

The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
Engineering Heritage Australia  
National Engineering Oral History Program  
**INTERVIEW TAPE LOG**

Interviewee: L G (George) Redmond

Tape Numbers: IEA EHA: MP 1 to 2

Interviewer: Dr Margaret Park

Number of Tapes: 2, Sides A &amp; B

Place of Interview: 17 Howse Street, Campbell, ACT, (G Redmond's Canberra residence)

Dates of Interview: 21 October 2003

**Restrictions on Use:**

Log prepared using (make and model of machine): Sony Cassette-Corder TCM-15V;  
Tape Conversion Rate: 30 minutes = 420 on counter, i.e. 1 minute = 14 on counter  
Interview recorded on Marantz PMD420 professional portable analogue recorder.

Tape: IEA EHA: MP1, Side A		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-012	Provides full name, date and place of birth.	Charters Towers, Queensland
013-053	Details of family migration to Australia in c1880s, grandmother from England and grandfather from Ireland. Grandfather interested in mining. Charters Towers in the 1890s was the second biggest town in Queensland, established as a gold mining town. Family moved to Cloncurry when Charters Towers went into decline (about 1910), father was a mining engineer trained at Charters Towers School of Mines (first tertiary institution in Queensland). Describes the workshop run by his father. Father also worked as a shire engineer for Cloncurry Shire Council.	Charters Towers Mining Gold mining Cloncurry Charters Towers School of Mines Mining Engineering Mt Isa Cloncurry Shire Council [Father – Edward Vernon Redmond Mother – Christina Bell Burness] (information from counter 205-207)
054-067	Describes father's engineering work including the Cloncurry water supply and as a contractor built the concrete reservoir. Built reservoirs for cattle stations and contracted building bridges and other civil engineering work. Member of Institution of Engineers.	Cloncurry Shire Council Water supply Reservoirs Bridges Civil Engineering Institution of Engineers
068-108	Influenced by his father's engineering business. Family were struggling and lived in tents when father was undertaking	Cloncurry Bridge Flinders River

	construction work, such as at Cloncurry and also at Flinders River when father was building a concrete bridge. Lived in a galvanized iron shed, workers lived in tents. Describes his mother and her background - born in Brisbane, was a school teacher in charge of a one teacher school of 64 children. Married his father in Paddington, Brisbane before moving to Charters Towers. Her father was a stonemason, worked on the Treasury building in Brisbane. Talks about his siblings, brother - Herbert Henry, sister - Dorothy.	Living Conditions Brisbane One teacher schools Paddington, Brisbane The Treasury Building, Brisbane Siblings - Herbert Henry and Dorothy Mechanical Engineering Foundries Blacksmiths Shops
109-165	Describes early schooling, correspondence courses by mail from Queensland Education Department. Natural resources provided entertainment - describes his pet porcupine. Moved to Richmond, near Cloncurry. Father worked as a consulting engineer. Then moved to Townsville and describes their T-Model Ford and running out of petrol. Talks about his grandfather's gold mining experience.	Correspondence courses Queensland Dept of Education Pets Richmond Townsville T-Model Ford Gold Mining
166-207	Attended school at Richmond, also at Townsville. Father was appointed Shire Engineer at Innisfail and George went to school there. Describes living at a property outside town. Father designed and constructed (with day labour) concrete bridges for the Johnstone Shire Council. At the age of 12 received a Royal Humane Society medal for saving one of his father's employees from drowning at South Johnstone River.	Richmond Innisfail Johnstone Shire Council South Johnstone River Royal Humane Society Medal (1926)
208-282	Moved to Ingham c1927 and attended local primary school, then went to the Grammar School in Townsville (boarding school). Describes family movements, feelings about, "never settled in any place for very long". Went camping locally on holidays. Describes playing hockey and other sports. Talks about shark-proofing bathing enclosures. Discusses the depression years and level of father's work.	Ingham Grammar School, Townsville Camping Sporting activities: hockey, swimming, fishing Depression Years
283-414	Describes subjects at high school, including his punishment for dropping Latin. Completed school after passing junior certificate. Family moved to Cairns and George undertook his matriculation by private study. Worked with his father (consulting engineer to Mossman Shire Council) while studying - did drafting, surveying, engineering and calculations. Recalls his father's employees - Norman Ward, became City Engineer for Brisbane and Frank Morris, in charge of the railways in North Queensland.	High School subjects Matriculation Mossman Shire Council Norman Ward Frank Morris
	End Side A, Tape 1	

## Tape: IEA EHA: MP1, Side B

Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-043	Describes his father's qualifications and associations with the Institution of Engineers. George worked for the Department of Main Roads, Queensland c1930. Did sketch plans for mobile crushing plant while employed as a mechanic, not qualified yet as an engineer.	Father: Associate - Institution of Engineers (1930) and the Board of Professional Engineers, Queensland (1932) Department of Main Roads, Queensland



044-101	Took up part-time matriculation studies. Entered university later than usual, about 1933 [1934] at the age of 20 – Queensland University. Describes university course in civil engineering and associated subjects. Course included practical work experience at neighbouring technical college. Taught by Prof. Hawkins, entered into Queensland engineering hall of fame. Describes Prof. Hawkins' lectures and the 'alarm clock' prank.	Engineering – Queensland University Engineering Work Experience Professor Hawkins
102-142	Most of the students were younger than George, no women attending; a degree in chemical engineering started at this time and a woman, Elizabeth Cowan – first woman enrolled in this course. Four year course, repeated second year. First year - 20 people, last year only 4 left. Also did surveying in last year of degree, but didn't complete the requirement of working 12 months under a licensed surveyor.	Chemical Engineering Elizabeth Cowan Surveying
143-180	Decided to do civil engineering when first enrolled. Lived at Emmanuel College, Brisbane. Describes practical work experience during holiday periods at Newcastle Steel Works and Gordonvale Sugar Mill. Local Government engineering work experience at various shire councils in water supply, sewerage, roads and bridges work.	Civil Engineering Work Experience: Newcastle Steel Works Gordonvale Sugar Works Local Government
181-242	Joined the Institution of Engineers as a junior member during university course. Became an associate of the Institution after the second world war. Finished studies in 1938 and worked with his father's business, including a tin mine at Cooktown. Describes work, equipment and sale of materials. Describes other engineering work with his father for Mossman Council. Rates of pay for engineers = £220 per year. Wanted to work in private industry, not in public service.	Institution of Engineers Tin Mine Cooktown Mossman Shire Council Wages
243-290	Talks about his attempts to join the Army at the beginning of the second world war and his involvement with building defence projects, construction of flying training schools. Appointed as resident engineer, Torres Strait Islands.	World War II Flight Training Schools Department of Interior Torres Strait Islands [Thursday Island]
291-383	Discusses meeting Adelaide Hester Smith, in Cairns at a dinner dance and describes moving to Thursday Island with her and their living conditions. Describes role as resident engineer and work, i.e. early radar installations. Civilian evacuation, only essential services. His father was resident engineer before him. Discusses water supply problems on the Island and use of salt water. Transported water from Darwin via tankers.	Adelaide Hester Smith – Marriage Thursday Island Radar Civilian evacuation Water supply/use of salt water
384-414	Stayed on Thursday Island to the last of the Coral Sea battles, approx. 8 months. Evacuated Japanese POWs – were pearl divers. Designed/built a dam with RAE on Horn Island to resolve water supply problems and Allied Works Council finished the earthworks; believes it now to be the water supply for Thursday Island.	Coral Sea Japanese POWs Pearl Divers RAE [Royal Army Engineers] Allied Works Council Horn Island Dam Thursday Island Water Supply
	End Side B Tape 1	

	Tape: IEA EHA: MP2, Side A	
000-081	Explains the work of the Allied Works Council during wartime. Undertook general work for them on Thursday Island, reported to the Director of Works in Queensland (part of the Allied Works Council). Describes working with the Americans during the war and his time and experiences on Thursday Island. Talks about the Japanese Zero's strafing the runway and civilians issued with tin helmets and rifles by the Army. Native battalion commanded by Cadzow, a European pearler. Talks about local stores and general food supplies during wartime.	Allied Works Council Dept. of Interior, Works and Services Branch World War II Air Raids Horn Island Thursday Island Native Battalion Tom Ryder Chinese storekeepers
082-117	Contact with wife/family during wartime. Talks about the evacuation of his wife and her contact with his family in Townsville.	Wartime correspondence Townsville Brisbane
118-155	Returned to work with Works and Services designing gun emplacements, anti-aircraft stations and coastal artillery. Concrete and steel, all Australian supplies. Directed by Kemp, [Deputy Director General of Allied Works Council] to go to Coen via a DC3 to extend the airstrip. Describes the trip there and other flights during the war.	Townsville Gun Emplacements Artillery, Coastal BHP Steel Coen J R Kemp, Allied Works Council
156-207	Describes living in Townsville renting a house with his parents. Continues with stories of various wartime work duties, including a seaplane base at Goode Island. Children born in Townsville, 1943 and 1944. Talks about his wife's work before the war; she worked for a music company, Neilson Grice	Townsville Living Conditions Goode Island Family during wartime Adelaide Hester Smith
208-252	At the end of the war appointed Roads and Aerodrome engineer for Queensland with Allied Works Council. Family moved to Brisbane with two children and one expected. Entered Commonwealth Public Service after the war. Impressed by Principal Engineer, Jimmy Cadden.	Senior Engineer Family in Brisbane Commonwealth Public Service Jimmy Cadden
253-286	Remained in Brisbane until 1950. Describes New Guinea in relationship to control by Brisbane Department. Dan Rooney appointed Director, George appointed Principal Engineer. Prepared for work in New Guinea from his general and wartime experiences. Took over former Army workshops. Designed a hydro-electric scheme for Port Moresby while in Brisbane. Principal Engineer was responsible for design and standard of construction.	New Guinea Dan Rooney Port Moresby Hydro-Electric Scheme Principal Engineer
287-314	Colleagues in New Guinea – listed in reports [Report on activities of the Department of Works by L G Redmond]. Main officers: Dan Rooney (from NSW Dept. of Main Roads) – describes his background; also Frank Vigden, Commonwealth Controller of Works, Queensland, acted as Director of Works after Rooney left for Melbourne.	New Guinea Dan Rooney Frank Vigden
315-330	Family arrived after 12 months. Children went to primary school in New Guinea, then boarding schools in Queensland.	New Guinea Boarding Schools, Queensland
331-394	Always acted as Assistant Director. Discusses work projects in New Guinea – bridge across the Markham River using salvaged army bridging. Built by contract – Hornibrook	New Guinea MacGowan Markham River Bridge



	Constructions. Talks about staffing – technical staff from Queensland, some from overseas recruits.	Hornibrook Constructions Engineering staff Fokkema (from Holland) Dr Schusler, hydraulics (from Central Europe)
	<b>End Side A, Tape 2</b>	
	<b>Tape: IEA EHA: MP2, Side B</b>	
000-035	Continues with description of staffing – mechanical engineer from China (Russian), also an engineer from India. Talks about achievements – Markham River Bridge. Tells the story of 'being reported as lost by ABC'. Built many miles of bridges, mainly prefabricated intended for erection during wartime. On the road from Lae to the Highlands, built a bridge across the Erap River.	New Guinea Vic Mackno Markham River Bridge Bougainville Erap River Bridge
036-063	Mount Lamington volcanic eruption. Worked for every Commonwealth Department – everyone wanted construction done. Estimated budgets for 20-30 clients. First experience within a bureaucracy and handling budgets.	Mount Lamington Budgets
064-084	Largest client was the Department of Territories. Built pavilion-type hospitals, also built schools and town infrastructure.	Department of Territories: Hospitals, schools and towns, New Guinea
085-110	Discusses problems of water supply. Port Moresby's supply from Laloki River was installed before the war and for a smaller population. Worked on improving pipeline. Severe water restrictions and lack of sewerage/sanitation.	Port Moresby Water Supply Laloki River Sewerage and Sanitation
111-140	Use of local population as day labourers – about 6,000 on books. Some had own bark huts, others were supplied with accommodation. Describes employment of dwarf natives on road construction – each came with their own bow and arrow. Talks about native staff home help – servants, such as house boys, cook boys, some problems with stealing.	Day Labour Native Labour Social Conditions
141-147	Describes social life – golfing, fishing, swimming, football.	Social Life
148-170	Constructed overseas wharves for cargo – copper as main export, gold – mines were located in Markham/Walaboo area. Describes problems with wharf construction.	Wharves Copper Mines Gold Mines
171-202	Describes Raboul power station. Rebuilt the power station and involved with constructing powerhouses at Port Moresby, Lae, Medang, Raboul. Talks about a 16mm film taken over this period (1950-1957) of works under construction, unsure of its whereabouts.	Raboul Power Stations Road Construction
203-235	Talks about general experiences gained during New Guinea period, also returned to New Guinea during his time in Darwin, not for work, but to help recruit teachers for Darwin Community College. Tells story of natives pulling vehicles across a river by ropes and the costs involved. Rained for 240 days a year in Lae, began about 4 o'clock every day	Darwin Community College Climate, New Guinea Wet Season
236-254	Travelled around in 4-wheel drive or by aircraft, sometimes chartered, others by RAAF. Office arrangements, no computers until 1970 (in Darwin, primitive then)	Transportation, New Guinea
255-279	Left New Guinea when someone else appointed as Assistant Director. Moved to Canberra in 1958 as Principal Engineer, higher classification than same position in New Guinea. Graded as a Class 5.	Canberra Principal Engineer

Tape log of interview with: L G (George) Redmond

Date: 21 October 2003

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