AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH MR DOUG FULLER, FORMERLY OF DE ROSE HILL STATION, AT STRATHALBYN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ON THE 25TH OF OCTOBER 2005 FOR THE PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF THE ANIMAL AND PLANT CONTROL COMMISSION.

[Square brackets include comments and corrections provided by Mr Fuller's daughter Kaye Stubbs in May 2007]

Tape 1, Side A

... back in the '20s. Now, all bloody heroes, they go up there, they back up to everything.

Four-wheel drive?

Yes. I don't bloody ... (laughs) Yeah, there we go. Now, this fellow that is a ... Pauline, they don't ... Kaye and Pauline don't talk. Don't know why – or I sort of half know – or Rex.

He's a bit of a character, isn't he?

(laughs) Rex?

Well, like his father, perhaps. A character.

He come down to get his aeroplane. He never told me. Belting on that bloody door. I think Kaye bought some shares in this. Because years ago there was a fellow, probate, insurance, and this fellow, I took a policy out and then mother died, she's 61. I got a little book there somewhere, Dalgety notebook. When I lived down at Beachport bloody arthritis got me. Now it's just about all disappeared.

You found it hard to write?

Yeah. Nice, warm. Now, there's Goyder's map … [pointing to a map on the wall]

The rainfall map?

… rainfall map, Goyder. Kaye doesn't – of course it rains all the bloody time where she is [Macclesfield]; doesn't at De Rose Hill. But I believe in it. Now, I was a kid at Melrose: you cross that railway line, the mallee trees. Here at Adelaide: mallee trees beside the road all here to Mount Barker. I think that's where Goyder went when he drew that map. Now, when the government run the post offices – of course, all they know now is private enterprise. (laughs) See that one, he's enlarged – the fellow, he works in the government department and he was up there looking for the bloody Three Chain Road, and see Giles is one end of it – Woomera put Giles there – but that's a line old Tom Playford had with the Three Chain Road, to walk your cattle through. Now, down where I was a kid at Melrose (clock chimes and speaks: 'Eleven o'clock a.m.') … That's a talking clock: what'd he say? He's there somewhere.

Must be about 11 o'clock, I think.

Must be.

Eleven o'clock, the news.

The other sister, Pauline, gave me that clock, this bugger up here. Wendy, her daughter, Pauline's daughter. ... Station, you know Balaba[?]?

No.

Beltana[?] Too bloody old.

We've got a bit of ground to cover, so you've started already: you've been telling me about Melrose and Goyder and –

Where?

– Melrose and Goyder.

Yeah. Well, Melrose, the railway line, you see. That went to Wilmington. There's two fences ...

Can I just say, Doug, so we put on the tape here that it's the 25th of October 2005, and it's Bernie O'Neil interviewing Mr Doug Fuller at Strathalbyn, and Doug was involved with the De Rose Hill Station and the north and northwest of South Australia.

Yes, it *is* north.

And we're going to talk a little bit about Doug's work …

There's a map there.

… in that area. Okay, Doug. Are you going to show me something on the Goyder map or the other map?

This map.

Oh, the main map, yes.

Do you see De Rose Hill marked there?

Yes, I can see De Rose Hill prominently marked.

Was nothing west of there when I went there. One water – Middle Well, I called it, after I bought the place. Mick and Tom and I bought it – no; Tom was the father of Lois.

They are the O'Donoghue brothers.

Lois worked in the government. She lived here for five years. And then, see, Dalgety's helped me a lot. Lillecrapp, Doug, he was the first – what do you call them? – stock agent –

An agent, yes.

– in the Territory, and he helped a lot of them. They could hardly read or write, half of these guys. (creaking sound) What are you ...? We're different up there to people down here. Our language is different. Now, lots of things she wouldn't know what we're talking about. Now, we gave her away at one – the missus did – to Smith, Tieyon, Bob Smith. Now, she was in the wedding – she's got a photo somewhere here – Kaye was flower girl in the wedding. I asked her how many years she'd lived with them after that and she wasn't too sure. She thought five years she lived with them. Now, this Mrs Smith, a little bit of Afghan in her. Anywhere there

was camels, like Marree or the end of the train line, camels there, Afghans there. You've been to Marree?

Yes.

The Afghans there they live with blacks, black kids, half-caste – half Afghan, half blackfellow. A lot of the stations had camels. Now, that railway line, South Australian government got a bit of money, they put a bit more railway line on. Just south of Oodnadatta there was a big camp there. At Mount Cavanagh there's an old house there, burnt iron house. He bought that from the Railways. They had shifted so many times from Port Augusta, as the end of the line went up. Pauline, my other daughter at Beltana – she lives in Adelaide, Ragless, Ragless there (laughs) in pencil [in a photo on the wall] – she married Richard Ragless and they had the first Outback Opera – you know when that girl from New Zealand[1] came over and sang there.

That's going back about 1988?

Bloody cold that night.

You went along?

Yeah. ... ... had to. (laughs) You had a free beer, they reckon, and a free hot dog or something. If you could get *in* you could get it free. I think I had one, not too sure about that. I don't drink beer now, it's too bloody cold.

What about in your younger days? Have a few beers?

Yeah. My father had a pub, Melrose, Mount Remarkable. You've stopped there, I suppose, at Melrose. He had one and old Bert Salinger[?] had the North Star. The North Star's closed up now. Mount Remarkable's still going. And they got names written on the bloody ceiling of the bar, names of footballers and cricketers and the ...

People from the area?

Yeah. I'm not on it. I suppose ... (laughs) Me brother was a jockey, only little short bugger. I was a shed hand and I had to cart the horseshit out and put the straw down and ride track work and all that while he slept in bed. Port Pirie, Georgetown – all those – Red Hill, they all had race meetings then. You know, there was every little ... Just we got now that – where the ice cream they make there, across from the racecourse. What's the name of that bloody ice cream?

Not the Golden North?

Golden North, yeah. That was a paddock when I used to train there. There was an old fellow used to gallop his horses round the bloody paddock in there, and I'd be riding them around the track, father's horses. He had some good horses, too: he'd buy some worn-out bloody thing, could win a race if it tried. When I'd ride the bloody thing could beat me brother every time,

[1] Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, opera singer.

’cause he’d gallop for me – he or she. Another bloody thing would buck when you got on. Around the back of the pub there at Melrose – hasn’t altered much. My cousin had a hundredth birthday the other day there. Kaye and Philip, her husband, went up there and met me, because I lost my bloody driver’s licence – too blind, you see; old doctor wouldn’t sign the paper the second time. Second time he said, ‘You’ve got a good driver’. The old bugger, he didn’t tell me she was going to die. She did! (laughs) That buggered me up. So I had two motor cars: now, what am I going to do with those? She had a motor car and she liked *Wheel*[?]. She was a bookkeeper for *Wheel* and one ..., he was known as Lucien[?], he went to school with Rex. He was here the other day, coming to see me. Because a girl – well, she’s a lady – she drives the school bus down there now, and her mother lives in here. Sometimes, not always. But he comes down here school holidays because he drives a school bus and all he does, walks around, comes and (laughs) sees me. Carts the rubbish away that probably she’s thrown in the back of the bus. So there we go.

Well, perhaps we’ll go back over some of that, Doug. You’re talking about your boyhood there in Melrose and the horses and ... shed.

Now, Goyder’s line: that railway, that’s a mile out of town, and the bloody rain ... drops an inch a mile. I put a few acres of wheat in there one year north of that line: never come out of the ground. A real drought. That’s when they split the farms up. The horses – had to cut most of the bloody crop to feed the horses through the next dry year. So I think it was old Tom Playford made three farms into one. Tractors came in, you see, and they didn’t need cut matter. I bought the first crawler tractor in the district.

That’s in the Melrose district?

Melrose. My brother, he had some country on the plain that was dry, and the hills were all right. They’re good. He’d have a lovely crop one year. (laughs) He’d get a pound a bloody bushel. That year. Got down to next year, (laughs) no good. It cost as much to sew the bag of wheat up as it did you got for the *bag* of wheat.

Do you remember when that was? Roughly?

About ’38 or ’9 or something – ’28 or ’9.

’Twenty-eight or nine, yes. So you’re working on a farm?

Working for my brother.

Working for your brother, yes.

Yes.

And then you decide to strike out on your own?

Well, you never got paid there and the depression time came up. Blade shearer I was. I went north to shear Coulthard’s sheep because Coulthard, Booleroo Centre, he had a boarding house.

Roy used to … My brother joined the Army up to go to the war to kill these fucking Germans (laughs). All the prisoners of war, they got the Australian girls in the family way, I think, I've been told. I didn't try, I was too young. This old age – not so bad being old, no good when you got no balls.

Now I bought De Rose Hill there for £55 – £50. Then old Mick said … I said, 'Why don't you buy it, Mick?' 'No money'. 'Well', I said, 'I'll send £50 to Dalgety's'. I got back to ... ... – my wife was stopping there, living there or something – and I built that house at Tieyon. Big bastard. Anyway, bloody Lois, Lois lived here, down here, before she got that job. Bit churchy. She got the job in Canberra. Stolen child. She wasn't bloody stolen. Greenfield – you know, Billakalina mob – at Greenfield, he lived down there, and his wife is still alive. He was the worst bloody man I ever knew. The women in the town used to call him 'God's gift to women'. He reckoned he was! (laughs)

One of those.

Yeah. He'd get out shaking his cock: 'Now, this is the one you need'. You'd raise your hat or say G'day to one of the women: 'Oh, you're knocking her off', he reckoned. Kaye would believe him. Now, this doctor – I had cancer in the balls you see. Of course, he knew how it was. He was a teacher at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and when she went there nursing ... Anyway, now down here they don't know what bloody colour a blackfellow is. All you see on television is a white man painted up like a blackfellow. Didgeridoo, every bastard's got. There was only one tribe had a didgeridoo when they started.

That's what you saw? When you were up there, that's what you saw?

No, they didn't know anything about a didgeridoo when I went up there. No, never heard of it.

But after you were shearing for Coulthard, you then went over to the De Rose area?

No, I shore – when I went up there I shore his sheep. He used to shear them himself. Firstborn was funny: he thought he could fucking shear and away he went. Knocked up, of course. I'd shear more in one run than he'd shear in a day. (laughs)

Quick work.

Bloody *good* work. I got paid for shearing, worked the rest of the time for free. Kitto, Kitto was up there, Kitto and Coulthard were partners, and Kitto had decided to get married. He married an Adelaide girl, he's a Sydney bloke. And anyway, we got a long way away from this fence, didn't we? (laughs)

We've got to get back onto it, but I wonder, you know, asking other questions to get an idea about what you were doing up there.

Oh, yeah.

Like you're saying. OK, you did some shearing.

I got paid for shearing.

And you got enough money to buy De Rose Hill.

Well, you didn't want much.

Say about £50?

Yeah.

What made you interested in buying the property?

I grew up off the land, my father had a farm out at Melrose. The Fullers' was Fullerville[?], that's where the old man went, and all his brothers: there's a monument there somewhere at Fullerville. And Spen[?], he's an old spring[?], he's one of the last, old Daddy Fuller, Spen. There's another boy after him, but Spen's a hundred. He doesn't look well. You know Arthur Whyte? Had quite a few horses up there. Arthur Whyte, Member of Parliament, one-armed fellow. Army bloke.

MLC[2], I think, Legislative Council.

Yes, that's right. Kimba, that's where he lives now, Arthur and Mary. I sold him some horses, then when I bought De Rose Hill that's when he got the horses, after that. I used to get a good stallion from Sydney sometimes, and when the tourists started to come up the main road, anything that looked like a horse they shot, the bastards! (laughter) They were good: I reckon the tourists and blackfellows were about level. (laughs) I was up ... I went there in '33.

You went '33 to go shearing –

Yeah.

– and you bought De Rose Hill about '38

No, '44 I went there.

'Forty-four, sorry. Okay. Well, let's have a look at what happened between those ten years or so. What were you doing ...?

We lived in a ... shed, that's all that the station blokes had, a ... shed.

But before De Rose Hill you were shearing, at Coulthard.

Then I worked on Tieyon. Shearing time I'd go out to Ernabella. Shear Ernabella. And finally that's where old O'Donoghues, they were on Granite Downs. Everybody had 2000, 50 dozen sheep or something. That was money for the tucker. You always got some wool and they always – that was a tucker ... They had no money, Depression times. No good.

So you were working mainly as a shearer?

[2] MLC – Member of the Legislative Council (South Australia's upper house of parliament).

Well, yes, shear around. At Coulthard, Kitto, Mount Cavanagh. Kittos sold out and a bloke from over Birdsville way owns it now. This drought – oh, Christ. They don't know anything about a drought. I was shooting bloody calves there, little buggers. It's pretty tough the first week; after that you got used to it. (laughs) Then Dalgetys, Elders, Bennetts started there. Elders. After Dalgetys, Doug Lillecrapp.

Now, Keith, old Keith Lillecrapp, he used to bring me down here to Macclesfield – oh, that little place other side of Macclesfield, you can see it from [Kaye and Philip] Stubbs's place.

Flaxley?

No. ... ... He come from Mount Barker onto the road there at Maccles and turned down that road to Macclesfield, on that corner. What's the name of it? Flaxley. (laughs) Got 'im. Well, Gordon's father used to bring me down there. He bought a farm there, but Gordon didn't like it. I only found out a month or so ago why he took me down there: to advise him. I reckon *he'd* know more about land because when I was a kid my old man had the pub at Melrose: there was a fellow used to come to the pub there, stop in the hotel, and – now, what was his bloody name? (laughs)

We'll get him later on, we can fill it in.

Yeah, I'll get him later on, all right. (laughs) When you're looking for him you can't find the bastard.

Well, we'd better look at some of that dog fence story, because that's why I was asking what you did between shearing first up, first time, and then when you got the property.

Now, Rankines, they had Mabel Creek. Old Dick Rankine started up there as a – what did they call them? Killing the bloody sheep. 'Boots' or something, at the pub they called them 'boots'. He had three or four, old Dick Rankine, three or four blokes up there. One bloke shot himself ... ... The gun went off, bang, and he fell down. Through the head, straight. One used to ride horses. Then, when they sold the three or four stations, they retired in Adelaide. Rankines was a big name up there. They even had five or six stations.

But you got to mix with, or to meet, quite a few big names.

Yes.

You know, the Rankines, Lillecrapp.

Rankines ... taxation instead of he'd ... the bloody station.

You got to meet ...

Mount Willoughby, they had Mount Willoughby as well. And all the buggers south of there.

Did you get to meet Reg Williams, R.M. Williams?

R.M. Williams, he started off, he was going … A fellow in Bennetts pulled him out of the shit and saved him. But he's such a liar. One of his books there [on the side table] – It was impossible to ride a camel from A to B: well, *he* reckoned he did. He got all these stories from the doggers, put them together.

He was a bit of a dogger himself, wasn't he?

Well, I don't know whether he knew how to scalp a dog. But that black half-caste fellow in the Flinders Ranges taught him how to make boots. Boots – you know, I used to buy a pair of boots from him, 30 bob. About 230 now (laughs) because they were a good boot. Kangaroo skin, a euro – he looks like a kangaroo but he's not. His skin, the bloody water goes straight through it. Of course, he'd get those cheap, the skins, have them tanned. R.M. Williams.

I asked about him because the work he's – he writes about the dogging lifestyle and the work he did up there: I thought I'd ask you a bit about ... I'll just turn the tape over, Doug.

Good.

Tape 1, Side B

... claims he went through this mission in that bloody – where was it?, there in Western Australia – and he worked for him as a boy. No dog-proof fence through there. Then this fellow I bought De Rose Hill off of, Lois's father, I don't know how many kids he had. One of them, old Townie[?], worked for me at De Rose Hill. I think three or four good daughters, don't know how many (laughs) no-good ones! Lost count of that lot. After I bought it I went back out there – when Mick died, I ... There was 14 or 15 hundred sheep there: I bought those, cheap – about 10 bob each they were – and a few camels, few horses. Sheared a bit there, I suppose, I've forgotten. (laughs) But I won that one. Tom, old Tom, he was a good honest old fellow. He was supposed to be my partner but he died. He didn't pay me his 50 quid or his half of the price, he just died. (laughs) That didn't matter, wasn't a lot of money. My wife said, 'What if you lose this?'. 'I'll have to shear more sheep'. They get about as much for one sheep now as we did then for a hundred. That was a difference.

You didn't have much money, you couldn't earn much money you say before the depression and at the time.

No.

So did you have any side interests when you were up there?

No, no.

I've asked before about R.M. Williams and the doggers: did you go out, do any dingo chasing, dingo catching?

No. Oh, Christ. Pups, they used to get pups.

But there were the teams out there getting the scalps and so on ...

... ... get any ... scalps but the bloody blacks used to get them. We don't know much about dingoes – they do now, they *reckon*. You can't buy any strychnine now. Now, the fucking rabbits in the street, you can trap them, you've got to have a 'friendly' trap: what is a 'friendly' trap? When you catch the bastard you hit him with a friendly stick, do you? What do you do? I've seen them here in the street, the scratchers are here. Rabbits now fill – they're building up there on his place, [Kaye and Philip] Stubbs. You can't get out and get scalps. The greenies, you see, the greenies.

That's all changed. But what about in your time up there when you could get scalps: did you do any scalping yourself, or get scalps from ...?

Oh yes, I used to get them from blackfellows. I used to put in about 120 scalps a year.

Was that either you personally or from the Aboriginal people?

Some I'd get myself, some from the blacks, I'd give them so much flour. And a lot of blacks, they lived off it. They liked their flour, tea and sugar.

So a bit of trading, a bit of bartering?

Yeah. When Dunstan come along he fucked up the doggy bank[?]. But we still pay, we do up there, we're 200 miles north of the dog-proof fence, we still paid a dog tax. I wrote, when I sent my cheque in one year, 'What do I do about this abortion of a tax?'. You know 'abortion'. Well, the poor bastard in the office (laughs) he didn't know what he was reading: he put it on the next desk and that fellow put it on the next one and it finished up on a mate of mine's desk. He wrote and told me what it was all about. I should have kept that letter. (laughs) He reckoned half would go to the government for the fence, the dog-proof fence – there's more bloody holes in that fence now than you could count, and the dogs are way down at Orroroo. There's a fellow Luckcraft[?] down Orroroo, one paddock he can't run sheep there, dogs kill them.

On De Rose Hill you were a fair way from the dog fence.

Oh, yes.

But what did you do about fencing your property? Did you worry about dingoes and rabbits and so on?

That's where he got most of his scalps, off of my property. Dogs, we don't know much about them. We reckon we do. But you try and buy a book on them you can't.

What about before you had De Rose Hill? Were you collecting any scalps then?

Yes, if I got them, everybody did.

Was that just something you did by yourself or working with other doggers?

No, not with other doggers.

You were an individual man.

Yeah. I just scalped what I found dead. Strychnine: well, the other buggers would put half a bottle of strychnine on one dead sheep – Coulthard did: 'That'll kill the bastards'. Half a bottle'd do me six months, ... track. I think Oodnadatta must have been ... Every pub used to have a bloody seat out the front to sit on, the drunks who'd stagger out and sit on there, and that was law. I used to sit on this bastard, I think it was Oodnadatta, watching the dogs. Didn't matter whether the dogs went up the street or down the street. He'd cross the road for a piss, wanted to go for a piss, or [?just I'd get one of these little guns, you shot a bit on it?]. (laughs) All I'd got to do was find out where they'd stop for that piss. If he's got a track there you'd go – that's what I'd do – I'd keep putting the bait there, make him a little one, about as big as a matchbox, put your strychnine in him, cover him up so the birds can't get him, and put him there. When the bloody government wanted the greenies to – their vote go to the greenies and greenies vote go the Liberals' way, which they do now – they cut out the strychnine, so that's stuffed that up. (laughs) That was back in Don Dunstan's time.

What about in your younger days, when you were collecting the scalps? You used strychnine; were you shooting as well?

Younger days? No.

Did you shoot dingoes?

You shot them, you poisoned – mostly poison. When they stop, they run away from you, they mostly stop: if there's a tree about they'll be behind that bloody thing. Just their head sticking around. I could get four out of five – till I went blind, that fucked things up. But I was in my 80s, getting near the 90s before I went [blind]. (laughs)

You did well.

Now, the fence.

Now the fence. Yes, I want to find out a bit about the fence and a bit about the doggers.

I was the first to put a boundary fence up on De Rose Hill. I bought a lot of wire before the wire … when the wire was cheap. When I fucked my hip up, Rex took over and he bought this Belgian wire, sharper than Australian wire. Better wire. We used this. All the bloody neighbours in return, bloody Australian wire. Blunt fucking thing. You could get a lot of it with no bloody barbs on. Rex went down to Port Augusta to a meeting, and he took some of this wire down with no barbs on. He says he got up at the meeting; he had mobs of it. The wire mob, 'We'll have to do something about this, I suppose'. They gave him the right to go to Dalgety's and get a pallet of barb, and he got a pallet of bloody beer instead! That's the way they lived. Half the bastards. Not ... ... good price. All money now. I didn't have ... ... Don Moyle[?], he had the Basin Angus Stud. When I saw him crossing the street to Dalgety – I knew where he was going – I followed him and we finish up there, 'Old Ginger' we used to call this old bastard ... I used to go and help him to drink the butts because he'd give me a ride

home. I knew he was going to drive me home. He lived up Kensington Road. (laughs) No good, getting old. Well, you put 10 years on your life.

You mentioned the fencing on the property, the Belgian and the Australian fencing.
We finally got it right around.

Was it effective in keeping out the dingoes?
No, only the three-barb fence. I thought it kept the strangers from coming in, but it didn't; they came in, they didn't go out – because they went in the fucking meat bag. Nothing got by. I had an old blackfellow, he came there one day wanted a job. I reckon he was one of the best blacks in the north. Pannekin. When he started this court case, he and another fellow, Peter, they were dead against me. Pannekin, he died down at Coober Pedy. But there was never a tribe down there. Rosemary Craddock, she didn't know a fucking blackfellow from anything else. Their digger, blackfellow, he used to get blacks from Coober Pedy, ... Different blacks each trip. He didn't know any different.

In your younger days did you notice that the different tribes kept to different areas?
No. If there was no water there was no tracks, no blackfellow. Cunning bastards: I was tracking a blackfellow up and when I went there they'd just stopped wearing a .44 on their belts, the whites. Blackfellows put a spear in you, no trouble. Like on Mount Cavanagh was a blackfellow speared there. Bert Kitto got the blame of killing him. Kitto went to jail up in Alice for a while. Kitto was a mate of one of our friends, Parson, Partridge, and … Well, it didn't matter whether he was in jail or out of jail: he was your mate and you stuck with him. Even the policeman at Oodnadatta; if they had a case of horse-stealing or anything like that they'd fix it up down the pub. Have a few beers and (laughs) no bastard was ever guilty. Bruce Evans, he's the only one still alive, is old Bruce. Now, the Sundown Murder – you remember that?

Yes.
Yes. That was pretty close to me: 14 miles, only 14 miles. Aeroplane flying around. Now, the policemen on that thing, they wouldn't have a black tracker, 'No, they're no fucking good'. Right. Noel Coulthard, he was a tracker on the Sundown. He lives over at – what do they call it? – the other side of Port Lincoln, Fisherman's Bay or something, that's where Noel lives now. Of course, I helped him out: his old man started, he and his mother, they started Kulgera[?] and that's – Coulthard's who I went up with. Followed him up to shear the sheep. He paid me for shearing the sheep, that's all, never got paid after that. Didn't want anything.

No, but you mentioned that earlier, and ...
No. Tucker's the main thing in life.

Keep you going.
Yes.

And you mentioned a few names as we're going along, Doug – ... Williams, Coulthard, Lillecrapps and so on: what about a few like Brumby or Colson or Davies?

No.

They were doggers: did you have any dealings with them?

Colson, there was old Ted Colson, the old bloke.

I'm just wondering if you had any dealings with those blokes who were out there doing the dogging work?

No. The dogger ... ... Old Jack Colson, he built the store, he had the store at Finke. That woman, she cuts hair over here: she was the last postmistress at Finke, and she's down here cutting hair over here. At Finke, no railway there now, train line goes straight through De Rose Hill. There wasn't even a bloody road when I went there. They're arguing the point now who made the road. Well, I did. There's an old fellow in Alice: he's the first fellow – he's the last man – he drove a motor car through. But there was another bugger went through there before that and I've just forgotten his name, but I'd follow any tracks when I went up ... ..., and I picked up a bit of paper, a receipt from the pub at Kingoonya: 'drinks', or a couple of beers, and a ... ... Third one, 'glass of water'. I go in to the missus and she's laughing: 'Look at this!' 'What's that?' 'Glass of water at Kingoonya'. Well, Kingoonya's buggered now. (laughs) As soon as the bitumen road was – what's the name of the pub? – they shifted the … ... to Glendambo or something.

We'll find that out later.

On the main road, on the bitumen there. You stopped there and you stopped in at Coober Pedy. Now, what's the one north between there and Marla?

Well, Marla, of course I think of that now as the little township there, but you'd know it differently from Marla Bore and ...

Marla Bore. I used to shear out that way. What was his bloody name? I've forgotten that one.

But in those days when you were shearing, it must have been a small group of people. You all knew each other even though they moved through the area and so on?

That's it. Old Rob, he used to have horses, horse buyer for ..., he had Mabel Creek, not Mabel Creek (clock) – shut up, you bastard (clock states time, break in recording) ... traded in now.

Well, not now. But I was interested in what you did with ...

Where's the money go, I wonder? Rex was going to take them to court. Then he found out they cost more in court than we got to pay for the Dog Fence. Give that away.

We talked about the inner and outer dog fence.

Well, you see, this fence there now is north of Coober Pedy. Now, that's not the old one. When I was a kid there was a dog fence at Melrose in the back of the hills there.

And that was part of the main ...?

No, Willowie[?] Station. That was a better dog fence than this other one. He went up so far and then he went out like that. This one down there is just up 6 feet and that's it. And there's still dogs go in there. Now ...

They go under, they go through?

Well, they can do both. You go on the western side there's wombats, they're protected. Along the fence, or ...? They're protected anyway. The old rabbiter was rabbiting down there. He was down on the dog-proof fence, he used to feed the bloody niggers on wombats – a bit like a pig, they reckon: good eating, wombats – down Keith there.

They're a fair old size, the wombats.

Good lot down at Keith. In the cemetery there I had a few mates buried down there, they'd go down there. They've put a netting fence around now, down the cemetery down at Beachport. Why, I don't know. Keeps the wombats out? By jeez, they'd dig through that. Now we go where? Where's she [Kaye] gone? (break in recording)

I asked you, Doug, a couple of times about if you came across the doggers or knew any of the doggers, the people I've mentioned by name, and you said you did a little bit of scalping yourself.

Yeah.

What did you do with the scalps? Once you'd collected them or you'd traded with the Aborigines for them, what happened there?

You took them in to the policeman. He passed them, and then they went down to Adelaide and the Pastoral Board used to pass them. But when they went up – 'Tin Shed' we used to call him, the politicians at Adelaide – what was his name, that bastard? [Steele Hall?]

He's from the Pastoral Board or from the police?

No. They went through the police, then the Pastoral Board, then the government, you see.

Where was the policeman?

Oodnadatta.

So you had to take them in to Oodnadatta.

Yeah. You'd either sell them to the store, I think – there was 15 000 pup scalps, something like that, that used to go through the store. None now. But the dogs are still breeding. Where do those pups go? The rabbits died out home on De Rose Hill, a few burrows there, the wreckers were ripping those. Now petrol's so dear he's stopped.

I suppose back in your time there, Doug, if you were getting the puppies, it was probably worthwhile financially because you were getting a few in a litter, maybe *quite* a few in a litter.

Yes. Every year the dog, he … Those dogs nearly always nest in that same area. There's several different-coloured dogs: yellow ones, black ones. That's how you know. I used to shoot the

bastards, the black ones, one area. They'd run in with the black calves, and I couldn't tell the buggers between them, you might shoot a calf. (laughs)

You had to be careful there. But if you were shooting or poisoning, you'd have to catch – you might catch one or five or ten at one time, then you had to skin them and ...?

No. Ears and tail. Now, the little ones, you had to skin them. Bloody hard to tell them from a pussycat. Of course different colours. But when they're a little pup they're all the same colour. Sometimes a black coloured bitch you'd open and take the pup out – he's not born yet, he's bloody near, three or four days he'd be out. Now, Long John, a New Zealander: oh Christ, he's good with dogs. Kaye and I went over there once, six or seven dogs, knew all their names. Now, we take six or seven dogs out, send them round the sheep, what have they got? Fuck all left; they've all gone after the whatever. (laughs) But not there, he could send his dog this way, he'd go another dog ... ..., and they all knew their job and they knew their place, and I wanted to know why and no bastard would tell me. Dogs weren't chained up over there, had little houses.

When you say the 'dogs' in this sense, you mean the dingoes?

The dingoes?

When you're talking there about the 'dogs' you're talking about the dingo?

Yeah. We talk about 'dogs' but down here they ride up tourists, probably first time they see the bloody dingo. But they've read all about him, they *know* all about him. They know stuff all. Now, Pauline, the eldest daughter, there's dogs at Beltana. I look for tracks and he doesn't, because you can't get strychnine, only from a chemist, and he'll sell you enough to poison a few mice, (laughs) that's all.

Where did you learn to scalp the animal?

Oh, down there around Kulgera[?], more or less taught myself.

Did you see someone do it?

Well, you take his ears off; a pup, you've got to take the skin. A big dog you only take the ears and tail. Well, it doesn't take much brains to do that.

But what did you have to send in? The whole skin?

No, only ears and tail.

Ears and tail.

But they'd tell me the law, you're supposed to do this and do that – oh, fuck that, too much. Strip down the back – well, you take his ears and that strip down the back ... I used to take the ears and tail and thread the tail through the ears, that's all. Depend on the policeman a bit, too. Now, they went up to $8 in South Australia and of course there, at bloody – oh, I've forgotten the name of the place, next to Mount Cavanagh – we'll get him by and by, remember him (laughs) – and Kitto, we went out there with the horses and a bit of a buggy that I'd made up

and camped the bloody night: smoke haze it was, turned out to be – we couldn't see the fucking horses. We went out Mount – oh, shit, I was going to tell you the name of the place that I'd forgotten –

No, we'll get it later.

– Victory Downs. Little hills there, deep soakage there. Those soakages, not many people knew where they were, you had to have a nigger to show you. Of course, the soakage there, get the deep one, you'd get up in the morning you couldn't see a bloody thing: smoke haze. We didn't know where it come from. We didn't have a bloody wireless then.

Rely on yourself and not much ...

End of session of 25 October 2005

SECOND INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH MR DOUG FULLER, FORMERLY OF DE ROSE HILL STATION, AT STRATHALBYN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ON THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER 2005 FOR THE PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF THE ANIMAL AND PLANT CONTROL COMMISSION.

Tape 2, Side A

An interview conducted by Bernard O'Neil with Mr Doug Fuller of Strathalbyn, on the 15th of November 2005, in regards to the history of the dog fence and dogging activities for the Animal and Plant Control Commission project. This continues the interview of the 25th of October 2005.

Yeah.

OK. Doug, today I just want to talk a little bit more very specifically about the dogging activities, what was involved and so on, and the sort of thing you did. You made a comment at the start that you didn't consider yourself *as* a dogger –

No.

– but last time we were talking you talked about some of the activities and scalping and catching dingoes and so on. Could you just tell me a bit more about that?

You had to have a permit to collect the scalps, you see. Old Frank Wilkinson – he had the store at Oodna[data]. He used to get 5000 pups a year there. Now there's nothing. Those dogs are still breeding. Now, I heard the other day, of course on the air, this bloody tourist reckoned the dog's a real cross with the local dogs, you see. Well, that's impossible. See, a dingo, they only come on heat – they've got to go to two years old before they'll get in pup. Now, these two tourists wouldn't know this. Now, if you look at the map, well, where the hell are the dingoes born? There's a little patch in Africa, way up the top somewhere; there's one in South America and one over here in the bloody – I don't know what you'd call them. I think they'd be [ours?]. They still eat dogs in China and around there. (laughs) A mate of mine, Arthur Whyte, at

Kimba, if he saw a fat dog anywhere he'd say, 'God, a Chinaman would like to see that animal. Eat him'.

Now, I didn't have anything to do with the fence, but a lot of them that's supposed to be camped on the fence. Oodnadatta Races. Well, I went in there often to the races. I used to ride there, see? Reg, my brother, was a registered jockey – Strathalbyn here, Adelaide, Oakbank: he'd race there. He got killed there at Victoria Park. That's where his leg was broken, there. He died of gas gangrene. He used to ride in Victoria, he was a top jockey. And I was four years younger but I put on a bit more weight than he, (laughs) so I was out. I could do the track work. Then I went bush, you know, shearing. Now, if you could shear around a hundred a day you're in good money. Since I've been down here I've read about the top shearers of Australia: he was a Port Augusta boy, Reick. I'm going down to Goolwa soon, there's this bloke's sister down there at Goolwa. Married an Oodnadatta bloke. I think the first days in the shed he'd shore over a hundred. Of course, he used machines.

Bit different in *your* time, because you used a blade …

Different altogether. When I'd see he was working on time[?], you'd say, 'Why don't you get a machine instead of these bloody shears?' 'Right'. *Chronicle*, the old *Chronicle* was around those days and I used to get the *Chronicle*, and the only machine I could find was a Leicester, advertising this Leicester. And I ordered from Dalgety's and up she comes. Well, they had a little book there, the positions to start off the learners – learners' book, that was all it was – but it didn't tell you the first position. Hold it facing the porthole. That's the way you … But the machine, you hold it with the sheep looking down the board and you turn him, you see, when you get to the long blow. And they didn't have this part in there. And – oh, God! – that tube used to belt hell out of my leg and I had to go back to blades. (laughs) We'd shear with the blades. The missus would come over: 'Now look, you've wasted your money buying that thing, now you're still shearing with the blades'. 'Yeah, yeah'. (laughs) Anyway, I finished up telling her, 'You bloody fool! You had two pages stuck together'. She didn't, but she started off wrongly so we got it up at Victory Downs. Morton's got it now, Harry Briscoe, you see. I was going to take it up but I had to go into Finke.

The post office at Finke is not there any more, it's a blackfellows' town, so no post office. Of course they can change their bloody name (laughs) every now and again. Old Flynn, John, he started the Flying Doctor. Panic, an old blackfellow, he worked for me. He was one of the *good* blackfellows. He died at Coober Pedy only a few weeks back. He worked for me about 10 years. Bloody good cattle thieves. (laughs) Of course, beef now down here is too dear to eat. (laughs)

Let's just have a look at – you were talking there about shearing, and because we want to talk about the dogging activity – so there's a long time between when you went up there –

Yeah.

– in the '30s till when you took over De Rose Hill, so you were shearing all that time?

I only got paid for shearing.

And when you were shearing …?

Shearing for Kitto. … Farm, Ernabella, that's about all. Bloods Creek, I shore at Bloods Creek a couple of years. Old Colson, Ted Colson.

You mentioned Colson: I mean, at these places were you meeting people who were doggers?

No. Only got paid for shearing, I worked for …

The other people coming through the area, did you see people like Colson or Brumby? Last time we mentioned R.M. Williams? I mean, did you see these characters when you were up there?

R.M. Williams?

Last time we mentioned him.

Yes.

But did you see them when you were working as a shearer?

No. Williams – I got one of his books there – he went up to Oodnadatta; and there was doggers west out at Ernabella, and all the bloody stories, I'd heard them from the doggers, you see, not from Williams. He just like a lot of these bloody fellows, they go around, they get a story and they put a bit more onto it. He couldn't travel from one circus[?] to another in the two days that he had, travel time. Well, he must have been skitin' a bit, eh? (laughs) I knew R.M. pretty well. Tom, fellow I bought De Rose Hill off of, bought it for 50 quid, he and Mick and I: 'Why didn't you buy it, Mick?' 'Never had any money'. He didn't, either. But just before I bought it, they used to carry a .44 on their belt and have a shot at each other now and again. See, old Mick, he used to have Granite Downs. He knew he was going broke and he took De Rose Hill up in Tom's name so when he went broke on Granite Downs he could shift over there to De Rose Hill. But when he did, Mick was there, Tom was there, and he told him to shove off. Well, he didn't. Then they start shooting at each other. Bang, bang. Must have been buggers of shots.

Anyway, Tom used to do his own shearing. When he was finished the last it was time to start again. All the bloody year round. Well, then, see, the store used to take all the wool to pay for the rations he'd had; then the Army got him. 'Look, you could do something for your country'. Well, that's when he went broke. He got near the booze, I think. And I was shearing there and old Mick came out to Ernabella on the truck to see me, to shear his sheep. 'Right'. I'd just

about finished at Ernabella and I went out to De Rose Hill, and Tom got a letter from Mick: 'I want to sell the property – 50 quid'. Hell. I sent 50 quid to Dalgety's and said, 'Buy it for me,' and they did. And when I got home my wife said to me – I was working at Tieyon, and when I wasn't there she would be cooking bread or something. Wouldn't be much, anyway – and anyway … Oh, shit. This is still going? I didn't work for them or trade with them or anything.

Did you see them going through the area? I mean, it's a big area, I know, but there are only a few bases, there are only a few places: the Oodnadatta's, the watering holes, those sorts of places.

Well, Oodnadatta was over two hundred miles from me and I never had any way to travel.

Yes. But people passing through the area, you must … did you hear about them?

No. One dogger, he worked later on when they gave up the dogging business. Don Dunstan buggered all the dogging. See, they went up to about $10 a scalp. Every state was going to clean them out. They would have if they'd all paid up, but they didn't pay up. The state, they had a go. Now, there on – where do you call the bloody thing? The mob there, at the station west of Mount Cavanagh, what's that one?

We'll get the name later.

Yeah. Anyway, he had a bagful of scalps there. And we're attacking a keg of beer – ooh, four or five of us there, I suppose, I've forgotten – and *she* came along and says to Colin, her husband, 'Why don't you get all these scalps checked out now?' Because you had to have a policeman or two policemen to count them out, check them. And when they come to Adelaide they went to the Pastoral Board. And of course when they went up, saw all this money, the bloody blackfellows are killing pussycats. They knew, the buggers: a city person, how is *he* going to know about a dog? See, we still pay a bit of money in to the government, so much for the dog and to pay us for scalps, and so much for fencing, keep the dog-proof fence in order. Now, Bruce Evans, he was in the Pastoral Board then. You know Bruce?

I know of him, yes.

Of course this bugger, when I sent my cheque in I put a little note there: 'How many more years we got to pay this abortion of a tax?'. Now, why should – I'm well over 200 miles *north* of the dog-proof fence, why would I pay a tax to keep the fence in order? Of course, when his son took it over to fix, he was going to play hell. It cost him more in bloody court fees than paying the dog tax, you see.

Did you have a problem with dingoes on the station?

Everywhere there's dogs. There's bugger all we know about dogs. Now this 1080: if the dog doesn't eat that bait that day, the bloody birds get it. A National Parks fellow told me, 'Eaglehawks, that's what they're frightened of poisoning'. These greenies. The Liberal Party said, 'We'll take all the bloody poison off the shelves'. See, you can't buy strychnine

anywhere. Back in those [days] when I went up there first … But once the greenies got out … I knew a few greenies down the South East and a bloody lot of the greenies are the laziest buggers you've ever seen. They'll do a lot of talking, but when it comes to watering trees, no.

You said last time that you'd have to scalp the dingo –
Yeah.

– and so on. What did you do with the pelt? You only sent part of it to Adelaide?
You took the ears and tail, that's all. And I used to take them to the policeman at Oodna, then he'd take them down to the store. He'd pay me and the store would pay him. Then they were sent down to Adelaide. I suppose he chucked a few out but not many, and he'd probably keep them and put them in next time. (laughs) I don't know *what* he'd do with them.

Do you know if that happened?
No, no, no.

You know, he'd send them down a second time?
No, I don't know. But I know old Jim Davies, he was a collector over at Birdsville somewhere before he went to Granite Downs. Bloody old Jim, he'd do anything. Anyway, I've had to thump him once or twice. Nah. Ernie Giles (laughs) often.

You had a little run-in with Jim, did you?
Yeah. He thought he could fight, but unless some bastard backed him up he wasn't much good at all. He knew that, too!

What was he doing? Was he a dogger, or …?
No, he owned Granite Downs.

Granite Downs, yes. Did he do any dogging, though?
No. He collected scalps the same as I did. If a blackfellow had a bit of dog scalp, a dog, you took it and you gave him some flour for it. A lot of the blacks were quite happy to do this. See, pupping time, they'd go out with the flour, the doggers from Ernabella. Now, a dingo, they'd always have their pups in the same bloody – on the same sandhill, and the same dogs, if you poisoned them out, they'd always go back to the same area. You could clean them out. On De Rose Hill I knew where they'd have pups at the finish – took me a bloody long time. A Yankee bloke, see in America, over there they got the bloody coyote and I don't know about a coyote, they wouldn't tell you ... Yanks used to tell me, if you had a good batch of coyotes you wouldn't tell anybody where they were or how to trap them or anything else. 'Well, why?' 'You don't give your bloody money away. It's hard enough to get without giving it away like this, isn't it?'. Anyway, what's the time? Early! Bloody big clock up there and I can't see the bastard. Now, you don't have to come back here? (break in recording)

Now, I just asked you, Doug, you mentioned Jim Davies. What about some of these other names, do these names mean anything to you? People like Charlie Lester or Harold Brown or Alan Brumby? They were people doing some dogging.

Alan was out with the doggers, because old – his uncle *owned* Ernabella at one stage. And then the missions weren't allowed to have a blackfellow settlement in South Australia in those days and they … people off the borders, £500 … for borders … I bought De Rose Hill for £*50*. That's old Mick, he never paid up: he died, the old bastard. (laughs)

You mentioned him last time.

Yes.

How about a couple of other names: Stan Ferguson or Walter Smith, Tommy Dodd? Do they …?

Tommy Dodd, he was a blackfellow. Tommy was a smart bloody blackfellow, too. He never dogged. He'd probably steal them from Ernabella.

He knew a few tricks?

Oh, plenty. It takes a while to think back – it's a long while ago. Now, in two Depressions, and I went up there in a Depression. I shore sheep and then I worked with Coulthard. They only had a … shed in those days. Mount Cavanagh wasn't there. Now, you ask this lady over the way – she was postmistress at Finke – about Mount Cavanagh. Probably never heard of it. Bloods Creek, another one.

Now, I got a book half-written. One of my elder daughters has got a copy of the book now. This was my life. Now, this bugger used to come … He married a girl, she was the daughter of my neighbour at Beachport. He came over there, just a little thing, about the size of a cigarette packet. Put it on the table and I'm yakking to him. Next time (laughs) he come over he played it back: it was half of a bloody copy of a book. He said he'd sent this to the publishers in Adelaide. Anyway, they're short on books between Adelaide and Oodnadatta, Ernabella – not Ernabella; Alice Springs. They reckoned they didn't have much history of the country in there at all. Of course, there was no bugger lived there, so … [?Kulgera], old Roy … His wife's still alive, Bubs: she's in a home in Adelaide. Kaye and I went to see her the other day. She's a few months older than me.

So she's doing all right, then?

(laughs) Yes.

Doug, you mentioned that you were up there during the depression time –

Yeah.

– and there was an episode around about 1938, 1939, when it seems a lot of the doggers – perhaps all of the doggers – they left South Australia and went to the Northern Territory. Now, does that ring a bell with you?

No, no.

They seemed to stop dogging for a while in South Australia and they went to the Territory, and I'm not sure why that would be.

Well, that'd be a lot of bullshit. There was nobody *in* that country. But one fellow told me, a dogger, Paddy Connolly, and he walked across with some camels to a goldmine, Wiluna, in Western Australia. He's 'sick of eating bloody kangaroos,' he said. 'When I get over there, there are these bloody goats. Dragged me rifle out, bang, down goes a goat. Rush over to cut his throat. Time I cut his throat there's a big Afghan. 'You'll be in jail, young fellow'. And he was!' (laughs) I suppose the tucker was a bit better. But he knew how much, he'd tell me how much it cost, he'd knock a finger off or something with a hammer. Depend on the finger, the size of the finger, how much you got. He worked, when he got out of jail he went back into the goldmine, he'd work there till he got enough money and go down to Perth, have a bit of a spell down there and go from Perth back to Port Augusta, and then over to Quorn, get on the old Ghan back to Oodna. I suppose most of it was free, I don't know. When he got into Oodna he'd go out on the mail bus once a month – he knew when it was coming and going – and … I suppose I'd better go up for a feed. Anyway … (laughs)

Yes.

[By the] time he got back to Oodna, see, he could go back out on the mail. He was right then, he was back with his mates. 'They'll come looking for me if I don't go up there'.

He was a bit worried?

Mmm. Now, I was never a dogger but I never left a dog with a scalp on. Always had a sharp knife.

Always carried a knife with you?

Yeah, you always carried a knife. Now if you carry a knife you're 'going to stab some bastard'. They took three knives off of me here the other day. One girl cut her finger with the back of it, she reckoned. Now, I don't think you'd cut *anything* with *my* knives with the back of them, but she cut her finger. And what do they do? They gave the knives back to Kaye, my daughter, and *she* gave me one of the bloody knives back. I've got it in the drawer here. (laughs)

Sounds like you were pretty handy with some bush skills, from what you said last time and today.

Yes.

Handy with a gun?

[:] **End of Side A, Tape 2**
Tape 2, Side B

Even when I had sheep there at De Rose Hill I'd scratch a bit of a hole in the dirt and put the little bait in, about the size of a matchbox, and cover it over with a bit of grass or something, dry grass or something. That's it. Now, you kept doing that. Each bloody dog that takes it, he'll die. You know the next dog that comes along he'll go the same tracks. I was up at the station once, I said to the young bloke, 'Any tracks around here?'. 'No, never see a track'. 'No, you go too bloody fast, that's the trouble. Slow up'. Bloody tracks everywhere. Now, most of those tracks are the same dog, from the same dog. But if you poison like I did, and keep at it, one dog will go out that bullock pad, one out that pad, and you finally know the dogs in no time. It's only common sense.

So you learned a bit about the dogs' habits?

Yeah.

What the dingo would do.

Yeah. A dingo – they don't come on heat, or sort of half, until they're fairly old, they've got to be two years old before they'll have pups. Now, I can't see the point in keeping a bloody dingo, a cross or anything, until it's two years, just to have pups. Why not get any dog? When they're little pups they all look the same as any other dog. Why keep the bastards? Right, I'd better go and eat this tucker.

Did you find any – just one very quick question, then: did you find any cases where (clock announces time) Aborigines or doggers themselves would be breeding dingoes for the scalps?

It would be too silly. How the hell could you breed them? Of course, these buggers in Adelaide, they wouldn't know, you could tell them anything.

That's what we're here to find out … … Doug.

(laughter) That's right. Now, all the stories that's come down there. Two years ago there's a big fire on Kenmore, and the reporters, they sat in the pub at Marla. How many tractors were there and graders and Christ knows what: well, that's a lot of bullshit anyway. My bloody tractor at De Rose Hill was there, and Rex was driving it, and he said, 'That bloody fire!' It would go as fast as he could drive that bloody tractor. Down the South-East all the paddocks were bare this year I was there, but yet that big fire … Sheep turds. Get alight and the wind would blow them along. Away you go, you bastard. And yet there wouldn't be enough grass to carry anything. Here you are, you can have all this.

There you go, all right. Well, thanks for that, Doug. We've got a few more points about the doggers and the dingoes and we'll send something through for you and Kaye to have a look at and have a chat about at some stage.

Yeah.

End of interview