

George Rudd (Uncle of Jack Rudd) – Lower Mine Entrance (90-second monologue)

My name is George Rudd, and there is a day in my life I never forgot.

In April 1916, I took my young nephew Jack and his cousin with me by horse and cart to the Jeetho Shaft, an old mine not far from here.

While I collected stone from the abandoned site, the boys explored nearby.

Our Jack was a curious boy. He stood at the edge of the old shaft, dropping stones and listening for the splash from the water far below.

The shaft was almost 240 feet deep.

I warned him to be careful.

Then, in an instant, the loose ground around the edge gave way.

Jack disappeared with it.

His cousin ran to Korumburra for help, while I tried to reach him myself. I lowered the reins from the cart and climbed down into the shaft, but I could not find him.

People came from all over the district to help. For days they searched the water below using ropes and grappling irons. A diver travelled from Melbourne by train and was lowered into the shaft, but despite every effort, Jack was never found.

His loss touched the whole community. Families who had never met Jack followed the search and shared our grief.

More than a century later, people still remember what happened here. I hope Jack's story reminds us why these old mines needed to be made safe, and why the lives of ordinary families are worth remembering.