

# Interview Abstract



Interviewee: Kevin John Capell

Interviewer: Judy Hinsley

Date recorded: 20 March 2021

Abstractor: Sue Mort

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File 01

Time 00.00	<p>KEVIN JOHN CAPELL and siblings are third generation of CAPELL family at LAKE HAWEA.</p> <p>Family's origins traced back to late 1800s to CLAUDE CAPELL. Born and brought up in HAWERA and worked in a dairy factory.</p>
1.20	<p>CLAUDE signed up to go to the BOER WAR in SOUTH AFRICA with the NEW ZEALAND ARMY. Trained at TRENTHAM. Boarded a ship at WELLINGTON Wharf. Army associates told an officer CLAUDE was under age. Kicked out of the army. CLAUDE bought a berth in another ship on the Wharf, bound for AUSTRALIA.</p> <p>Lied to AUSTRALIAN Army about his age and was sent to the BOER WAR.</p> <p>Joined a group called IMPERIAL BUSH MEN who were sent to cause trouble amongst the BOERS and to spring British Soldiers out of jail. One soldier was WINSTON CHURCHILL.</p> <p>CLAUDE, mounted on a horse was shot through the knee and his horse killed by the BOERS.</p>
3.17	<p>Invalided out of the Army, returned to New Zealand. After convalescence CLAUDE moved to BALCLUTHA to set up a dairy factory.</p> <p>ELIZABETH, his wife died soon after giving birth to their first child, about 1915. CLAUDE not fit to serve in the 1<sup>st</sup> WORLD WAR, sold the dairy factory and moved to LAKE HAWEA. He built a guest house catering for hunters and fishermen up LAKE Hawea and HUNTER VALLEY STATION.</p> <p>CLAUDE had a boat built in PORT CHALMERS by MILLER &amp; TUNNAGE. Boat sailed to CROMWELL and trucked to LAKE HAWEA.</p> <p>Used for tourists and to service HUNTER VALLEY and DINGLEBURN STATIONS. Boat called the BELLBIRD.</p>

5.45	<p>Kevin's father NOUMEA CLAUDE CAPELL was born a tiny baby and not expected to live. Put in a shoe box, sent home to die. He survived, tiny in stature so was always called TINY TIM.</p> <p>The origin of the name NOUMEA was from CLAUDE's boxing days. He had a Maori trainer called NOUMEA.</p>
6.50	<p>Tim brought up in the HAWEA guest house. Took a job on road construction to MAKARORA. While at work he met a government deer culling group, and showed interest. One of the group returned and offered TIM his job. Late 1920s – early 30s. Started by organising supplies and horses, worked through the ranks to become a deer culler and hunter up the war years.</p>
9.05	<p>TIM courted EDNA BELL in the late 30s and married her just before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. TIM joined the NEW ZEALAND ARMY and was sent to Noumea. He was invalided home having malaria and dengue fever. TIM and EDNA set up a school bus and taxi service for Wanaka.</p>
10.19	<p>KEVIN had an elder brother and sister. KEITH and CHRISTINE. Kevin was born in Cromwell.</p> <p>MINISTRY OF WORKS workforce shifted houses from ROXBURGH to LAKE HAWEA. TIM and EDNA'S Guest House got a liquor licence and became a full-blown hotel. KEVIN grew up around a construction site and he went to school at HAWEA FLAT which expanded from two to seven classrooms to cater for dam worker families. MR JENKINS the headmaster meted out corporal punishment laying into pupils with his bare hands.</p> <p>KEVIN spent more time on construction machinery than going to school.</p> <p>As a consequence, he was put back one year. Because he was not very big, he got knocked around in school rugby and did not play other sports.</p>
	<p>1952 – 58 was the period of the HAWEA Dam construction. Workers then shifted to OTEMATATA to build the BENMORE Dam.</p>
	<p>1961 Mum and Dad had had enough of the LAKE HAWEA hotel, leased it, and moved to a construction house in the village.</p>
15.03	<p>Because of his mechanical knowledge from dam construction workers, in 1965 KEVIN sent to WAITAKI BOYS HIGH SCHOOL to study engineering for 3 years. His father TIM got him an apprenticeship with J &amp; A.P. SCOTT engineers in Dunedin where he became a journeyman engineer. At first, he boarded with an uncle in RAVENSBORNE. His wages were \$14 a week, \$8 went on board leaving \$6 to play with. Boarding in the 1968 period exchanged for flatting. He came out of his time with J. &amp; A.P. Scott and was sent to GREGS COFFEE MANUFACTURERS to do maintenance engineering. Because of the connection to GREGS, in the summer</p>
16.35	<p>he worked at the ROXBURGH CANNERY, on maintenance. After two summer seasons he returned to J. &amp; A.P. SCOTT</p>
17.01	<p>1971 CHRISTINE [CAPELL] AND husband FRANK HUSON were living in TWIZEL. FRANK was working for the UPPER WAITAKI POWER PROJECT. Frank asked KEVIN if he would be interested in driving a bulldozer at PUKAKI DAM and canal</p>

	<p>for BILL BRYSON. KEVIN left Dunedin and did a winter season. FRANK and CHRISTINE and four children. WARREN, TREVOR, GEOFF, and GLENYS were living in shearers' quarters at PUKAKI DOWNS STATION. The shearers needed the accommodation. BILL BRYSON meant to, but did not find them a house in TWIZEL. The dispute led to FRANK returning to HAWEA and KEVIN moving to the single mens' camp in TWIZEL. He finished another winter season and then left.</p>
19.25	<p>Asked to go back to ROXBURGH cannery for a summer season. Did his OE travelling through EUROPE, BRITAIN and SCANDINAVIA.</p>
21.06	<p>Returned to TWIZEL and worked for AARON &amp; MCGREGOR on motorscapers TIM [Father] knew of a bulldozer contractor COLIN NOLAN in WANAKA. In ill health COLIN unable to work. KEVIN scraped the money together and bought NOLAN's business in 1973. He started up as KEVIN CAPELL. COLIN's clients had no work, Wanaka dead. KEVIN survived labouring for a drain layer for a year. Wanaka started to move. Won a tender for WANAKA sewerage ponds and had drain laying work. Name got out that he was a capable contractor. Got roading work for farmers, LINDIS IRRIGATION SCHEME, maintenance redevelopment and repair. Expanded the business, bought a bigger bulldozer and excavator. In 1972 KEVIN had met SUE his future wife. They had two daughters LORNE and JASMINE. The marriage did not work out, they went their separate ways</p>
22.23	<p>KEVIN got work on the TREBLE CONE CLUB SKIFIELD development. The organisation went corporate and bigger contractors were employed.</p>
25.02	<p>At the same time JOHN LEE was considering developing the CARDRONA SKIFIELD ROAD. He asked KEVIN if he was interested in helping JOHN YOUNG. JOHN LEE admitted he would probably run out of money which he did. Project completed in the third summer to the present base. JOHN LEE opened up the ski field and called in investors and bigger contractors were used for further development. It was the end of KEVIN'S involvement. 1978 KEVIN involved with the Cross Country Skifield JOHN LEE was developing Worked on the CLUTHA PROJECT doing exploratory roading for the CLYDE DAM and potential for a dam in the NEVIS BLUFF area. Ground tested and found to be on the move, and idea abandoned. Mid 1980s dozer work for Tarras farmers.</p>
27.23	<p>Transitioned to subdivisions in Wanaka. Had a team of 7 or 8 workers on machines. 1992 MEADOWSTONE SUBDIVISION, Wanaka put out to tender. Won the first stage and employed 15 men and more machinery. Completed Stages 1,2,3,4. 2001, by Stage 4 Kevin became ill. Diagnosed as peritonitis and had been walking around for a year with it. A serious operation needed and long recuperation. KEVIN told ALAN DIPPPIE he would have to put a manager into the</p>

30.40	<p>business, or sell it. ALAN said it would make sense for him to be the buyer and it became CENTRAL MACHINE HIRE.</p>
33.00	<p>During apprentice years in Dunedin, KEVIN had met IAN BANKSHAW, a dairy farmer from Waitati. Struck up a friendship. The family farm failed and the BANKSHAWS moved to Wanaka. IAN drove for UPPER CLUTHA TRANSPORT then went out on his own, building.</p>
33.00	<p>IAN asked if he could come and work for KEVIN. KEVIN suggested he buy KEVIN's excavator to go out in business independently and leave KEVIN to concentrate on bulldozer work.</p>
33.00	<p>IAN tragically died when driving a transporter which had a mechanical malfunction. WENDY his wife had three boys. KEVIN took over running the business while WENDY concentrated on the family, for 3 years. WENDY did the office work, and KEVIN the mechanical.</p>
33.00	<p>After several years KEVIN married WENDY BANKSHAW and the two businesses merged into CAPELL BANKSHAW CONTRACTING, in recognition of IAN's contribution.</p>
35.09	<p>Memories of HAWEA</p>
35.09	<p>1950s in the HAWEA HOTEL.</p>
35.09	<p>The dam was being built and the road constructed from MAKARORA to HAAST, two construction teams working from each end. Because the WEST COAST road was not built a lot of freight and booze went in from the hotel at HAWEA. Mum and Dad had strong connections with the West Coasters. Twice a year for the WHITEBAITERS and DEERSTALKERS BALLS a truck was loaded to go to the construction end of the road, then transferred to a tractor pulled by a bulldozer, taken through the river to meet the other end of the road. KEVIN describes his mother as being the first woman to go across the PLEASANT FLAT BRIDGE which was just a plank.</p>
35.09	<p>1959, KEVIN age 9 went with REIDS TRANSPORT on the uncompleted roads to deliver the very first haybaler to reach the coast. It was not successful, too wet. He went with a truck load of lime and the truck fell into a hole. Petrified that they were going to drown in the river, the truck climbed out.</p>
35.09	<p>Late 1980s Dad [TIM] could not make money out of the land at Hawea. Instead of selling up, KEVIN took it on, shifting from Wanaka. He won a tender for a house from TWIZEL which became their new home, with WENDY.</p>
35.09	<p>Money was spent on underground irrigation. He bought an irrigator to grow Lucerne. A workshop was set up in a paddock. The farm was called TIMSFIELD in recognition of Dad's contribution.</p>
39.16	<p>For several years in the mid-1960s TIM had bred and sold free range PIGS. On a World War 2 truck they were crated and driven to BURNSIDE MARKET, DUNEDIN, travelling through the CROMELL GORGE where the train was running. The journey was broken at BEAUMONT, to get to market on a Monday morning. It proved not to be profitable.</p>

<p>42.38</p> <p>43.30</p> <p>44.00</p>	<p>During those same years, sister CHRISTINE became chief of the HAWEA FIRE BRIGADE, the first female chief in NEW ZEALAND.</p> <p>KEVIN was asked to join because he had a heavy traffic licence. He was the fire engine driver for 26 enjoyable years.</p> <p>He still lives in Hawea on a spot which looks down HAWEA FLAT and up the CARDRONA VALLEY.</p> <p><i>Ancestry detail</i></p> <p>CAPELL - Grandfather was from the County of ESSEX, ENGLAND.</p> <p>BELL - his mother's maiden name was from SKYE, SCOTLAND. In her lineage is ARMSTRONG, derived from strong arm.</p>
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