278	Don outlined his tour of the US with Premier Borbidge and advisors of the space industry with a view to putting a space port into Nth Qld.	Space Industry in the US
288	Don received a grant to allow him to travel for 2 months in the US to view how things were made i.e. weapons control, shipbuilding etc	USIA Grant

310	Current role with the University in developing control systems for space	University of Queensland
314	Don outlined the treasured experience of winning his many awards	Institution of Engineer Awards Hall of Fame Peter Nicol Russell Memorial Medal
335	Don describes the community awards he has received	Community Awards The Officer of the Order of Australia Paul Harris Rotary Fellowship
370	Don described this award and that his father had received the inaugural award.	Cairns Citizen of the Year
Tape: IEA.EHA:LJ 3, Side B		
Time/Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
007	Don outlined his work in funding and building Centenary Lodge for homeless men.	Homelessness Salvation Army Minister Jocelyn Newman
125	Introduction of the metric system	Metric conversion
142	The change to computerised control systems	Computerised control systems CMC plate cutting machine.
196	Don outlined the business decisions required to remain competitive.	Competitiveness & new technology
209	Time lag in building large projects – programming operations when decision-making is slow.	Executing contracts
230	The effect of China on large ship building projects	China
240	Don enjoys attending symphony orchestras, bike riding or walking.	Leisure time Malanda –hobby farm
256	Time spent in an apartment in Cairns and at Malanda	Malanda Cairns
273	Don outlined his hopes for the future with NQEA and his son's role	NQEA Mark Fry
284	Close of interview	
	End Side B, Tape LJ 3	