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**OH 621/8**

Full transcript of an interview with

**ROBERT EDWARD TAYLOR**

on 25 October 2004

By Don Gobbett

Recording available on CD

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J.D. SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION, STATE  
LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA: INTERVIEW NO. OH 621/7

**Interview with Robert Edward Taylor by Don Gobbett on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004, for the State Library of South Australia's A Social History of Gluepot Reserve Oral History Project. Robert's wife, Beverly Taylor, is also present.**

TAPE 1 SIDE A

**This is Don Gobbett interviewing Rob Taylor on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004 at his home in Taylorville, concerning his experience in the pastoral industry in South Australia. The recording is being made for the JD Somerville Oral History Collection of the Mortlock Library of South Australia. (break in recording)**

**I'm very grateful, Rob, for you giving me some time to talk about some of your background in the pastoral industry. Can you tell me where it all began? Where did you begin your working life in the pastoral industry?**

LS: Actually, probably before I turned fourteen. (laughs) I left school and was supposed to go, one fortnight, in – I forget what year it was, but didn't get there. Supposed to have got an exemption. But yes, I did quite a bit, used to go out camping and one thing and another, prior to that. Yes.

**And where did you start working?**

LS: Here.

**On Taylorville?**

LS: Yes.

**Is Taylorville named after your family, or – – –?**

LS: Yes.

**It is?**

LS: Yes, yes.

**Your father, grandfather?**

LS: Grandfather.

**Grandfather. What was his name?**

LS: Frederick George, I think.

**Right, yes.**

LS: And the surveyors actually named it because I suppose he had the lease on the corner. Oh well, actually it went from here to beyond Lake Bonney.

**Right. A very big lease.**

LS: Yes. Yes, that was before it was cut up.

**And what work did you do when you started at age fourteen?**

LS: Oh, mainly on the farming side, I suppose. Cropping. General rouseabout. I was pulling out big wethers when I was fourteen years of age, for crutching. Yes, sort of all that work.

**And there's been a combination of farming and pastoral activity throughout your working life?**

LS: Yes. More so now in the latter – oh, since the mid-'80s, I suppose.

**What's the reason for that?**

LS: Oh well, we dissolved partnership and I've got the farm and no more pastoral company, of course, and we rely on a few sheep and some grain.

**Right. And part of the land has gone to the Bookmark Biosphere, is that right?**

LS: Yes.

**Can you explain that?**

LS: I think Neville sold that. That would have been, what, '86?

No, no, it's later than that. I think he sold that –

LS: Sorry, no, that was '90.

– he sold it, '97 he sold it to –

LS: '92.

**To Gluepot?**

– to Gluepot, and I think he sold – – –.

**Bookmark was before that.**

LS: No, Bookmark was later, I thought.

LS: That was *after* that, after that.

I thought Bookmark was after –  
It could have been twelve months after.  
– they'd bought the hundred square miles.  
I wasn't quite sure.

**Anyway, doesn't matter. So your connections with Gluepot have been as a neighbour, mainly?**

LS: No, no, I was a partner in Gluepot.

**Oh, you were a partner.**

LS: Yes. The brother and I bought it – well, we leased it in 1979, as far as I can work out.

**Oh, this is when the Mattners were getting older and weren't able to manage.**

LS: That's right, yes. We leased it for three years and I think the first year we leased it we ran out of water, and then we ran out again in '82, I think.

When we took it over.

LS: Yes. That's when we bought it, anyway, 1982. And we dissolved partnership in '86, when we had it paid off.

**Right. So your working life has been as a neighbour, more, of Gluepot – since '86, anyway.**

LS: Oh yes, well – yes. Gluepot always figured, you know, because we had the hundred square miles of pastoral lease on the south side of Gluepot. It had always figured a fair bit because sheep wandered, there was always some sort of contact, but not a lot with the Warneses, I suppose, until Peter lived out there. And then – yes, we struck Peter quite a bit because he sort of developed the road a little bit that he could drive in and out to Waikerie, and we used to strike him in the bush. Yes. Well, I suppose it just sort of went from there until the Broads bought it.

**And you had contact with the Mattners – – –?**

LS: Yes. Well, we actually had considered buying Gluepot prior to the Mattners. Bev and I weren't married then, and there was some talk that we might go out there and live, but that never eventuated. But soon as Wes bought it, well –

no, actually then it went to Broad. Broad bought it, that's right. We used to meet Harold and the boys on the road. Then Wes bought it, Wes and –

**Reg.**

LS: – Reg, that's right. 'Mick', as they called him. (laughs) And got to know them pretty well. Improved the road, because they used to drive fairly fast! (laughs) Very fast. In the sandhills a bit of a worry! Yes, actually I was instrumental in widening all the road, and Wes graded it.

**Who acquired the grader?**

LS: Wes bought the grader. When it arrived it came by semi-[trailer] and it landed here, and I said to him then, 'Well, look, I've got a 'dozer, what say you grade it I'll grub it?' So I grubbed it out wider and pushed the sandhills down and wider, and eventually got all the way out to Gluepot, yes. We widened it, graded it, yes.

**Fifty k?**

LS: That grader is still out there, yes.

**And it's still used –**

LS: Yes, yes.

**– for maintenance of the road.**

LS: That's right.

**So did you work on the grader yourself, or you were using the 'dozer?**

LS: No, when we leased it they carted water with the grader and the three thousand gallon tanker for, I don't know, I reckon about six months.

**So you got water in here at Taylorville?**

LS: No, I carted from one end of the property to the other, from Picnic right down to Gluepot. Used to be able to do a load in half a day, three thousand gallons at a time.

**This depended on where the rain fell. If it fell at one end you'd have to take water from there to the other.**

LS: Exactly. And I think in the later drought I carted the other way, from Gluepot back the other way, yes. The roads got that bad that it was just about impossible to drive a ute on them, the dust was that bad. But then, I think it was '82, I was also carting water from home here, and '79 I carted with a truck and trailer from here when it ran out altogether at Gluepot. And '82 I shifted water on Gluepot again with the grader and tanker, and I had to cart water to our own hundred square miles on the south side from the river here.

**So you spent a few hours carting water.**

LS: My word, yes. Know all about it. I was born in February.

**Aquarius.**

LS: (laughs) Yes, that's right.

**And when you were working sheep you'd be out overnight, would you, or ---?**

LS: Yes, we used to camp out. Actually – oh, I used to try and get in one night, usually Wednesday night, during the week to check things out at home and see how the families were going. But later when I was dam sinking I'd spend the whole week, camp the whole week, and come in on the weekends.

**Working on your own most of the time?**

LS: Yes, on my own, yes.

**Ever feel lonely?**

LS: I had a radio. (laughs)

**To listen to music or to listen to – radio to talk to home, or ---?**

LS: No, no, no.

**No two-way radio?**

LS: No two-way radios in those days.

Nothing like that at all, just had to ..... when he got home.

LS: No, listen to the news and that was about it, I suppose.

**Pretty isolated out there, isn't it?**

LS: Yes. I didn't mind it. I like the bush, of course. But we spent a lot of time catching goats, too. In fact, I think we made more money on the goats at times than we did out of wool. Oh, goat prices weren't that good.

**The price of wool fluctuated too, didn't it?**

LS: Yes, yes.

.....? .....

**Tell me more about putting down the dams.**

LS: Nineteen seventy-nine, after we leased it, I put down what I called 'Abo Dam' but it's 'Oil Road Dam', with the 'dozer that was on the property. I think that took me about a fortnight, what with breakdowns and one thing and another. And then, later on, I shifted in and made a start on another one in Quinn's Paddock, but only got that down to about – oh, I suppose a bit over, maybe two metres, I suppose.

**Which was Quinn's Paddock?**

LS: Now, the walk now goes down from the House Dam, down past Quinn's tank, Quinn's dam.

**Oh, Whistler tank?**

LS: Whistler.

**Right. That's Quinn's Paddock?**

LS: Yes.

**Tell me about some of these breakdowns. It must have been frustrating.**

LS: Yes. Well, the old TD-18 [bulldozer] that we inherited with the property, of course, it was a large enough 'dozer, but it had spent most of its life, working life, you know, and got a bit neglected – – –. One time I got out to start – oh, after the fan belt broke and a couple of other problems, like cables on the winches breaking, and a valve, a changeover valve, in the intake manifold broke. Shot in home, welded it and was back on the job within a few hours, of course. Yes, a lot of little things like that.

**I guess you had to improvise at times.**

LS: Yes, did a bit of that.

**Can you give an example?**

LS: Oh, like (laughs) patching up springs, or doing without a part altogether, especially on motorbikes. Joining chains together with wire and one thing and another.

**So you travelled out by motorbike to where the ---?**

LS: No, actually I had an old Vanguard ute [utility] I used to run out in, and that was a crank handle job. (laughs) Starter motor wasn't too good. And yes, then I graduated to a Holden ute then, I think it was. That was a bit better. Could start it from inside the cab. But – oh yes, I had my fun with those, of course. Broken clutch linkages and cables and so forth and so on. Yes. Oh, I did my share of walking. I got bogged coming in from Oil Road Dam one night, I was channelling actually, and a storm went between where I was and the house. Anyway, I came to a fairly big patch of water and I thought, 'Oh, I'd better stick to the road.' Anyway, I did. And I got through that just nicely, and about a hundred yards further on there was another patch. I don't know what happened, I think I slipped off the firm patch and into the bog. Well, it was that time of night and in wintertime that, if I didn't make a decision pretty quick, well, I wasn't going to, you know, do much at all. So I decided it was pretty hopeless to try and get the old ute out, so I set off – on foot, of course – and it was about seven miles. That was just as the sun was going down, and I ended up – just as well I smoked in those days, I had a lighter with me – and I ended up lighting a spinifex and two pieces of mallee and used that as a torch on the way in. (laughs) Couldn't see where I was going. It was black – it was cloudy and pitch dark. I was a bit stiff when I got back, but, yes, hot bath and I was okay.

**So you came back into the homestead.**

LS: Yes. Oh, yes.

**And so when you were out there you stayed at the homestead, but you didn't ever live there permanently?**

LS: Not permanently, no, no, no. Oh, I spent quite a bit of time there, especially carting water and dam sinking, roads, one thing and another. Yes, repairs in general.

**What is it that appeals to you out in the bush?**

LS: Oh, just the bush itself, I think. Yes, I – I don't know, just sort of got an affinity with it, I suppose. I just like it, I just like to go and have a look now and again, see how things are going, see what the bush looks like. Not too good since it's been destocked, it needs some summer storms, I think, to improve. Just terrible at the moment. When we get some summer storms I think things might improve. Not like '73 and '74, when the spear grass was as high as the table. Everybody was afraid of fire then. Of course, that's when Morgan Vale Park went up, I think it was '74. Anyway, the grass was nearly as thick and as high as 1950 when it burnt then, and that was really thick.

**Do you have an interest in the birds – that's the main focus of Gluepot today, but what about the birds out there – – –?**

LS: Not really, they only used to wake me up in the morning. (laughs) No, no, not really. Goats, yes, that was money.

**Kangaroos?**

LS: No, never worried kangaroos. We had a kangaroo shooter out there. He used to spend a fair bit of time there. Yes, permits were no worries in those days. But I never shot a kangaroo out there.

**And at shearing time, how long would you spend out there for shearing?**

LS: Usually the mustering side of it was – oh, there'd be a week beforehand. I'd be in and out because we used to shear in here at the same time, too – oh, after, following on after Gluepot. And yes, it was always a week, I suppose. Good week. And then doing shearing, and then cleaning out the wool and then of course carting it away.

**Long process.**

LS: Yes, there was some work involved, yes. The trouble is that you always used to follow on after the harvest in here, and that was hard enough, and then of course we used to shear in January because of the mustering of it ---.

**It was easier to bring the sheep in to water.**

LS: Yes, well, they used to come in to water on their own, virtually, but you'd always get a few that wouldn't, especially if there was a summer storm around. You had to ride to them then.

**Did you ever use the airstrip and have a 'plane to help with mustering?**

LS: (laughs) No, no, unfortunately! No, I often wished we had one. But when we -- I always first of all went out and helped the Mattners, probably that was about 1978, and there were summer storms and that was pretty awkward trying to muster. And there was quite a few double fleeces that year. And of course they had a lot of trouble with lice because they couldn't get a clean muster. So ended up going out and gave them a hand to muster, and I think we got virtually all apart from a couple which they ended up probably getting a bit of lead in, and then dipped twice. Otherwise, yes -- no, it's one of those things, you've just got to get a clean muster. They'd bought a flock of sheep that had lice, too, to make it worse, and that went straight through the mob.

**So when you were selling or buying sheep, was that through Waikerie or Burra or ---?**

LS: No, most of the sheep came from Yelta, some from Burra, but mostly from Yelta in Victoria. New South Wales sheep. Yes, for some reason.

**So were there any special experiences out at Gluepot or out, when you were away from home, that you remember?**

LS: Oh, the odd storm, rainstorm. Yes, getting bogged, I suppose. I did a fair bit of road work out on the eastern end of Gluepot, that was a fairly long drive on its own to get back to the house.

**What was the longest period you were ever bogged?**

LS: It was only overnight, actually. No, had no troubles, like Wes, in dams. (laughs) We cleaned Old Gluepot when it went dry, Froggy's, Quinn's -- oh,

my lad and myself cleaned that. He was only in his early teens, I suppose. He drove the grader and I drove the old 'dozer. We cleaned that one out.

**That would be several days' work.**

LS: That was a bit over about a month, because he of course was going to school. And he used to ride his motorbike out and I'd meet him halfway or somewhere and pick him up or wait for him to roll up.

About four k's.

LS: Then we'd spend Saturday and most of Sunday, because there was probably around about – oh, I think around about three to four metres of mud in that one, and that really took some shifting, and it was getting dry and sandy. Cleaned that one – – –. Oh, Diesel, Picnic, Froggy's and Kangaroo, yes, we cleaned all of those, yes.

**You've got a special memory of cleaning dams?**

LS: Well, actually, I was sinking, putting the one down at Quinn's, and there was charcoal burners on their old hundred square mile property on the south side, and one was a bit light-fingered. Anyway, he had rebuilt or botched together a Holden car, and unfortunately I bought it from him for a hundred dollars. Anyway, I was sinking down a dam at Quinn's and a police car came over the hill. That was a bit strange. And –

**It was a long way out.**

LS: – it was a long way to go! (laughs) Anyway, of course they wanted to know what I'd done with this car. Well, I'd actually put it on the back of the truck and taken it to Barmera to the wreckers and sold it for fifty dollars. I wasn't very happy about that. Anyway, I was more worried when the police came because my old ute wasn't registered (laughs) and the policeman was looking at the registration sticker on the windscreen. And I don't know what he was like as a tracker, but he could have tracked me all the way from the bitumen road! But he never said anything. And I had a beer with him at Wes's afterwards, a few weeks later. And I said, 'By jingos, you gave me a fright when you came over the hill!' He never said a word.

**It's a long way out there, isn't it?**

LS: My word. Just to find out that I'd sold this car. And I said to him, 'Well, I've got a receipt,' and he said, 'I'll bet you have.' And there was no more said. Anyway, that was – I got in touch with the Pastoral Board after that, and I told them what was going on. And these chaps that were burning there, they were fairly rough and ready.

**Did they have to have a permit to – – –?**

LS: Yes, they had a permit from the Pastoral Board, or we arranged it. And anyway, the old chap originally that was there, I think he had a stroke or something and he had two other chaps come in. And they'd threatened the neighbours with Bryant and May's<sup>1</sup> law, and that wasn't very nice, so I thought, 'Oh, well, best to get rid of them.' So I rang up the Pastoral Board and got a visit from Don Burns and he fixed it up. I filled in the charcoal pits, took the 'dozer out and filled it in.

**What was the charcoal used for, these people were burning out there?**

LS: I think it was mainly going to Adelaide for charcoal chickens and the rotisseries and that sort of thing.

**Right.**

LS: Yes, I think that's where it mainly went to.

**What about woodcutters?**

LS: Woodcutters in the early days, yes, Harold – Harry – Board from Morgan. That's all stemmed from the prisoner of war days when the Japanese were out there cutting wood, in the '40s, he continued on and he went right through until – oh, the fires in 1950, I think it was. And that was mainly on the old hundred square mile block.

**Which is the old Gluepot plot.**

LS: No, which is now the Biosphere, part of the Biosphere.

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<sup>1</sup> Bryant and May manufacture matches. The expression refers to setting fire to more than was safe or necessary

**Oh, right, yes.**

LS: Taylorville Station, as it's called. He had woodcutters out there, usually two camps, and occasionally there'd be two cutters to a camp, and he was probably doing about three or four truckloads a week into Morgan. And yes, by the time he'd sawed up a load he'd be out and get another one. Yes, he had his experiences, too, with wet weather.

**Of course, during the [Second World] War charcoal burners were used for vehicles, weren't they?**

LS: That's right, yes.

**So that's probably started with that.**

LS: Yes, yes. Due to fuel rationing, yes. Not a lot of charcoal burners ---. Actually, my father-in-law had a gas engine and that used to use charcoal, the gas off of the charcoal, yes. Big, single-cylinder engine it was. Used to pump the water onto the block.

**What was the biggest difficulty you had out there?**

LS: Water. Water would have been the biggest difficulty.

**Lack of.**

LS: Lack of, yes. Yes, it's either feast or a famine – most times it was a famine. But no, we used to get storms fairly regularly, but we had a couple of bad years, like '79 and '82. There were floods probably in the late '80s, sixty inches all in one night. I didn't see that – we saw some country around it.

**Carting water was a big-time –**

LS: Yes.

**– occupation for you?**

LS: Full-time for me, yes, at one stage for at least six months.

**How many loads would you take?**

LS: Well, I used to spend up to four days at Gluepot carting from one end to the other. It used to take me a couple of hours, actually, just travelling one way, an hour to fill, an hour to unload, and I could do one and a half loads a day,

with the grader and the tanker. But carting from home, well, that was a different thing again. In the days off that I had at Gluepot I was carting from the river to – oh, that was only about twenty-odd miles, I suppose. Yes, and what I didn't cart one day, or one weekend, I'd have to cart the next to make up for it, otherwise we'd be out of water.

**What about the other jobs that had to be done at the same time?**

LS: Oh well, the brother was doing the looking after the sheep, I suppose, and any jobs that were needed around here, because being pretty dry, well, there probably wasn't a lot. He was actually hand-feeding sheep in here as well, which we didn't have to do at Gluepot, but we did in here – carrot tops and, oh, anything that was chucked out from the vegetable growers locally.

**All that had to be picked up and – – –.**

LS: Yes. Forked onto a ute and out to the paddock, of course. Yes, there was a fair bit to be done.

**So how many hours a day were you working?**

LS: Well, when I was out at Gluepot, well, I usually used to leave here, I suppose, about half past seven, eight in the morning, before the kids went to school, roughly about that. And then sometimes I wouldn't get back to the house of a night until ten or eleven o'clock at night. In fact, it got that way – I was working in the moonlight, but it got that way there was no moon, that I put a bit of a headlight on the front of the grader and could see a little bit. Yes, otherwise, yes – – –. No, it was early. Sunrise, and knock off after sunset most times.

**Very long days.**

LS: Very long days, yes. Young man, of course, a lot different. (laughs)

**And you're still working those hours.**

LS: Now? No. Well, I do, seeding time. Seeding time I start at possibly four, half past four in the morning. Now I've made a habit of knocking off after sunset, soon after sunset. I try and get everything ready for an early start the next morning and then I can – I usually wake up early and do the work.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A: TAPE 1 SIDE B

**This is side two of an interview by Don Gobbett with Rob Taylor on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004. Rob, you were a bit of a mechanic – did you get any mechanic’s training, or you’re self-taught?**

LS: Self-taught. Yes, self-taught. Yes, I suppose I made my own welder when I was probably – oh, I wasn’t married then. That was really something, I suppose, that helped out around the place. Did a lot of repairs in the bush, of course, because it was mobile, had its own engine, and it used to cut as well as weld, actually. And in our scrub clearing days we used it a lot, of course, for repairs.

**So that became a bit of a specialty for you, your brother looked after the sheep and you were more of a mechanic.**

LS: That’s probably the situation, yes, that’s how it was.

**And you had some fun at shearing times.**

LS: Yes. One in particular I can remember, and I can’t quite think of the year, but it was probably in the early ’80s, and it was very hot, *very* hot. And I used to do the wool pressing, the mustering and the dipping. And yes, I got in a pretty bad way there one day because I was working in the sun pressing wool and got pretty dehydrated. Ended up getting home about, I don’t know, eleven o’clock. Luckily some boys were out there and I got a ride in with them, otherwise I wouldn’t have made it. Into hospital, got some gear and got sent home. Yes. Four days later I was still stiff. I ended up going out four days later, anyway, and loaded the wool, took a load to Adelaide, and came good quietly afterwards.

**That was in February.**

LS: That was in a February, yes.

**Any idea what temperatures it would have got to at that time?**

LS: Well, it was probably – in today’s figures it would have been around about the forty-five [degrees Celsius], I would think. That would’ve been from the Bureau [of Meteorology]. But it can get pretty hot at Gluepot, in the mallee. Yes, it was pretty hot. Couldn’t stop the perspiration running.

**And you had your own truck to cart the wool to Adelaide.**

LS: Yes. Yes.

**What about carting goats or sheep?**

LS: Yes, we used to shift sheep in and out with that – smaller mobs, anyway. And, oh, it'd be wool to Adelaide and super[phosphate] back, or fertiliser back. And goats in those days would go to Peterborough. I think they were worth about two dollars fifty a head then, but – well, it was better than nothing.

**This would have been the mid-'80s, or – – –?**

LS: Yes, it started probably when we first leased Gluepot, after '79. And there was one day there that we loaded up the previous night at Gluepot, got home to Taylorville and left about four in the morning, I think, for Peterborough. Got back, fuelled up and went out again to Gluepot, loaded another load and went out through Old Koomooloo, Woolgangi, into Burra, and Peterborough of course, and got home I think it was about eleven o'clock that night. That was a bit of a telling trip. I had to fiddle the log book a bit, I didn't show the log book.

**And you bought sheep at Peterborough –**

LS: Yes.

**– as well as other places?**

LS: Yes, yes, we used to buy sheep nearly every year. A lot came from Yelta –

**Yelta?**

LS: – Yelta in Victoria, New South Wales sheep. But yes, I suppose about fifty-fifty from there and Peterborough, young wethers, because Gluepot was never breeding country.

**Why was that?**

LS: Oh, the feed was too hard, ewes didn't do well in it. Oh, we did rear some lambs at different times, especially down on the Old Gluepot end.

**Depending on the season, no doubt.**

LS: Yes. There were some hectic trips there, I suppose. There was one comes to mind that we'd been – Wes Mattner came with us – and we went with the Elders car, of course. Anyway, the sheep were expected at Gluepot during the night so we waited on the road because we knew there was one bad sandhill that they mightn't get over. And I think it was about ten o'clock the first semi- rocked up, and he made it okay. But the second was a truck and trailer and he didn't make it okay. And Wes was there in his ute, we went back, I suppose, about five or six miles and got a cable off of the silt scoop, and the first one pulled the other one over. Anyway – yes, we finally got over it, and I think we unloaded the sheep about one in the morning at the yards at Gluepot and got a few hours' sleep before we shifted them to Old Gluepot the next morning.

**So you had your motorbikes with you out there to get them out to Old Gluepot?**

LS: Yes, well, I think Harold Broad left the motorbikes there and Wes inherited them, so did we. They were Benleys, Honda Benleys. I think I've still got a stiff neck through them. But we used to take one or two of our own, mostly one of our own, out as well, because it was a little bit more comfortable. And there was enough motorbikes to go round – unfortunately. (laughs)

**You spent a few hours on motorbikes.**

LS: Yes. Yes, a lot of hours. When we went with Wes and Mick for a start, well, I was virtually eight hours on a motorbike because that was that wet season and sheep were very hard to find. And some days we went without a midday meal, of course, and that was a bit telling, that was a bit trying. We soon learned to take our tucker after that. But yes, a lot of days I've spent – probably as many hours looking for goats as looking for sheep. Get very sore and stiff, you know, and the country's pretty rough to ride through.

**Any memories of breakdowns of your motorbike?**

LS: Oh, yes. (laughs) There's a couple of walks I've had. But usually I've been able to patch up. Mostly with broken chains, you know, that sort of thing. Oh, one time Reg Mattner and I were looking out on the eastern end for sheep and we found a waterhole where they were drinking, of course, and we could

see by their tracks that they were there around the place. It was getting late in the day, and we decided we'd better head for the Oil Road and come in and we'd go back the next morning. Anyway, before getting to the Oil Road I happened to stake a front tyre. And anyway, that was fairly hectic – I was trying to ride that for about, oh, one and a half, two miles, through the bush with a flat tyre on the front. Anyway, I got it to the Oil Road and we left it there. I got a dinky in behind Mick, (laughs) and Wes picked it up next morning and we repaired the tube. But yes, we finally found the wethers too, so that was the main thing, we got those, that were watering on that particular hole. Which probably there would be a lot of birds there, too.

**So did you ever have social visits out there with friends, or have visitors that you took out there just to see the bush?**

LS: Not a lot. A few relatives, mainly. We sort of didn't encourage tourists very much because of their nuisance value, leaving gates open and one thing and another. But yes, we had a few relatives and a few of Bev's relatives a couple of times, or once or twice. Those that come to mind first – – –.

The Andersons.

LS: Yes, the Andersons and the Smiths.

.....

LS: And my own sister – oh, well, we just took them to the drive a couple of times, I suppose, yes.

**So you didn't have as many visitors as the Mattners seem to have had?**

LS: No, they were pretty popular.

**Tell us about some of their stories.**

LS: Well, they had friends, of course, Wes had friends in Waikerie, when he was living in Waikerie. And I rocked up out there one Sunday and old Mick wasn't in a very good mood and it turns out that –

**You called him Mick?**

LS: – Reg.

**Oh, Reg.**

LS: Reg Mattner. His nickname was Mick. And he wasn't in a very good mood, because I used to ride a fair bit with Mick, we'd pair up and go off together. And anyway, it turned out that some of Wes's neighbours had called in and (laughs) there was sheep everywhere and they were just a nuisance. Mick wasn't very happy. Reffords was their name, I think, Reffords. Anyway.

Oh, I remember.

LS: You remember the Reffords?

Stretford.

LS: Stretfords.

Yes, Stretfords.

LS: Anyway, they had a fruit block.

..... neighbours. No, they had a lot of visitors they did.

LS: Yes, they used to get people from the South-East, of course, where Wes came from, and he had an old windmill expert he used to take out there, Dick Jolly.

**Get him to work out there, or he'd just take him out?**

LS: Yes, he had Dick out there doing a fence at one stage, Reg, Dick and Wes. Wes might have told a story about how they put the fence up, north and south, over on the eastern side of Quinns. How there was only a few black oak posts to bore, and Mick said, 'No, I've got to go home.' Wes said, 'Oh, there's only a few to go.' 'No.' So old Dick said, 'No, that'll be right, we'll do them next time we come.' Of course that was a week later, and black oak dries out very quick and it's very hard to bore when it's dry. And he had to make a trip into Waikerie to buy more drill bits to finish off the few posts. (laughs)

**And you knew Jim Fairley?**

LS: No, I didn't know Jim. But heard a lot about him, of course. I heard about the time when he had killed a snake and hung it in a tree and Mick had to go back and pick it up. I think he was going to make a belt out of the skin or something. But he used to get out there, yes, quite a bit. Very popular old doctor.

**So, Rob, when you were staying out at Gluepot, you'd be out there Monday to Friday or for weekends or whatever, how did you communicate with Bev?**

LS: No, there was no communication at all, unless somebody happened to go in or out, no. No communication.

**No 'phone?**

LS: No, not in our day, but prior to us taking over Gluepot there was a one wire system, that was pretty scratchy. But we never worried about the 'phone. But Wes used to use it occasionally, and the wire went to Parcoola and then on to Canegrass, which was virtually an exchange.

**That then connected with Burra and ---?**

LS: Yes.

**Right. So you were out there four or five days without contact with anyone?**

LS: Yes, that's right, yes.

**And you were talking about the name 'Gluepot' – a lot of people wonder how it got its name. What are your theories?**

LS: Well, the impression that I got, or formed over a period of time, was that the early dam sinkers, I suppose, decided the clay was very gluey in the hole they were putting down, and it used to build up on their boots, so they named it a 'gluepot', the hole that they started originally, yes.

**I guess after heavy rain it probably, the soil still becomes ---?**

LS: Virtually it only needs about five or ten points, or a couple of mills, and it's enough to build your height up by about two or three inches, on your boots.

**And Wes Mattner needed some help in about 1978, you started helping him muster. He had some problems with sheep, you were suggesting.**

LS: Yes. He bought a mob of sheep – I'm not too sure where they came from, whether it was Burra – and they had lice. And of course the lice went right through their whole flock, and in about '78, I think it was, after talking to Wes on the road – struck him one night coming in – yes, I offered to go and give them a hand. Anyway, he was always looking for somebody to help out, muster and so forth. He used to bring a lad or a friend up from his Naracoorte

area where he was travelling from in those days. Anyway, he couldn't get anybody so I offered, and both Neville and I ended up out there, mainly mustering in the eastern end of the property, which they used to call the 'open country', simply because after the fires in 1950 Harold Broad called it 'open country' because it was all burnt. And it was probably growing good feed then, anyway, too. But that's where the sheep were very hard to muster because the pretty rough going and the odd waterhole that's through the country made it pretty hopeless. But we eventually got them.

**And how many sheep would you have been mustering at that stage?**

LS: Probably I think there was around about six or seven hundred in that paddock. Mattners used to, as the wethers got older, instead of selling them – there wasn't much of a market in those days – they would turn them out into that paddock, and if they survived, well, they'd come back and have another fleece of wool on. But if they lost them they didn't worry too much. I think it was about six to seven hundred, and probably we got about five hundred and fifty out of the paddock, I think. The rest would have died. They used to get – oh, the shearers had a word for it, put their knee into the wether's stomach of course and there'd be like a very hard ball of probably stuff that they couldn't digest, which of course didn't do the sheep very much good. In fact, I used to put them on the motorbike, across the front of the motorbike, and try and struggle on until you get to another paddock and dump them in there. This particular day I lost one. I'd only gone about – oh, I suppose about ten chains, and the thing just went limp in front of me, he died on the bike. He had this 'cotton ball', I think they called it – big lump of stuff in his stomach – and of course it killed him. That's through eating roughage, not soft feed.

**So it's a struggle for them to survive out there.**

LS: Yes, in that particular patch it was, yes. It was only when there was good, like summer storms, that did their bit of feed in the flats, and a bit of water in the waterholes, and yes, they'd walk around through it all right, no doubt about that. But it had to be a good winter. That's why I put down what I called 'Abo Dam', but you can't call it that now.

**Diesel Dam?**

LS: It ended up being called ‘Oil Road Dam’.

**Oil Road.**

LS: Because it was on the oil road, and of course I called it ‘Abo’ because I found – or there had been, before I put the dam there, Reg Mattner had found an axe head and some Aboriginal, what would you say, some bits and pieces that they’d left there –

**Flints and so on.**

LS: – flints and so on, yes. And when I was clearing, or grading one of the channels, I was unearthing these, I suppose you’d call them ‘middens’, their cooking fires, big large areas, I suppose they’d be two metres in diameter. I’d look back and see how things were going and there’d be this big black patch on the ground, yes, in the channel, the grader mark. I never searched for anything too much, but probably there’s still a bit to be found there.

**Now, Horrie Truscott was somebody who lived at Old Gluepot at one stage. You knew him and – – –?**

LS: Yes, I knew Horrie.

**Knew some of his .....?**

LS: He related a couple of his stories, one especially, how he – he and Gert were at the Old Gluepot homestead, of course, and he had a draughthorse. No, sorry, it wasn’t a draughthorse, it was a hack. And anyway, it rained and of course the horse decided it was a good time to go walkabout, and he related the story about how he left the Old Gluepot homestead. He walked so far tracking the horse, and then I think he got to the bottom Gluepot boundary and decided the horse – yes, well, he could see the horse had gone on into our old western block – and decided he’d better go back and get the vehicle. So he went back and got the vehicle, and he found the horse only probably about four miles from what is now the bitumen road leading to Morgan. Anyway, he got back that night with the horse, just on dark.

**So that horse would have come forty kilometres?**

LS: At least. Yes, thirty-five to forty, yes. That was a fair hike in the one day.

**And Horrie built the cellar at Old Gluepot, and he also had a vegetable garden, I think. How did he water that?**

LS: Well, he told us how he used to pump the water by hand through a pipeline that he put down, I suppose it was provided by the Warneses, onto the first rise, probably near where the water tanks are, not too far away from there, now. Yes, he'd pump it into a hundred-gallon tank and water his garden from there, and every time that went dry of course he'd pump again. Yes, he spent a lot of hours down there, hand pumping.

**Hours hand pumping, hours following a horse.**

LS: Yes. (break in recording)

**And you'd been out to Old Gluepot as a child?**

LS: Yes, I was pretty young. We went out, and the only road that was of any use was on the western side of what we'd call the 'western block', past Schmit's Dam, Phillips' Catch and out the northern corner, and got to the house at Gluepot, Old Gluepot. And I can remember seeing Horrie and Gert. The memories are pretty vague now, of course.

**Well, thanks very much, Rob, for your help. It's been a very interesting thing to reminisce a bit about Gluepot and your life and all your experiences. Thank you very much indeed.**

END OF INTERVIEW.