Clem Jones Oral History Project

Job name: Barry Maranta

Interviewee: Barry Maranta – BM

Interviewer: Lindsay Marshall – LM

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LM: This is an interview with Barry Maranta for the Clem Jones Oral History Project. The interview is being conducted by myself, Lindsay Marshall, at the offices of the Clem Jones Group at 63 Wellington Road, East Brisbane, on Monday 20th of June 2022.

Barry, first of all, thanks very much for doing the interview and taking part in the project.

BM: My pleasure.

LM: A bit about yourself first of all before we get on to your relationship with Clem. You were born in 1934. You went to Marist College at Rosalie as a school boy. What were your memories of that time of your sort of life there, your school days, and Brisbane itself in those years.

BM: Well, it was post-war and it was an exciting time because we were brought up to think that all the evil was behind us and that the opportunities were going to be expansive. We grew up to be one, very patriotic and very supportive of what this little nation of Australia could do, and secondly, that the opportunity were boundless, if we were prepared to put our mind to things. That was the culture and it was a pretty widespread culture, even amongst people who didn't treasure education the way my family did. But even those others realised that work was, it was non-negotiable.

LM: And your family life, your father Joe and your mother Beryl, what did they do for a living?

BM: Dad was a principal of a technician training school which taught young men to work phones and communication and all the technical side of things. So he was the principal of that training college. My mother worked in the PMG [Postmaster General's Department] at some stage as a telephonist. She was from a sort of a non-professional family, although the family did very, very well. They were.. the Woodwards were pretty well known particularly in the Maryborough, Bundaberg area, in that area. She came from that area. Anyway, that was mum.

She was very strongly involved in reading and learning. She was more into the verbal side of it. Dad was more on the technical side of it, which, I followed my mother, much to my father's dissatisfaction. But I just couldn't handle the sort of technical stuff that he did.

LM: But you did end up in the teaching profession.

BM: Yes.

LM: As did your siblings.

BM: Yes, all my siblings were teachers, and that was something. Dad used to have people come in, like even as we were doing our homework, we'd have two or three 18-year-old's come in because in those days, to get anywhere, you had to pass exams. It's a shock. These days, my God. But even just to get into technical training, you had to sit for exams. Dad would take students every night just about and we would have to shift because he'd say "Wait on, I've got someone coming in at 7 o'clock", and we'd have to go and do our homework somewhere else.

So the learning and the focus on that side of education was just part of the way we lived.

LM: So you were sort of immersed in that whole idea of teaching.

BM: They were also very strongly affected by the Depression and the idea that dad used to say: "You become a teacher, then you're not going to lose your job." That really rang home to that generation. So the idea of being a teacher was not necessarily an esoteric one. It was because if there was a Depression again, at least they need teachers and you'd have a job. So it was something that we just gravitated towards.

LM: And at that stage in your life there, you lived at Coorparoo, not far from where Clem's parents lived.

BM: Yes, at Norfolk... I think it was about the early '50s, we shifted into what turned out to be three or four doors down from where Clem was in Norfolk Street.

LM: But at that stage, you didn't have any interaction with him.

BM: No. Although I was just starting to play cricket, but I didn't know Clem... because it wasn't Clem himself, it was Mr and Mrs Jones. I didn't get that relationship for quite some time.

LM: Now, you ended up at University of Queensland.

BM: Yes.

LM: And you started Arts and postgraduate degrees.

BM: Yes.

LM: And you ended up becoming a teacher in North Queensland in the 1950s, thereabouts?

BM: Yeah, late 1950s. I started off in primary school, and then I did a second degree and because I'd specialised in history, they were just at the beginning of the time when education was evolving and they were actually picking and appointing subject masters. So I then got appointed as a history subject master because of my studies. From that point, I then went to Ayr which was the Ayr/Home Hill State High School. So that's when I went up to North Queensland for a couple of years.

LM: You were starting to play cricket because you were playing, as you've told me previously, you were actually playing rugby league, but you started playing cricket because of a league injury.

BM: Yes, well I had played both. In those days you could actually play summer and winter. Nowadays there's a sort of a … cross boundaries. But in those days we played cricket until March and then we started playing rugby league. I was a rugby league player so I played rugby league. When I went to Ayr/Home Hill, I actually went as well as a professional footballer. They paid me to go up there and play for that part of the Foley Shield. That Ayr/Home Hill was a strong rugby league area. When they found out that the history master was also playing first grade in Brisbane, and through the good wishes of a fellow called Jack Reardon who was the rugby league writer, he wrote some nice things. The next thing, they signed me up to a club up there. So I was both playing… and while I was up there, I was still playing football as well as being a history master.

LM: So just to sidetrack a little bit from the main subject here, given that you were involved very much in the establishment of the Brisbane Broncos, a professional football club and business, in those days when you were playing, what you said was a professional… you were being paid, it would be a vast difference from what's happening today with football players.

BM: Yes, it was again, well before professionalism came in, the one thing I can hear ringing in my ears as I speak is my mother saying: "Would you please study more. There is no money in sport." And I copped that, because when I finished Grade 12, I got an offer to go to a school, St Brendan's [College], to go up and have another year at Grade 12 which wasn't uncommon. Footballers from Churchie [Church of England Gramma School] and every school that had some footballers that people favoured, would get an opportunity. Sometimes you'd be playing against guys, when I was at school, playing guys who were 19 who were coming back for their third year in Grade 12 or senior as we used to call it then.

So I can remember after I'd finished Grade 12 and mum and dad were thinking quite comfortably that I was going to go to teacher's college, and I said: "By the way, I've got a free scholarship to go…" All that was, was board and everything else to play up in Rockhampton for St Brendan's. That conversation came to a very sudden end and I went off to teacher's college. But mum kept saying… that was a fact of life, there was no money in sport. I've been involved, as things, the evolution of sport, I've been party to… I've been part of it through accident, not through design. Everything's happened through accident.

Because I got involved with Greg Chappell who then came up to Queensland, then things just blossomed. There were all sorts of things happening. First of all there was the tennis, Jack Kramer's tennis where tennis went professional back in the late 50s, early 60s. So that was the first time money… and of course a lot of people like Rosewall, Lew Hoad, Frank Sedgman, as tennis players, were really frowned upon because they left the amateur ranks and took money. We were offended, those of us who followed the sport, because we couldn't conceptualise money and sport. They were separate things. And as I say, I can still hear my mother saying: "Stop doing this, go and study because there is no money in sport."

I joke about it because I've started two football teams. I've been involved at every level of sport here and overseas. Anyway I chuckle thinking "Mum, you got that wrong". But that was the evolution.

LM: But the professionalism of sport is more than just the player isn't it? It's a whole business now.

BM: It's a whole network now. The one thing that when I got out of, and got into the business community, as I say when I jumped the fence and got out of academia which everyone thought I was nuts, when I got into the commercial world, the thing that I saw was that I needed to go and study. I needed to go and learn if I was going to be involved in sport, and I got very heavily involved in American sport which was the leading professional flavour of sport. Through tennis it was Kramer, then it was through Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus in golf. Then of course I got involved with the American football team. So I've been 30 years involved with the Denver Broncos. For example, I do more with the Denver Broncos, well I did, until the week before last when the franchise was sold. But up until that point, I'd been very heavily involved in American sport.

LM: The idea of professional sports versus amateur sports always bumps up against each other at the Olympics doesn't it?

BM: Yes, well it used to. It doesn't so much now because as you know, they have tennis and it's now accepted that you don't have to be….

LM: A pure amateur.

BM: …a pure amateur. But in those days it was absolutely sacrosanct that if you took a dollar… I mean it was just ridiculous what happened. Because I got involved with Greg Chappell as the captain of the Australian Cricket Team and then people like Kerry Packer got involved in starting World Series Cricket, I was involved in and immersed in that. I got personally immersed through no fault of my own.

At that point, I didn't think Clem was a great supporter. Because Clem was of the old school, it was very hard for people to reconcile the playing for the love which we all did, to playing to make money. There was that reconciliation and it's going on to this day. I saw where the netball are going through this problem as we speak. It's a fascinating study in itself but, you know, it's evolution.

LM: Back to Clem and particularly the University of Queensland Cricket Club. How did you get involved and roughly about what time did you get involved in that?

BM: I started playing cricket at uni. What happened is I'd play football and then I still had to study to finish my exams because I did basically all of them at night. So I taught, coached the local team and then went to uni from 6 o'clock to 9 o'clock for 15 years. I just did nothing else. But come the end of the football season, my mates would go down and join the surf lifesaving clubs because most of them were there. But I'd go to cricket because I could stay in Brisbane and go to uni, and still study.

So I played cricket from about '54 on, but as a nothing cricketer. I was there virtually to fill in the summer and it was there that I started to hear the stories about this apparition called Clem Jones. The stories that were going through at the [cricket practice] nets with a fellow called Wep Harris who virtually ran the nets. The stories he could tell about Clem Jones were bountiful and we loved them because it was like some person from outer space who was writing back telling us things. As you know, when Clem did things, he did them thoroughly, and he would send back information and we would hear the local gossip of what he was doing here, there and everywhere.

LM: And this was at the time when he was studying in America?

BM: Yes, he was doing some course over there with Sylvia. I had no idea what it was. He would then go to a baseball game and then tell people what happened. This was all news to us because in the '50s, we didn't really understand world sport at all. We didn't really understand local sport that much. Cricket we did. But the football codes were sort of going through their embryonic stage as well. But Clem then passed on what was happening over there. He developed a relationship somehow, through the LA Dodgers if I remember correctly.

I remember Wep Harris always had this Dodgers cap that he reckons Clem gave to him or something. So that was it. We were at a very, very embryonic stage of learning something about what sport could become. We saw sport as an aside. It was what you did of a Saturday and a Sunday while you worked. Now we know quite differently what sport is a part of our endeavour.

LM: You mentioned there you're hearing the name Clem as you mentioned, like an apparition because he was over in America. He'd applied for the Fulbright Scholarship. He was studying various courses and travelling over there in America and as you mentioned, communicating by postcards. When did you first sort of physically and personally come across him?

BM: I think it was probably.. see in the late '50s I went up to… I don't think I met up with him personally. I may have at nets or games. I can't remember, but I went up to North Queensland '59 -'60 and I came back '61. Then I got cleaned up in a rugby league game and that was it. I was finishing my second degree anyway and we were having a second child. So I then concentrated on my cricket. So from '61 on, I then immersed myself at university. So I would think the relationship developed about then. That would be the timing that I would think.

Our involvement was really about winning and Clem sized up who he needed to win, and I was one of the people that he selected. He had about five or six that all of us just stayed with him for a number of years, notwithstanding the opportunities to go elsewhere. It was a joke that if you got Clem C Grade side, if you got dropped, you went to B Grade. It was like "bad luck, you got dropped, you're in B Grade". That was what it was like. We won easily. God knows what damage we did to young kids playing cricket because Clem was tough. He was a tough captain, and we loved it because we were very successful. So we just enjoyed the… and then we'd go back to his place at Camp Hill.

If we were playing over Bottomley Park, some of the clubs here, if we were playing on the south side, we'd always go back to Clem's place. If we were at uni, we'd always go back to the Regatta [Hotel]. They were places. Most teams finished at 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock. We'd have our win by 3 o'clock. So you can imagine, we had a couple of hours of acquired moves beforehand.

LM: You mentioned his attitude to winning there. Was it like a winning at all cost mentality? Or was there….

BM: No, it was just winning. Winning through all sorts. He really had trumps up his sleeve at all times. I mentioned to you about having the cheque, and having the resignation in his pocket. I remember, we would play and particularly when he became the Lord Mayor, because he'd have the Lord Mayoral car. In the back of it, he'd have every implement to dry out a cricket pitch. So those days in the '60s, if we were playing at a field where there were no covers, anyone else playing at that C-Grade level would call off the game. Not Clem.

We'd arrive in our creams all ready for a game. We'd go to the back of his truck, his car I should say, and there'd be all these implements to dry out the pitch, and we would be covered in this black soil whilst we were getting everything ready for the game to start. The umpires felt not obliged to call the game off because guess who was the captain of the side? And guess who ran the QCA, and guess who could have determined an umpire's career? Not that anything was spoken but it was always given the benefit of the doubt that we could get the track ready. We could get the track ready and we would play and get an outright when the other teams would call off their games. So, we had quite a number of years of success.

LM: You mentioned there the QCA, the Queensland Cricket Association and the famous letter in the top pocket. Just explain what that was about.

BM: Again, without being too descriptive, what Clem did say, and I'll never forget, is that "I always go to these meetings…" because you've got to understand, some of the personnel were not up to Clem's acumen. I don't want to misword it. You can understand it that Clem had a mental alertness that surpassed most, the average. So he would go into these and the people that go on to boards, whether it be in soccer or I guess in snooker, although I don't know, but certainly in cricket, were not people there because of their IQs. They were there because of their enthusiasm and their regular involvement and all that.

Clem came in and cricket was just wallowing, and he was the one that could go in and lift it. But in doing so, he would sometimes find a group who would gang up against him or do things to that extent. He just said: "The best way I can handle them is to… is if I couldn't get what I believed was right…" – he never said "what I wanted". He just said "what was right for cricket"– "…I'd offer my letter of resignation and they can then handle the securities that go with that resignation." Of course they… He said: "I never had many difficulties" – and they would frequently back off. It was just Clem's way of doing things and he got things done.

LM: You mentioned there the boot of the Lord Mayoral car with all the rags and the squeegees. But also in those days, as I understand, the Lord Mayoral car also had a lot of afternoon tea and Thermoses of tea and coffee that Sylvia Jones would…

BM: Yes, but she would come out later.

LM: Right.

BM: She would generally come around about… I think tea was around about 3:30 and Sylvia… we could see Sylvia coming because we were hungry little things. Sylvia would arrive and put out the blankets and put out the things. We couldn't wait for tea to be called. We'd be straight over there getting into the cakes and the rest of it. No, Sylvia was just great. That's why it was good to play. We played with the Jones's, not just with Clem. Everything was so pleasant. I hate to say it, but when you're winning, things do get a little bit more pleasant.

LM: Can you imagine these days the Lord Mayor getting away with those sorts of activities. You'd be criticised for not doing your job wouldn't you?

BM: I'm not sure about that, relative to headlines in this morning's paper. What I would say is that he was doing his job. It's just that on Saturday afternoon he wanted to do the job better than anyone else and he did so.

LM: You mentioned his philosophy of winning. You have previously told me a little anecdote about the incident involving Clem's 11 versus Len Summer's 11. Can you just explain what went on there?

BM: These were annual games and they were quite spicy because of the interchange of views prior to the game. It was meant to stir. Fundamentally, everyone was good mates but there were two teams and the losing team had to shout dinner at Tatts [Tattersall's Club] for the winning team. In this particular case, we were playing it as we normally did it, always did at Uni number one [oval] and came the last over, and there was a fellow RM Gow. Now, Gows were a very famous family in Brisbane. They had cleaning materials and also soap powders and that sort of thing. They were in that field of endeavour and very well known.

I forget whether it was Robert Gow. I didn't know him but I knew the name. He was in, he was a strongly built guy and we came to the last over and they needed a certain number. It was getting.... everyone was getting pretty frazzled by it because we'd been playing all day. It was the last over. I was standing over the stumps and he gave the ball to Kevin Norris who was one of his proteges. Kev was a surveyor and had a very successful business afterwards in surveying, after he left the Clem scene. He gave the ball to Kev and I was [wicket] keeping as I always did, or in these instances. I'll never forget, the last ball, they had to get four runs to win. Clem put everyone out on the fence.

Kev, for reasons I can't explain, decided to throw a dart in which, for a spinner, I'm up the stumps. It went down the leg side for four byes. And they won. So, I was persona non grata so was everyone else on the team. So Clem, without being verbally aggressive, one could pick up very quickly that life wasn't going to be very enjoyable as we went upstairs for drinks. And it wasn't because the Len Summer's team carried on and were most excited about the whole thing. The point I'm getting at in the story was that I went home .. went home early because you had no-one to drink with, you just go home early.

I remember being in bed and the phone goes. It would have been 10:30-11:00. In those days, you'd go out of your bed to answer the phone which I did, and it was Clem. And he said: "We won that game." I said: "No Clem." The first thing he said was: "What end were you standing when the first over was bowled?" To be quite truthful, I couldn't bloody remember. And he said: "I've rung up Tom Corcoran. I've got him out of bed. He's gone to his car and got the score book, and he's gone and had a look, and we bowled one over more than the other side." Because we started… He said: "I knew we started at the Union College end and we finished at the Union College end." I'm thinking "Clem, I was just getting to sleep". He said: "I've won and I just want to let you know because I'm just ringing Len Summers and I'm going to ring a few more people." This is 10:30-11:00 at night. I was so excited because I thought, oh boy! I was so thrilled that we actually had won. He was chuffed. That's what is meant, you know. We all took it fairly seriously.

LM: Yeah, although you did say there just before, while you took the game seriously and played seriously, everyone was very good mates. In particular, there were some people with differing political views from Clem involved, but that didn't matter?

BM: No, no. Len Summers, they played tennis of a Wednesday. These were the same guys that played tennis every Wednesday afternoon at Clem's place.

LM: At Clem's house at Camp Hill.

BM: Yes, at Camp Hill. There were a whole group. Even I played a couple of times as well. He had his whole groupings that went there and they were all good friends. But more particularly, the thing that struck out, struck more with me was Clem's ability to, as I said, to be ecumenical. I think that comes from a background where he had immersed himself in activities, commercial activities, and he understood that some people may or may not have different views. Even though I used to spar with him over socialism, because I was at that stage, an academic that had all the theories and all the studies, and Clem had none of them but he called himself a socialist which really came from his father more than himself. Anyway, Clem used the word loosely which, if you're in the academic world at that time, we frowned upon people who used phrases like that or words like that. But anyway that's by the by.

But Clem would be as friendly with John Moore who was the President of the Liberal Party and who was captain of the Reserve Grade at university, with drinks. Sometimes there were political issues that were quite nasty but they were never viewed or aired of a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday if we were playing cricket. John, as you may know, went down to politics. He then became a Minister under John Howard. When the Queen came out here, he invited six, seven, eight of us there. We didn't feel like we were part of the political scene at all, but he made it quite clear that he found it much more pleasant just to be with people he could communicate with.

LM: You mentioned there your academic career. You started to write textbooks and started to gain an income from that.

BM: Yes, what had happened in the '60s and I published some works on this which I've also given addresses to the Queensland History Association, is in the 60s, education went through an upheaval. A pleasant one and a positive one in the sense that education, when I first got involved and when we all went to school at that time, was really just perfunctory but in the late '50s and the early '60s, teachers and academics started to go overseas, and for the first time, actually started to see what other curricula were being developed. Then either stayed or came back to take up positions here and use their knowledge of other curricula to alter the shape of education.

I was involved in the sense that I was engaged in writing books, but more particularly, I was the President of the History Teachers' Association. I did the senior history examinations. I was actually right in the middle of it and it was just fortuitous that at that stage of my academic development that all this change was taking place. The Education Department put out new curricula in history and social sciences they called it, social studies. I helped write the curriculum, so I was right in the middle of that. Then a group called William Brooks and Co who were the big educational publishers in Australia, they approached me and said would I write the books to complement the new curriculum that was coming forward. So that's how I got involved and I ended up writing seven. I did it all in three years which was quite a dramatic effort while I was still teaching, studying, and being a father or trying to be a father. So I was heavily involved there.

I'll just digress slightly. It was the beginning and as I gave in this speech, it was the beginning of the end of history and I was too dumb to see what was going on. I got invited by the Commonwealth Education Department which had only been just developed, because education at that stage or prior to that was all state [based]. I get invited by UNESCO to go down to a conference in Melbourne to discuss social science. Social science to us was an unknown quantity. We used social studies. We understood that social science was new to us. I couldn't work out why this happened. When I made enquiries, they said UNESCO, the United Nations group had determined that Australia was backward in social science development.

Now, given that I thought Australia was one of the leading educational groups, I found that strange but I went down and spent a week with these people who really were bringing about the end of history teaching, because it now has supplant… social science as you may know has got all these other elements and they have swallowed up history and my thesis is, my melancholy thesis is that history teaching is finished. That we will never have… The problem is we are now in the third generation of teachers and lecturers who know no history. If anything, have surrendered history. Again I'm getting on my bandwagon.

LM: That phrase you used "the end of history" that's what you mean there. Is it the facts of history aren't being taught?

BM: Yes.

LM: So it's the theories of… social theories that are being taught.

BM: It's switched from the study of the past. It's all part of what I've studied but I wasn't clever enough to link the two. Right through from the French Revolution, I'll bore you but, from the French Revolution, people wanted to change society. There's so many people, which is natural, who think society's not right so they want to change it. So they do it right through the 18^{th} Century. This is what I was saying with Clem. Socialism, there were something like 52 different brands of socialism through

Europe, right back, right through. Of course Marx was the prime one. He was the one that sort of had the class division and historic materialism and all of that stuff.

It was just, how do you change society and of course when Russia was changed, that was one thing. Then the idea of taking this change of society which Hitler did, which Mussolini did, and it wasn't "the society's no good so we're going to change it". Whereas our society was just evolving. It was changing but it was done in an evolving way rather than a revolutionary way. Sadly what's happened was that the social sciences then started to take over. If you want to destroy a society, you get rid of its past. You delete its past, because if you don't, that past is going to cause issues. Lenin worked it out, Stalin worked it out, Hitler worked it out. All of them worked it out. Get rid of history, and then you can do what you like.

Stalin of course was a classic because he went through after World War II and there was no history. So he could tell them anything. Just like now, he can tell the Russians, just like Putin can tell the Russians, that "Look, there are Nazis in the Ukraine, and that's why we're fighting." They go: "Oh, is that right?" Because there's no understanding. Poor old Ukrainians, Stalin killed about 20 million of them. There's been a clash anyway. But sadly, when you take away the historical base which in western civilisation is just unbelievably good, everything we've got is through western civilisation. But what you do is you then destroy western civilisation, then you can put anything in its place.

This has been planned by UNESCO back in the '60s, and stupid people like me and the other academics who were there, we didn't understand what we were doing. We came back and thought what the hell was that all about? Then of course we went into sociology which is called behavioural science. What we did was institutional. History is institutional. You study the institutes and the institutions and you have your facts. Then you learn how to research which was a critical part of history. If I was teaching students, the thing I'd teach them is how to go and chase your own facts. It's the historical method. In fact, that's what I lectured for five or six years on the historical method.

One of the students, I might tell you, was a kid that I had at Mt Gravatt whose father wanted to kick him out of school and so on. I brought him to our place for six months where he finished his Grade 12, got through his Grade 12 and then went off and then years later became the Bush Tucker Man. I don't know whether you know....

LM: Les Hiddins, yeah.

BM: .... Les Hiddins. So Les lived at our place for six months while we ran him through Grade 12. Now he's written some of the great studies of [Edmund] Kennedy and [Ludwig] Leichhardt. Some of the wonderful studies. I keep saying: "Mate, you must have had a good history teacher." Because he actually knows how to do that. But when you get into the social sciences, which is behavioural, you don't know anything about the past. All you know is what people's behaviour is. So you study how they do this or how they did that. So the knowledge is not in the past, it's all in the present. That's what sociology is. Therefore the past has been neglected and we now have a world of researchers. Oh research says this and research says that, which is bullshit of course. It's just, this is what someone's come up with and [0:36:56.2]. Anyway, that's by the by.

LM: You mentioned Les Hiddins, that was when you were teaching at Mt Gravatt State High School.

BM: Mt Gravatt High, and Les was going to leave. Anyway, it's a great story.

LM: We went down that path because you were talking about your arguments with Clem about socialism, but you could have those arguments but still be friends.

BM: Of course. We were testy. Clem, he'd get testy but it was all over in a second. We'd then go and have a beer together. For all the people, as I was saying, Gordon Chalk rang him up. People just enjoyed Clem's company and they knew that he bristled over this or he'd bristle over that. Most things I didn't understand so I just went along with him. Once he got into the field of socialism, a little field that I had some knowledge of, Clem and I would burr up. But it was always done in good faith and he always recognised that…. you know, I was never going to change his mind. Let's put it that way.

LM: But he brought that, I guess it's a professional rather than a personal approach to arguments. Even when people were running against him as mayor which is one of your, a relation what your friends did. You saw that first hand.

BM: Yes, with John Jameson's father. Then Gordon Chalk rang him. It was what was good for Brisbane. I'll never forget him saying to me, we were talking about things and he said… and you may not have picked this up, but in the '60s, people still had outhouses. There were a number of suburbs that didn't have sanitation. I remember him, the big thing he was on was we were going to have everyone with sanitary capabilities, every household. He said to me: "There is no votes in this for me." He said: " I don't get one vote out of this. People that have got the indoor toilet, they don't care. But people who are outdoor, they're happy. Of course, you know, the bloody guy would come around once a week and empty the bloody thing." He said: "They're happy. I don't get a vote out of it." Yet he put his neck right out because he just believed in it.

LM: And you mentioned Gordon Chalk who was the state Liberal Party Leader. They had a great professional relationship.

BM: Great professional relationship. I mean, I don't remember, you know, John Moore who was less involved in my way of thinking, but John and Clem got on famously. There was never a "you said, I said". There was none of that. I just thought it was more mature and I regret that I don't see that so much today. But that's something of the past.

LM: Your own relationship with Clem, you had a sporting relationship, you had a professional relationship. At one stage it changed to a very deeply personal relationship when your father died?

BM: Yes, that was the personal side of it. Clem took a liking to me for reasons I can't explain, to the point that he would ring of a Sunday night, and this happened quite a number of times where he'd say: "What are you doing?" Or: "You're not doing anything." It was more, never a question, it was more a statement. "You're not doing anything, why don't you and Lyn come over for drinks?" We had four kids. So we'd pack up four kids, 7 o'clock of a Sunday night. We were at Tarragindi at Clifton Hill, and we'd drive over. Lyn would sit down with Sylvia and I'd sit down with Clem.

But Clem and I'd talk cricket. It wasn't heavy stuff. We'd just talk general sport, tennis, whatever was going on and it was for nothing else, just for social interaction. We'd do that sadly until 3 o'clock in the morning sometimes. But that was what you did I guess in those days. Television didn't dominate our lives. We didn't have colour television. It was just black and white and it was pretty average. So the idea of sitting there and having a chat to Clem was something I found very enlightening.

LM: But when you started to get royalties from your textbooks, he did give you some advice about how to invest?

BM: I went to him because at that stage, it was the late '60s and the mining boom, there was a stock market mining boom, and all the guys around at the Uni, the guys who were dentists or accountants or who had some profession, were buying this and buying that, Poseidon [shares]. They had all these stocks and of course I wasn't au fait. The fact that I didn't know what to do. I remember walking off a cricket field one day and I said: "Clem, I've got these funds coming in, what do I do?" He just said: "Buy real estate." I thought at the time that was a non-convincing comment. So then I took it up with him at a later date and said: "What do you mean?"

He said: "Real estate, it increases in value 24 hours a day, seven days a week." As simplistic as that sounded, I then went out and bought a hell of a lot of... with partners, I bought quite a bit of land.

LM: And that was the time, you mentioned the Poseidon nickel boom.

BM: Yeah, yeah, that nickel burn. Yeah, that's right. How did you know that?

LM: It was a big thing at the time.

BM: You were too young.

LM: I may look it but I'm not [Laughs].

BM: I didn't mention that because it was the Poseidon boom.. nickel boom.

LM: And a lot of high profile investors got stung.

BM: Absolutely, it all collapsed and Clem was right. I just went about my business that way.

LM: The time your father died, Clem.... Your relationship with him changed a bit there.

BM: Yes. I mentioned that I was on my way home. Because we lived at Northview Outlook [at Moorooka] at that stage, I popped in, because I was lecturing. Was I lecturing then? Anyway, went to the Cricketer's Club, had a few drinks, got a phone call from mum saying something was wrong with dad. I thought at the time it was a strange thing for her to say, but I could gather that I'd better do something, and I took off. As I was going down the stairs, Clem was coming up and he said: "Where you going? We're going to have a drink." I said: "No, something's wrong with dad." That's all I said. Then when I'd found that he'd died, I simply rang the Cricketer's Club because I was with some guys. I said: "Look, I'm not coming back, this has happened." They must have told Clem because next thing, Clem arrived at our place and had a couple... In those days, they had the long bottles of beer.

LM: The tallies.

BM: The tallies. He just came in and said: "You have these." He handled the whole lot. I was flummoxed because I had no idea what to do. But the important point of the story is that Clem just stepped in. No fuss, no bother. He did what had to be done. So obviously I was hugely indebted to him although he didn't see it that way. He was that sort of person. He just did what needed to be done. And as I said to you about the Darwin thing. That's what it was. What needs to be done, he does it. It's a beautiful way to structure your life isn't it?

LM: But then you felt some obligation to pay him back and you offered to do some work for him?

BM: What could I do? Here I was, a dopey academic and here I was, what the hell could I offer. I said to him, look if ..... of course part of my postgraduate was in comparative governments, Russia and the United States. I was very heavily involved in... it was the John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Nixon period, and I was into the American side of it as well as the Russian side of it, but more particularly. Of course speech writing and all that, whatever I could gather out of the American scene, I tried to incorporate in my studies. Speech writing and that sort of stuff was the thing that people did in those days.

So, I volunteered to Clem, and he was polite enough to say: "Well, come into our meetings and you might pick up what we need to say." Those were the days where they went out on the back of a utility. I think I told you the story.

We were at Camp Hill. You've got not idea. I laboriously went through this script as though it was, it was sort of a Mark Antony oration and I was just going to turn the political world upside down because I was full of this academic know-all bullshit. I couched it. You've got no idea, it was a work of art. I gave it to Clem, well gave it to his office, I'm not even sure whether I personally gave it to him. He said: "Well, I'm out campaigning." He said: "I'm going to a few places, we're at Camp Hill shopping centre."

Out of nowhere, someone said to me, one of the cricketers said: "I saw Clem this morning out at Camp Hill." I said: "Did you hear him?" "Yeah, he was down the back." I said: "Did he say this, did he say that?" "No."

LM: [Laughing]

BM: I then realised all my literary compositions weren't necessarily acted upon.

LM: But they may well have informed what he did say.

BM: I'd like to think that. But it was, you know, his graciousness that he knew I wanted to say thank you, and I was not in a position to do it. How do you give someone like Clem, with all that he's got, anything? I mean, all I could do is do something. I think he was able to tolerate that sort of request and do it nicely. You know, do it nicely. If I hadn't have heard from someone who was at the Camp Hill shopping centre, I would have thought I won the election for him. It might have been a good thing I was told.

LM: And observing him up close in those sorts of political environments, did you ever consider entering politics yourself? Was that an attraction to you?

BM: He nurtured… In his own way, he decided not only was I his wicket keeper, I was also going to be his protégé. Because I was in the Clifton Hill/Tarragindi area, that was the sort of the Salisbury thing and there was a fellow, I think Dean, Alderman Dean, that may be a name. I may have that wrong. But I think it was. He was either stepping down, and there was a fellow, a Keogh, who also was… I remember the Labor Party had a place near, there's a fire station on the corner of Ipswich Road and something that goes to Yeronga. I don't know the name of the street. And the Labor Party had a meeting room there. I remember going to a couple of those and Clem had got me into them. He'd say: "You've got to be at such and such."

I knew Keogh who ended up going into federal politics.

LM: Len Keogh.

BM: Len Keogh, that's who it was. I knew him, so I went along. I didn't know the other fellow, Dean. I think that's the name. I could be wrong. But somehow Clem wanted me to be the guy. He said: "You're the fellow." I'm embarrassed to say this, I said: "Clem, I've done six years' study and I'm right on the verge of getting a PhD." I said:

"I'm not doing all that." I made some terrible comment which I'm embarrassed to even say. This is the way I just said it. "I'm not really doing all this to help Mrs Murphy get a gravel road fixed up." Oh boy, and he teed off on me. As it came out, I knew it shouldn't have come out. It wasn't meant to be aggressive or unfriendly but it came out and I couldn't pull the words back in and he just, pow, he gave me three upper cuts and told me that Mrs Murphy might have been more valuable to the community than people I thought were.

It was this wonderful blister that he gave me. I was so mortified that I'd actually said… because here's a guy who's devoted himself to it.

LM: He took it as though you were being critical of local government.

BM: Yes, I mean then I was. Frankly, if you know academics, I was one of them, so I was part of the bloody tribe. They see themselves as being more valuable than they really are. Because I was up here… thinking, you know there's an attitude problem that exists when you live in a small world, and I was in the small world of academia. I saw myself as being well above what I really deserved at that stage, and he made me very much aware of the fact that the Mrs Murphys of the world deserve our full attention. But he didn't have to say much, because as it came out, I knew I was in for a barking and I got it.

So I think he then realised, well I don't know whether he or I decided that wasn't something, but he did have it in mind that I then… as I saw on the photo, Brian Walsh became then one of his proteges and I think then became the Lord Mayor.

LM: Yes he did, after Clem left.

BM: I went to Teacher's College with Brian Walsh.

LM: Oh, okay.

BM: He was a teacher as well. I knew him quite well. But anyway, be that as it may, that was a very poorly composed comment.

LM: And you'd observe Clem up close, particularly in his activities associated with cricket at the state level, the QCA, running the Gabba [cricket ground], the University [Cricket] Club. Also, he took it upon himself to give himself a role of curator of the Gabba at some stage. What are your recollections of those days?

BM: Well, to be quite honest, the stories have come out subsequently because obviously, the only thing was that Clem used people that he… like Kev Norris, who was one of his protégé surveyors. He used Brian, what's his name, the lawyer?

LM: Brian Halligan.

BM: Brian Halligan. So Brian Halligan and Kevin and Kevin's team. If Clem wanted to do something, for example, building a new stand which he did in a miraculous period of time. Any of those things, he'd just call those people in who could be helpful. I couldn't contribute. As I said, I was in a different field. But certainly, when Greg Chappell came up here as captain of the Queensland side, what had happened is one of my proteges in teaching, I taught a fellow called John Maclean, and John Maclean was an engineer, but I taught him at Junction Park. Then I nurtured him as cricketer, and he then played for Queensland. He actually played a couple of games for Australia.

John was the captain of the Queensland Cricket Team. I was heavily involved with that side of it, the player side rather than the admin side, which Clem was. John stepped aside as the captain of Queensland so that Greg Chappell could come up from Adelaide to captain Queensland, and then go on to captain Australia. It was when Greg… And then what happened out of nowhere was that I ended up, I jumped the academic fence and went into commerce through some issues. It was an unpleasant one, that I got out of academia. Anyway, I went into the commercial world and then I went round the world a couple of time playing cricket.

John Maclean, when he stepped down, Greg Chappell came up to my place. I had a pool and it was a summer's night and it was hot so they came up and had a swim and barbeque and all that stuff. I met Greg and I met his wife. To be quite truthful, I was more impressed with his wife than I was with Greg. Greg had come from a family of very aggressive cricketers which had created some issues. But I found that Judy, his wife, was so switched on. I thought boy, if he's married that bird, he must be better than I thought. So I changed my view.

Overnight, with the barbeque, I worked out that he needed someone in Brisbane who could handle the requests for speaking for the Heart Foundation or Leukaemia [Foundation]. I asked him: "What's it like?" He said: "Well, I just don't want to knock people back. I'm just in Brisbane." Kev Norris was saying: "Barry, you've retired, you're not doing anything. Why don't you do it?" Anyway, Greg then rang me and said: "Look, would you mind just handling the phone calls and all that."

So I then became not….. manager's not the right world, because I didn't take any money or anything like that, but I thought I would oversee. Just on a different level, my son was a very good cricketer, captain of Queensland, from under 10s right through to under 20s really. So I saw and I was playing first .. by that stage I was playing first grade cricket. I saw how poor the standard of people were as well as playing at the first grade level. I didn't want my son's team or his groupings to come into their level of first grade cricket and have all this mediocrity around him. The idea of having a Greg Chappell who was, by that stage, a master class in batting, I decided to at least find reasons to keep Greg in Queensland so that when Michael and his group of guys, a number of them went on to play for Australia, but they were very talented cricketers. I thought if Greg was here to give leadership, that would help them. So, I had a personal reason for saying: "Look, I'll handle the phone calls" and so on."

It just grew to the point where I then started to head up some of the businesses that came his way as captain of Australia. That was the beginning of the reformation or renaissance of Australian sport. Because then Greg's era went into World Series Cricket. I got involved to do things for him as a friend. Then as the business started to grow, I built up a company that came out of England called Eagle Star, and they wanted the captain of Australia to handle their marketing. As you can imagine, my background, I knew nothing, but I undertook to do something about it and we built up the biggest marketing group in Australia. It was very successful. We went to Switzerland. We were picked up because of our success.

Then Greg's, if I could just jump across a line a bit because I tell it from time to time when I'm forced to or when I'm requested. But what happened was that in the course of all this, the same RM Gow, remember I mentioned Gow?

LM: Yes.

BM: By that stage, Judy had had Stephen the son, and they were living at Kenmore. There was a flood, I think it was '74. We helped out with the flood and all that stuff. Anyway, out of nowhere, Greg said: "Gows have asked me to do a television commercial advertising their products."

Now, that was all new. If you can understand, that was just unheard of. I knew nothing. Fancy asking me. So, I then rang a friend of mind, a fellow called Bruce Francis who worked for Neilsens who were worldwide marketing people. This fellow, Bruce Francis, he played cricket for Australia. Bruce was a friend of mine on an academic level and I rang him in Sydney. I said: "Mate, I've been asked to step in and help Greg. He's had an offer to do a television commercial. I don't know what to ask, I don't know what to say, but I don't want to sound like a dunce. So, can you give me some background?"

He didn't know much more than me but he said: "You know they're going to have directors and they're going to have people doing sound and they're going to have film crew?" "Yeah." "And you know it's going to take time?" I'd heard enough about it, so this was going to take…. So, there was Judy, there was the baby and there was Greg virtually in their laundry doing something to clean the nappies or whatever the thing was.

LM: With the Gow products?

BM: With the Gow products. He said: "Find out what their budget is and then you can work out what Greg's getting." I thought how bloody basic. So: "Oh, okay." I'm a learner. So they came in, Masius, they're a big international group that came in with their Italian suits. They came in with all their stuff, and Greg was in the next office by that stage. By that stage, we were running a very big insurance marketing group for the British company. So Greg was there. I said: "Well Greg, you go do this."

So he went into his office next to me. So they came in and I pretended I was Mr Big. So they had all their literature and all their stuff there. So the guy started to talk, I said: "Look, I know this is going to take some time, it'll probably take close to a day." They said: "Oh, we start at 6:00. We should be out of the place by 2:00 in the afternoon." I'm thinking gee that's eight hours. I said: "Yeah, and you're going to have your crew there?" "Oh yes, the crew will be there" and so on. I'm thinking there's the crew. So I said: "What's your budget?" They said $5,000. And I went backwards. By the time they paid three of their crew, by the time they pay for the filming and the directors and themselves, out of our budget, Greg's going to get bugger all.

And I could get him – because what was happening, football clubs and others were ringing up wanting [him] to speak at lunches – I could get him $1,000 even in those days, $1,000 to speak at a lunch. He'd get more people there.

LM: He'd draw the crowd.

BM: Some very famous names who I would negotiate. Anyway, when they said… I said: "Oh mate, let's not continue this." I'm not going to ask Greg and his wife and the baby for there for 7 or 8 eights for a grand or two. It just didn't seem right. I said: "Why don't we give this a miss. They've got things to do." Anyway, within 10 minutes they're out the door, in the lobby, and out they go with all their Italian suits. Greg comes out and I said: "Mate, I'm sorry, but that was bullshit. They wanted this and this. By the time it's all over, you get $1,500." I said: "You can run out to a lunch and get $1,500." Oh, fine.

So anyway, that's it. So we go about our business. The next thing, the next day I get a call from Masius. They said: "If we give Greg, not five but ten thousand, would that be alright?" And of course, I had no idea. And I've gone: "Oh well, why don't you come up and we'll discuss it." So, this is '74-'75 and of course we did the deal, and it became then a national thing. I became famous as this guy who got, for the first time, a sportsman to get a larger amount than people even imagined. So next thing, there's a group out of Melbourne.

LM: And that's all because you misunderstood the $5,000.

BM: Yeah, I just did the sums and thought… when I said "the budget" I meant the budget for the whole…

LM: Yes, for the whole shoot.

BM: So for $3,000, he would have done it in a heartbeat. But people then thought, oh, that Maranta's smart. Not that I said it, but other people… "Look, he got Greg Chappell this." So next thing, the word's gone out "this guy's some genius". The next thing I get invited to go down to Melbourne with a guy called Wayne Reid. We then started the first sports management company. Wayne was a very well known tennis player. He played in the Davis Cup, the Davis Cup squad. Clem would certainly have known him. He headed up a company called ISM.

So we then started the first sports management company.

LM: International Sports Management, ISM.

BM: International Sports Management, ISM, and we started that in the '70s. He was the President of the Lawn Tennis Association. His family was very, very well known in Melbourne. He was on something like eight boards. He's one of the nicest guys and one of the best people I've ever worked with. Together, we then, just incidentally, we did the first.. we did tennis tournaments. So, we did the Australian Open, we Davis Cups. Queensland Open up here. My team would run that. I was by that stage, sort of preoccupied doing other things. But anyway, the upshot, just on that, ISM did the first [Australian rules football] State of Origin in Perth. Victoria played West Australia in Subiaco. Our company ran it. It was a major success. I took all the documentation stuff, came up here to see the Queensland Rugby League and Senator McAuliffe and said: "Look we can do all this and do a State of Origin for rugby league."

He took this out of his office, told us it was a Mickey Mouse, it would never work. These fellow play football with one another every weekend. They're not going to bust their guts playing for State of Origin, so "see ya". I got kicked out. As it turned out, I'll digress a little more, '76, Australia went to Montreal and didn't win a gold medal. By that stage, [Malcolm] Fraser was the Prime Minister and Wayne was right in. [Andrew] Peacock was part of the…. when I went down there for meetings and that, I'd be running into Peacock.

LM: Andrew Peacock, yeah.

BM: Yeah, it was Liberal Melbourne, the whole bloody lot. And the second wife actually worked in our office in Toorak, for Peacock that is. Anyway, Fraser who didn't know anything, they talked Fraser into starting the Confederation of Australian Sport. Wayne was the chairman. He got Wayne to head up. So all sports then came to Canberra, and then they started the…

LM: Institute of Sport.

BM: Institute of Sport, and Wayne was the head of it. So, Wayne was into all sports because they had representatives and so on. So when McAuliffe kicked me out of the office and told me it was a Mickey Mouse thing and State of Origin would never work, I got back to Wayne. I said: "Mate, I'm going nowhere." He then went to the head of the New South Wales Rugby League which was a guy called Kevin Humphreys. Together, Humphreys and Wayne and myself, we did lobbying profusely and next thing, we get the State of Origin. So anyway, that's a bit of an aside. So I was involved in that by accident. As I say, everything's by accident with me.

LM: Just harking back to Greg Chappell there, you were dealing with him, you're telling those stories there as Queensland captain, but as Australian cricket captain, he was involved in a legendary incident in terms of the pitch preparation. It's a much told story about the West Indies/Australian match in November 1975 at the Gabba. The wicket prepared by Clem Jones as curator. What's your understanding of that incident?

BM: Well as Greg told it, they played the first day and Australia bowled. The pitch did everything, it was just dynamite. Greg made the point that he didn't look forward… because West Indies had these fearful quicks who were just sort of unplayable. He said he didn't sleep the night before because he knew he was batting the second day. And all he could think about was trying to defend himself because the wicket was just, virtually unplayable, but they played it. They got the West Indies out.

As always, Greg got to the ground a bit early. He knew the security guy. He went out and had a look at the pitch and the pitch is different. The pitch is beautiful.

LM: Like a new pitch.

BM: Like a new pitch. He's gone: "I don't like the look of this." So he's gone to the security guy and he said, he only knew him because he kept running into him, he said: "What's happened here with this pitch?" The guy said: "I don't know." He said: "Well you're the security guy." He said: "Look, we were told, Clem came around about 2 o'clock, gave us a box of grog and said 'Just go under the mango trees and have a drink'."

LM: Is this 2:00 in the morning?

BM: In the morning. By that stage, he'd rung Kev Norris and he'd rung another fellow. I've got to give you his name… oh what's his name? One of Kev's offsiders. They went out there and they had miner's hats on and the lights. They just fixed the pitch up. I'll think of this guy…

LM: It wasn't Vern Smerdon?

BM: It was Vern. Yeah, you know Vern at all?

LM: I've met Vern yes.

BM: Well Vern would tell you. Vern was there. Have you spoken to him about it?

LM: I've had a chat with him, yes.

BM: He would be a better judge. But anyway, Greg's story was that he thought, 'I've got to report this' says Greg to himself. This is an international incident. So he went to the West Indian dressing room and he to Clive Lloyd, who was the captain: "Clive, can you come out here?" So Clive came out: "Yes man." He said: "Look, I'd like you to have a look at the pitch, something's not right." Clive said: "No, no, we'll just…" Greg said, and I don't know how he heavily insisted, but he said: "Look, I'd like just for you to come and have a look so that this can be established that something's happened." Apparently, according to Greg, Clive Lloyd just waved it off. He said: "Look, a game's a game. It's a game of cricket. We'll play the cricket." Greg tells the story, it's just a knockout. I don't know what Vern's told you.

LM: But Clem and Vern, Kev Norris had totally rebuilt the pitch overnight.

BM: Whatever happened… I didn't go into it but obviously there'd been a bit of water sprinkling and there'd been a bit of rolling, then been a bit of flattening. Clem would have been covered in mud [laughing]… the wicket worked. No-one, as Greg keeps saying, that could have been the biggest international sporting incident, but fortunately nothing happened.

LM: Again it's different times isn't it?

BM: Well, that's right. Now, everyone would have been… the security guy would have pulled in and hauled over the coals, the whole lot. But we just got on with life and the game went, and Australia won the test.

LM: Would you say that was like a typical Clem approach?

BM: Yes. I mean Clem…. When I say typical, he can see a problem and he can solve it. Now whether that was Marquis of Queensberry rules or what is another issue, but he got the problem solved. That's why we're talking about him.

LM: So looking back on your involvement with him, what are the big lessons you've learnt from associating, from having associated with him?

BM: I think more than anything that…. I learnt about him rather than about me. I'm trying to work out what I've learnt from him. I mean I was a fairly competitive person so that didn't change. Clem was very… I think there was a compatibility more than anything. More than anything, it was admiration. I just admired him. You know I didn't do it for any particular reason other than the fact that I just thought he was one of the quality people. When I spoke to him, I told you the story about it. It would have been about 2003. Out of nowhere he rang me and gave me the usual: "Barry, it's Clem." "Yes Clem." "You're not doing anything, Craig McDermott's got a few problems. This is his phone number, give him a call." I told you the story.

My son was captain of Queensland Colts when Craig was just out of school and he went to New Zealand under my son. So my son was in London, so I rang him up and I said: "Mike, what do you know about Craig McDermott", and typically, when you ask a sportsman, they go: "Good bloke."   "No, no. what else do you know about him?" "No, he's just a good fellow." I didn't know Craig. I'd heard Greg talk about him.

Greg Chappell was a big fan of his and I've watched him play and I was a great admirer of his physicality and everything. But that didn't tell me anything.

So when I did say to Clem "What's his problem?" He said: "He's got a blister, he's got a big blister." So I knew that that didn't sound too good. So, I ended up meeting up with Craig and Greg was very good. Have you spoken to Craig at all?

LM: Not yet, no.

BM: I can't comment on what happened between them there or after. I don't know anything positive or negative. I'm not saying that in that regard. But Craig then had, he went from success to success and then he got too successful and then it all crashed. That, I think, jaundiced his views a fair bit. I've not spoken to him for some time but I actually got him out of a very big blister. He had a 40-million-dollar blister. And he was 36 years [of age]. I remember saying: "Mate, that's a world record." It wasn't his fault. I knew the people that got him into the trouble. He signed a guarantee. The guy went to jail and he had the blister.

He had no credibility. I had credibility, right or wrongly, so when he was trying to do work with Clem, and Clem was very good at… they had some business relationship. I'll have to think hard about how it all worked. But Clem did things with him that enabled him to develop a lot of land around the Redlands area. Whatever this guy did that caused the 40-million blister, they had good land. It wasn't that it was bad land. So thank god they'd bought well, and then all it needed was for someone to raise funds or allow Craig to raise the funds, to get him out of that. I took it further and we built up a lot of… and then he got a lot of money and became sort of written up in the magazines as one of the young success stories of Australia. This sort of stuff.

I remember saying to him, because by that stage I was living in Orlando, I remember saying to him: "Look, what'll happen is… stick to a small area and know it." When he was at Redlands and that area of Brisbane, he was a genius, like he knew everything. I told him in my experience, because I'd made the mistake, I said I was in a certain area, Beaudesert Road, in that area I'd built up a lot and made quite a lot of money. Then I thought I was a genius and I'd be going to buy here, there and everywhere. It just doesn't work.

I mentioned to him particularly, I'm trying to think of the guy that was as Aspley, a very well-known developer.

LM: Bill Bowden?

BM: Bill Bowden. I said: "Just follow Bill Bowden, don't follow Barry Maranta, because Bill Bowden got into an area, he knew every inch of that area and made a fortune." I said: "That's the way it should be." I'll never forget, I rang him when I was in the [United] States, and they couldn't find him. The next thing, he was up outside McKay, down in Sarina or something. I got to him. I said: "What are you doing there?" He said: "Oh, this mob have come in. It's a mob out of New Zealand came in with a bag of money and they want to buy." I said: "Craig stick to where…." and it was Hervey Bay. We were doing a development in Hervey Bay and he had Hervey Bay well and truly… he knew all about it. But then some guy came in with a bag of money, a young guy and just said: "We'll go up here, we'll go up there." The next thing, he was buying all over the place, missing out on what he should have , and the world came to an end.

LM: That issue there, you mentioned Clem ringing you and telling you that you weren't doing anything and had to help Craig, it's a bit of a hallmark of his career wasn't it? He was a good networker. If he couldn't do something, he knew someone.

BM: Absolutely. Well, Halligan would tell the story about, he'd get a call, Brian, this is it. Brian would say: "I'd have to drop everything and have it all done regardless of whatever." Clem wanted things done, he wanted them done in his time scale. But we all knew him and that wasn't a reason to grumble or anything. You just did it. But that was probably the last thing. I did tell you before that I had a bit of an arm wrestle with Clem over soccer, which I had no interest in, no involvement in, but our insurance marketing group had had these Italians, football club Azzurri or some such name they had. They said if we did their insurance, or superannuation or something, we'd sponsor it.

So we did the sums and said: "Righto, we'll give you…" They gave you a lot of money. It was Greg Chappell and Barry Maranta. So it made headlines because it was more Greg Chappell than me of course, but we were well-known people. We then, our company Living Insurance, we sponsored the Italian club. Nothing ever worked. What people say and what they do. But in the meantime, I didn't realise anything but [Clem] was heavily involved in Perry Park or some such thing with the Strikers.

LM: Clem was involved in them. Brisbane Strikers.

BM: Yeah, very heavily. He was most upset that I'd put money into what was a competitor thing. Because this was the national… when we sponsored Azzurri, it was a national competition. I think the Strikers were in a local competition.

LM: Yes, look that structure's changed a couple of times. I don't know what the structure might have been at that stage but there was a continuing relationship with Clem and the Strikers, certainly, yes.

BM: Oh yes, and he was fierce about it and didn't mind telling me. It seemed like a good business deal for us so we just did it. I know he felt a bit put out by it.

LM: But you got over it?

BM: Oh yeah, I mean like all these things. His loyalty was unchallengeable. You don't challenge his loyalty. If he's loyal to the Strikers, god help you if you're not involved.

I may not have handled his comments all that well, I don't know but I do know he got quite testy about it. To me, it was just a business deal that we sponsored a group of Italians thinking that we'd get business which we didn't anyway. But it was quite a sponsorship, and by that stage I'd had International Sports Management. We were doing..... obviously Greg was high up there in the World Series Cricket. There was all this sort of involvement in the '70s and that was one of the areas that we could see that sport was going to become more than a Saturday afternoon frolic in the park, and that's what I was trying to tell people. This is the way my mother and father saw sport as a frolic in the park of a Saturday. Whereas what the next generation saw was that sport was something more financial.

LM: Just to finish up, you did mention, the way you put it, was the ecumenical nature that Clem Jones exhibited. Particularly in politics, he could have strong arguments but there was nothing lasting or malicious or personal about it. Just to finish up, how do you see current political events and the political climate for debate these days compared to that?

BM: Non-existent. What we have now as opposed to Clem's time, like when a Gordon Chalk would ring him up, they were people that had actually had their hands dirty doing something. We now have a generation of politicians on both sides who've never had a job, who've never written a cheque, who had never taken a risk ... which is quite comical when you think about it. We have now politicians who get paid to make a decision, and we have bureaucrats. Now when I studied public administration, which used to be a subject for your degree, public administration meant those bureaucrats acted as bureaucrats. They acted as decision makers and they used to work on the basis that these politicians might not be there next time. So the political side didn't come across.

Now we have politicians getting paid well, then we have the bureaucracy which has just gone crazy, and if we want a decision, we form an inquiry. Can you think of anything more stupid? Can you imagine Clem working in an environment where first of all, he couldn't liaise with his bureaucracy? Could you imagine Clem then saying "I'm going to have an enquiry to see how I fix up Darwin in 1974-'75?" That didn't exist. Most politicians, I can remember when I was up in the bush, up in Ayr, and I had a year in Proserpine, the local politician was either a publican or he was a something, actually... a butcher. Someone who'd actually had a cash register and had to pay bills and had to work late because we had to pay the bills. That mentality went into politics.

LM: Part of the community too.

BM: And very much contributed to the community. Now we have generations, and it comes with people, and I come back to my education side of it, who have no knowledge, who have no... have never learnt the art of research. They don't know how to research things. So they say things, do things on a spontaneous. It's a clip for the news media or something. People are that stupid, they can say anything and get away with it. "What's a woman?" We don't know what a woman is.

Can you imagine 10 years ago saying to the Chief Medical Officer in Australia, Professor Somebody, someone asked him: "What's a woman?" He said: "I can't define." Wait a moment. It's hilarious if you think about it. I mean, can you imagine what Orville would have done with this sort of stuff. The idea of picking up words and not knowing how they mean or what they mean, or how they should be applied…. It's got to the point… the worst part is I don't know how it rectifies itself. I don't think it can.

LM: What the answer is?

BM: I don't know. That's why I say to my grandkids: "God help you." We were lucky, we actually knew what a woman was, we knew what a man was. We knew what was right, we knew what was wrong. If we didn't know something, we were taught how to research it. We spent hours in the Oxley Library. There's a guy that writes in *The Courier-Mail* and I keep writing to the editor who never publishes because I never put my name. But I just keep saying "In the old days"… this guy's a so called academic… "we used to go to the Oxley Library or the Mitchell Library and we learnt things. This guy goes to CNN and he knows everything."

To me, it's a problem and it's, I believe, insurmountable. I don't know how it's fixed. I can't imagine how it's fixed.

LM: It comes back to what you were saying about facts does it?

BM: Yes. It all comes back to facts. The idea that facts are important. Clem could never have gone down this world because everything, like when he talked about sanitising Brisbane, like they were facts. He knew. That's why he was such an Australian leader in local government because he went over to the [United] States. He studied what had to happen and he transposed it to Australian scenes. He worked on those facts.

Now we have a whole society, and sadly we have politicians who have got no background in decision making, making decisions. Like some of them couldn't run a school tuckshop. Seriously. It's just sad to think what hope has the next generation got? We haven't got any dams now. We haven't got any dams. Can you imagine? We had all this water but no dams. In three years' time, we'll have a drought and what will happen? People will die, the whole thing, and you think well why the hell haven't you built a bloody dam? There's nothing more simple than that. It's not political. It's not "this is good, this is bad". We need dams. We can grow anything.

I started the first mango plantation. I don't know whether I've told you but we did the first mango plantation south of Townsville at Giru, Greg Chappell and I, and we had 8,500 mango trees. Now, that area can grow anything. I taught at Ayr and when I had an opportunity….all I knew in Ayr, I mean being a dumb academic, I knew it had sunshine, I knew it had good soil because it was the Burdekin Basin, and it had plenty of water. So it had good soil, water and sunshine. So *QED*, we'll go and plant some trees, and of course that's the biggest… well it used to be. Now Northern Territory's just about taken over.

I'm talking about, we started in '79, we put our first 8,500 trees in and we sold out. But Australia, Queensland particularly, I'm being biased but Queensland can grow anything. We are the most blessed part of the world and we can't even build a dam.

LM: And the Ukraine war has certainly put the focus on the issue of food security for a lot of nations hasn't it?

BM: Definitely. We take so much for granted because people don't want to talk about the basics. There's a whole generation that talked about nothing else but basics. Power, fancy not having electricity. What?

LM: I guess in terms of the public discourse and public debate, if, in your view, people can't see or can't…. if they can't see the facts, they can't agree on the facts.

BM: And they can't go and research them and find out.

LM: And they can't come to a solution.

BM: The worst part is they don't want to. The skill of the historian or it was the history teacher was for me, and I used to say to my students… I was always preparing them for senior. Had to get through senior, because as I said, if you didn't pass, you don't go on. So getting Les Hiddins and all these others through senior history, that was the challenge. But I used to say to them, whatever happens…. In those days, I'm sure you're too young, but I can remember, we would sit back and watch the results in the paper. I would have a terrible day. I'd go through and: "Oh shit, he didn't pass, he didn't pass." I'd just about cut my wrists saying: "God, I've had three failures this year." Then when we went back to school, the geography guy would say "How did you…" We would be devastated because we couldn't get them through.

I used to say to the students, the test of me as a history teacher will come when you're 40 and you pick up a history book or you pick up a biography, or you pick up something. That's when I've been a good teacher. I wasn't the only one by the way. I was part of a whole group because we were just focussed and dedicated. None of that happens now. None of them go into doing research. None of them want to find out what's right and what's wrong and what's good and what's bad. It's just a world of… where you can say anything and it has no meaning. Nothing has any meaning.

So I just feel so sorry for the future of Australia. I really think we've got massive problems. What we needed was a Clem Jones that said: "You do that, or you don't do it." Now, we have politicians saying:"Oh well, if you don't do it, who cares?" Clem would never say "Who cares?" Clem would say "You do it." Now whether he's right or wrong, he did it. He was part of a whole range of politicians across all sectors. When I say "all" I think of some dummies by the way. Some I shouldn't say in general but there were a lot of politicians who on both sides you know… Tom

Burns, I had a bit to do with him. Tom was the old fisherman. I'd do this and we'd do that. It was all sort of, get a result on the basis of what we know to be true. If we don't get the result, then we'll go back and check why that wasn't the result we wanted.

But now, it's "Who cares?" The papers don't care. The papers have got their own way of doing things. It's just sad, but anyway.

LM: Okay, well look, on that note, we've covered a lot of ground today on a variety of issues.

BM: Thanks Lindsay.

LM: Thanks very much for your time and thanks for taking part.

BM: I just hope when it comes out at some point, I'll look forward to it. What's the timetable?

LM: I've got to get the transcript done. I've got more interviews to do. It's a bit of a work in progress.

BM: Are you talking to Vern?

LM: Yes, I've got to talk to Vern.

BM: Have you got his number?

LM: I've got it, yeah.

BM: Well Vern would certainly tell you about that night.

LM: Yes. Well thanks very much.

BM: Good Lindsay. Thank you very much.

[end of recording]