



Northern Territory Archives Service

Oral History Unit

TRANSCRIPT OF EDITTED INTERVIEW WITH

Patrick J. (Paddy) GREENFIELD

55 MINUTES 53 SECONDS

Recorded at Port Pirie, SA
on 2 February 2006

by Megg Kelham

RAILWAYS, 1970s—

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NOTE TO READER

Readers should consult the detailed note at the end of this transcript for information on the following:

Recording

Provenance

The interview

The recording

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Transcript

Notations and typography

Processing methods

Principles of editing—reading transcript of the spoken word

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH

Patrick (Paddy) GREENFIELD

Recorded by Megg Kelham

at Port Pirie, SA

on 2 February 2006

Copy begins

» 1 (0:00—0:12)¹

The following interview was recorded in the home of Patrick Greenfield in Port Pirie. It was February 2006

» 2 (0:00—24:58)

Yeah, I'm Patrick Joseph Greenfield, and I was born in Port Augusta on the sixteenth of January 1934.

Well, I always say I was born a bastard, because my mother sort of deserted—my grandmother reared me; but if I was born today I'd be a love child.

My grandmother, she reared me until I was [fourteen].

What was her name?

Winifred Virginia. She was a Bothwell and then she married a Greenfield. Yeah.

And just a brief snippet, you know, of your childhood, or how you ended up working on The Ghan?

Well, I suppose my granny done the best she could do for me and, as I said, I was always in care of the Welfare. I remember one day - - Granny used to get these little vouchers—she could get a pair of shoes, two pair of shoes a year or pair of shoes a year and so much fruit a week, and everything through the Welfare, and I think they were probably a bit of a nuisance.

One day I went to the greengrocers to pick up the [fruit and veg]. I would've been about eleven, I suppose, might've been twelve, but I was old enough to be cheeky, and not shy.

And Lena Sarris, bless her soul, she worked for George Cardassis, and when I ordered what I wanted from the thing and I had the [vouchers] she said:

– Oh, you bastard. (She said): This gives us a lot of work, these documents. And she called me an illegitimate bastard.

So I don't think I swore at her but I did pelt all the fruit and that back at her and got on my bike and went home. Of course when I got home the police were there and they wanted to know what happened, so I went back and Mr Cardassis was quite on my side.

Lena—sort of we both apologised to each other, and then my granny went down to see Mr McNally, who was probably the CEO, I think they call them the CEO, down in the courthouse and she said:

– From now on I won't have any of those vouchers. I'll raise Pat on my own

¹ For an explanation of these notations, see the *Note to Reader* at the end of this transcript. — *Ed.*

Which she did, and she knocked that back and she was only a pensioner. She owned her own home, and [was] a pretty talented musician. She was a good piano player.

Is that where you learnt how to play the piano?

That's my biggest regret in my life. When she was teaching piano, and I come home from school, and someone was learning, I'd wait outside—because she was so strict; you had to keep your hands the right level. She'd put a matchbox on there and if the matchbox fell over she'd - - she wouldn't actually hit you, but she'd always have a stick there. But she never ever whacked me for doing it.

But this day I come out and she was having this student and I come in. As I said, she was pretty hard, and then she had to do all the theory, which I didn't like. Yes, so I went in the kitchen and I got a carving knife, and I took twelve chips of veneer of the front of the piano. And that was it—I wasn't allowed touch the piano any more.

But I did have a fairly good chord structure, and I did play violin a bit, so I knew the rudiments of music, and I played mandolin.

So how old were you when you got banned from the piano?

About twelve, eleven. Could've been about eleven, twelve, you know, and that was it.

And then when I was fourteen I left school, and the Welfare were still taking [an] interest [in] me. I had myself a job at Bull's Bakery. Perhaps I shouldn't say this though, but that was a bit of a boozy bakery, Bully's were, and the Welfare said I wasn't working there, and they said - - as a matter of fact I think it was Mr McNally or Mr Puddy, one of them, said to me:

- We're going to get you a job in the Commonwealth Railways, Pat, and you'll be a rivet boy and you'll grow up to be a welder

And my remarks to that was:

- Pig's arse, I'm going to be a cook.

► 2 @5 17

Anyway, so they showed me who the boss was, and about a fortnight later I'm on my way to Edwardstown Industrial School, or Glandore West Boys Home, whichever you want to call it, and down there Mr Slade, who was a wonderful superintendent, said:

- Paddy, we're going to send you up to the Goodwood Boys Tech. (He said): There's sheet-metal classes and fitting and turning and all that.

And I said - - I never used any bad language there, I was a bit quiet on that, I said:

- No way in the world. (I said): I want to be a cook.

He said:

- You do? All right, we'll make you kitchen boy.

So I was then a kitchen boy with the main cook, a Jack Bishard, and the lady cook who was Mum Bobridge, and they taught me a fair bit. On the weekends I used to cook for the staff—the staff was only about ten or twelve—plus the kids.

I had another kitchen boy with me, who was Fritzzy Blight, and before him I was a second kitchen boy to another bloke. I can't tell you his name now, I forget, but Fritzzy was second kitchenman to me.

Anyway, so my idea was that I wanted to still be a cook. Anyhow, so time rolled along, and they said to me one day:

- We're sending you up to Welfare in Adelaide, and we think they might have a job for you at the Grosvenor.

Mr Slade said:

- You'll be there. You'll be a chef there, Paddy.

And I thought:

- Struth, that's a bit of a rise.

So off I go to Welfare. I get up on the tram, get into Victoria Place, go in there, and there's a flashy looking dolly about eighteen fits me out with a new sports coat, new trousers, new underclothes and all this sort of thing and she said:

- Now, you'll be boarding at Camanca[?] was a government-run hostel in North Adelaide, where it had rules but you were still free—you could come home up to so many hours at night, but you couldn't stop out all night without someone to vouch for you, you know.

But it was a wonderful place to be and I had friends that were there. Not at that time, but I've spoken to the friends that were there and been there, and great things.

This girl said to me - - I got talking about the Grosvenor and I said:

- Yeah, well, I can't wait to get there.

And she said:

- Oh, yeah, you know, you won't always have to be washing up dishes. You won't always be in the scullery.

I said:

- What do you mean in the scullery?

She said:

- You've got to be a scullery-man to start off.

I said:

- Pig's arse.

Well, she raced out of the room, a-hollering and screaming. In come a fairly stern elderly lady and said to me:

- What's all this bad language?

And I said:

- I didn't swear.

And she said:

- Yes, you went and you swore in front of Miss So-and-So.

Anyhow, very smartly all me stores are packed back on the shelf, and about a quarter of an hour a police car picked me up and took me back to the home. So Mr Slade had me in there and he said:

- Listen, Pat, next time we get you a job you'll handle that more carefully.

You know?

Now they used to let me smoke there too, even though I was only fourteen—because I smoked when I went there they used to let me smoke. That was another thing—I stopped, thank goodness.

But this particular day in the kitchen—well, it would've been just after this, I reckon, 'cause I'd only been there about seven months when I had this opportunity, and I was back in the kitchen with Mum Bo, and we had a bit steel pot burning on the stove.

It was making hot water—that was the hot water for making teas and coffees and that. It was like an urn but it was heated by this big wooden stove. And we were burning, for fuel, the wooden blocks they pulled out of the paving roads in Adelaide. But they were a bit too big to go in so we had a little axe there, and you'd give them a smack on the block and cut them in half and put them in the [stove].

Well this day Mum Bo, who was a lovely lady, raced in:

– Oh, Pat, you're doing this, you're not doing that, not doing something else.

I'm frustrated and I picked up the axe, walked down to chop this [block]. I hit the pipe in front of the cast-iron boiling water, that's come out over the kitchen, boiling water everywhere. No-one got hurt.

I let out a few oaths going and Mum Bo raced out:

– Oh, your swearing, you're swearing. I'm going to report you for swearing.

And of course she had no intention of reporting me, but Mr Slade was in his office, he come out and saw the commotion, so he brought me in and he give me a big lecture.

He said:

– Listen, if you're going to keep swearing (he said), the only way I'm going to stop you, you'll have to go to the reformatory.

Well, that frightened hell out of me. I still swear, but not as much as I used to. Anyway, so he said:

– As a punishment, no more cigarettes.

So he took away my cigarettes from me.

And Mum Bo from then on - - Mum Bo and Jack Bishard, they bought me cigarettes, so I still done all right. But when they took me out to fitting and told me I was going into the country to work, well, I was quite happy and I went to Wilmington.

And so were you cooking there or were you doing - -

I went to Wilmington to do an improver-ship. I couldn't do an apprenticeship because there was no place where I could go and do any after-hours training, so instead of being an apprentice I was an improver. So I done a four-year improver-ship as a baker and pastry cook.

» 2 @ 08:39

Now where - - before we go to there, where did this passion for cooking come from?

I don't know, don't really know.

When I was going to school I wanted to be a journalist. I used to love writing essays and stories, and always said that I wanted to travel with the circus and write a story of what happened around the circus. I mean, that was my pipedream, but it never got to that.

Now, about the only journalist I do now, I help print our local car club magazine and I write the scandal sheet which we call *Oil Can Harry*. If we hear anything about anybody, we tell the whole truth and nothing [like] the truth in there, yeah.

Okay, so you're in Wilmington?

Yep.

And that's where you met your wife?

Yes, she worked there. She used to work in the house and in the kitchen and sometimes in the shop, but, you know, we had a fair bit to do with one another.

And you did your apprenticeship?

Yeah.

And then what happened?

Well, when national service come up, and I was eighteen, I had one year to go, and so I got Pop to defer me. So he deferred me. ... They kept me longer than that and I didn't go in national service till I was twenty-one.

But when I was in national service, one of my other heartaches was, they called for volunteers for the royal car for the royal tour, and about two hundred of us started out. They wanted forty, and they got down to about fifty, and this bloke stood in front of me this day, because he knew something, and he just stood in front of me and stood in front of me and stood in front of me until I blinked.

And he said:

– Fall out, solider, there's no room on my parade for people that blink. This is a royal parade.

And he shot me off.

I went back and had a bit of a cry. I was upset about that. And about two days later they told me I was going with the royal car company as a cook. But they knew I was going, and they told him to make sure I got off the guard, not to break my heart more.

But I wished they'd chucked me out three weeks before, you know, because that was a volunteer thing, and you had to have your boots shiny like the sun and your brass shiny like the sun. For a start it was hard yakka, and disappointing, because everyone that was on that, they had chromed bayonets and they were all allowed to keep them. But, you know, you can't win them all.

And I was lucky then, I went with the royal car company, and worked there with, I would say, the best army cooks in Australia. I went there as a sweets cook, but mainly things that I was doing there was batters and puddings and pastries.

Done a couple of big shows. We done one on Torrens Parade Ground, when I had a real good yarn to Lady Pamela Mountbatten—she come round to talk to the boys. Never talked to the Queen; talked to the old Duke. He come in the kitchen there one day and said:

– Can I give you boys a hand with the spud peelers?

Anyhow a bloke, one of the boys working there, was a bloke called [Corporal Ray Keeples, he handed the Duke a spud peeler, but he didn't peel any spuds. [Laughter] But, you know, that was a good experience.

I've often said that - - We done a show for the [parliamentarians], and we had the whole table done up with crayfish, and we used the shells of the crayfish for the chariots, and we used cucumbers for the battlements, and we used prawns for the soldiers. And they set it up on the table with all this, and of course the cray meat was all around it.

You couldn't do it in civvy street, but you'll never see it unless you're anywhere like in the army where you could see it. And to work with those blokes and be able to make the battlements with them, you know, that was, to me, an eye-opener.

And I sometimes do that on a small scale. You know, just make a few battlements for the prawns—but no Bodaecia and the chariots, no.

When you say national service, was that compulsory at the time?

Yeah.

For everybody in Australia?

Yes. It was only three months, and then five years part-time.

So what year are we talking about then? Is this – –

'54.

'54?

Well, from 1954 to 1974 I had twenty years in the army, [17 years] part-time and three years full-time.

And working as a cook?

No, not in the latter part I wasn't, but I used to do a bit of instruction. But in the latter part I was in charge of, well, a Q-store. But a Q-store does water, food, ammunition, clothes. You know, it all ties in. I done a little bit on the administration side but, again, I liked the Q side, you know, because that was food. I used to like doing instructions.

So twenty-four years in the army?

'54 to '74—twenty, yeah. But a lot of that was part-time, of course. But the part-time's pretty hard to keep up, and I'm proud to say that I have got an efficiency medal, which not too many blokes get that. That's for twelve years continuous service, part-time. You know, not too many blokes got that.

There's a few of them got that and a bar. I never got the bar, but, you know. I don't know why I didn't, I never applied for it, but they never - - I reckon I'd be entitled to it, if I worried about it, but I'm not worried about it.

» 2 @ 13:50

And so were you working – – did you have another job?

Oh, yes. Yeah.

What was the other job?

I was at Wilmington Bakery. I was in Port Augusta. In Port Augusta I had a business for myself. Unfortunately that went bad. It was a bakehouse. We were only wholesale, and that was a mistake.

And a friend of mine said:

– Pat, you just can't be wholesale, you've got to be retail too.

But, young and stupid, and couldn't be told.

I showed my wife how to run the money, and ever since she's run the money I've had a quid, so I didn't show her too good, that's for sure.

So how did you end up in the railways?

Well, I was still part-time army in Port Augusta, and the army wrote to me and they said:

– We're looking for blokes that's had a fair bit of service who'd be interested in coming in full-time duty with the CMF unit.

And I [talked] to Norma first. She said:

- Where are you going to go?

I said:

- I don't know. It's only going to be in South Australia, I'd think, but, you know, I wouldn't mind.

And in the back of my mind I had this thing about this one-and-a-half percent house loan if you went to Vietnam, and I had a few friends that were regulars that had gone to Vietnam, and I'm glad, glad, glad, glad I didn't go.

But at the time I felt - - I applied to go and I didn't go, and I used to feel, well, they used me up, they could've given me that. But I've got a few mates who [have] got real problems, nails falling off, and lost their wives, and boozy, crazy, you know.

So I reckon I was lucky that I - - I had a lot of lucky breaks, and a lot of opportunities. If the opportunity comes you grab hold of it both hands and make the best of it.

And I was here, and I had to either sign on again, and then I would've had to go somewhere else in Australia, and I knew I wasn't going to get sent overseas, that was pretty obvious. And so the kids were going all right at school here, Norma liked Pirie, and I said:

- All right, so I'll go back in the part-time.

So I went back in part-time in 1968, and I stayed there - - Christmas '68 or early '69 moved back part-time and I said to Norma:

- If the CMF ever finishes in Port Pirie I'll give it away, [unless] they throw me out.

Of course where the TAFE College is in Pirie now was the CMF. They pulled it all down and since then they've built another smaller show. But for several years there was no CMF or reserve unit here. Now there is.

So when that time was going to be up, that's when I said I'd have to get another job. And I thought:

- Oh, well, batters and fillings. I'll got down and see Pirie Cake Company.

I went and seen Pirie Cake Company, and they offered me a job, no hassles. And Brian Richards, as I said, is a wonderful bloke, even though his brother, Leith, used to be in Whyalla, was my main opposition when I was in Port Augusta. And one of the reasons I went wrong, I tried to undercut Leith's prices.

A friend of mine said:

- Don't undercut prices, you can't do that.

But I couldn't be told, so you cut prices, make too many lines. Richards in Whyalla made about fifteen small lines, we made about fifty, so instead of the people buying four dozen of that they'd buy half a dozen of this, half a dozen of that, half a dozen this; and you spent hours on production to make nothing.

And of course those days a pasty was only eight-pence, and you could buy a vanilla slice for thruppence, so I mean - - But, of course value was different, but still, to make it would still be the same. Twenty-five percent of that would be the manufacture of it. And if you made fifteen and you only sold six, you gave them away or you threw them out—bad [economics].

... And then Norma's uncle, Peter Hackett, was here in Port Pirie, and he was a bookkeeper here. He wasn't actually an accountant, but he worked on the clerical side in the books. He finished up becoming the supervisor here as well, in my time, but he wasn't supervisor when he said to me:

- Take the job.

So he was working in the railways?

Yeah, he was living in Pirie, yeah. And I went down and applied for the job. ...

I can go back a bit here. I come down from Port Augusta when I first lost my bakehouse, and I had friends up there who were working on the trains and they said:

- Why don't you go down to Pirie and get a job as a cook, Pat? You know, get in down there.

So I came down to Pirie and I went and seen this Mr Conole, and I had an appointment to see him at ten o'clock in the morning. So I go to see him at ten o'clock in the morning and [he said]:

- Oh, I'm busy, I'm busy.

You know?

He was a grumpy old bugger. He said:

- Come back and see me later.

So one o'clock I come back again and he said:

- Now what did you want?

I said:

- I'm Greenfield from Port Augusta. I'm - -
- Oh yeah (he said). Listen, can you come back in an hour?

So about two o'clock I went back there again and I said to Norma:

- I don't think I'm going to like working for this bloke, if he's the boss. You know, I've always been lucky. I've had some pretty cranky Warrant Officers but they're all good fellows at heart.

Even though they might talk a bit rough, they're going to get a job done. But I didn't like his attitude. Of course I didn't realise he was a catering officer in the army, but I still didn't like his mannerisms.

Anyway so when I went back again he said:

- What, what did you want? What, what did you want again?

I said:

- I come to see you about that job.

He said:

- Oh, there's no jobs here. Where do you live?

I said:

- Port Augusta

He said:

- You've got to live in Port Pirie.

I said:

- What about Jimmy Rayner?

And I rattled off a few of the blokes at Port Augusta—Rodney Davies.

These are all blokes working the railways?

And they were Port Augusta blokes working on the trains. He said:

- Don't you tell me about where my blokes work. I'm telling you, you want a job you live in Pirie.

That afternoon - - sorry, I come out and went back home and I said:

- Well, that put paid to that.

So I didn't worry about it, but when I got out of the army and Peter Hacket told me about it I said:

- Who's the boss?

He said:

- Conole.

I said:

- Oh, he don't like me.

The day I [came] to see him I walked in in uniform, and I had three stripes and a crown, and I come in and he said:

- Sit down, sit down. How are you going? You're in the Army, yeah. What do you do in the Army?

Oh, God, he was all over me like a rash.

- Yeah, when can you start? When can you start?

And I said:

- Well, I could start such-and-such a time, but [the army] asked me would I take money in lieu of holidays and they're going to pay me.

Which the army don't do—you finish up and they just pay you your thing

But to get a replacement in Pirie they had to ask me would I stop on. And anyway, so I stopped on, and Mr Conole said - - I told him what I was doing. I was doing the army a favour and everything. He was real pleased about that. He was really good.

But, as I said, afterwards, we had a couple of run-ins, and I reckon when we had the run-ins he realised I was the same bloke that come down from Port Augusta that he shot through; but he didn't recognise me in uniform.

But I reckon afterwards he got to know me, because we never really ever got on real well—not that that worried me. A couple of times he used to hurt me a bit under the skin, you know.

But this Major Cruikshank, who was the Army Major, she rang me up and she said about this and I was going to finish up, say, on the end of November and she said:

- Oh, Pat, could you do us a favour? Listen, we'd be happy to pay you the money.

I said:

- That'd be all right, some extra money's always handy.

And she said:

- You can finish up just before you're going to get this job in the [railways].

Well then they rang up and told me to get out of the house. I said:

- Hang on a minute, I done you a favour, Major.

She said:

- Hang on, no, no, no. You should've been making arrangements for your house. You've got to get out.

So, you know, that was a bit of a lump in the throat for a few hours. But like Norma said, we got a little place down Pirie West, like a beach shack, and we lived there for a few months and then we rented a place on the Terrace with right of purchase, and then we bought this place here.

And you weren't concerned - - when you first heard about the work on the railways you were concerned about the pay, you were telling me before?

Yes. When I came down from Port Augusta to see about a job on the trains, pay didn't come in to me then because I hadn't been getting the pay I got in the army.

Because army pay, as a staff sergeant, pay with a marriage allowance was - - I don't know what it would've been but it would've been over a hundred dollars a week, which was pretty good dollars in that day.

And to come back to thirty-four or thirty-five dollars, which I reckon it was, as a kitchenman was shocking. And [Pirie] Cake had offered me I think seventy something, or eighty, more than double what the railways were going to give me. ... So I thought I will go to Pirie Cake, but then Peter Hacket said:

- Don't be stupid.

So I thought:

- Oh, well - -

(I did see Trevor's pay, you know, and it was a good pay he showed me.)

- Let's take a chance. I suppose I haven't got to stop here if I don't like it.

And so I went there.

And so what happened when you saw your first pay cheque?

Well.

It was bigger than the thirty-seven dollars, eh?

Yes, I think we might've cleared two hundred dollars for the fortnight after I'd paid tax and insurances. I'd always been an insurance bloke. People growl about insurance. I don't. I've paid a lot of insurance, which is money lost, I suppose, but it was nice to know that if anything happened to me that Norma had money.

And now—I mean, the kids have grown up and we haven't got them, that's not important. Assurance is all right, but insurance, if you've got nothing you can get cheap insurance and I think that's a pretty crucial thing.

Can you tell me about your first trip on The Ghan? What did you do and - -

My first trip on The Ghan I went to Alice Springs, and one of the chaps on the train was Bob Collins, and Bob was one of our really, really good waiters, and a bit effeminate, Robert, even though he's a married man.

This particular trip Robert was - - when I got to Alice Springs they said:

- In the morning when you wake up you'll see the beautiful Macdonnell Ranges.

And I'll never forget this, because I'd got out of bed and I just had my underpants on, and I'm looking out the window, 'cause the train had come in late at night and they'd shunted it around on a siding, so we were away from the town.

I was looking at these beautiful ranges and around my belly come these two sets of fingers and I thought:

- Hell.

I didn't know whether I'd won a heart or what had happened, and then Bob said:

- Good morning.

[Laughs] Frightened hell out of me, but he used to often play tricks like that on the guys, you know. But I'll never forget that.

But also when I got there I had sea legs. And Tom Laurenson—he wasn't a senior waiter but he was a senior in the actual waiters, and he said to me:

– When you get to Alice Springs, Pat, you're going to find you're going to have sea legs.

Well, I did too, because the old train took such a long time to get there and she wobbled, that I did, but that's about the only time it's ever happened to me that I've got off a train and had sea legs. I got it on that first trip—I never got it coming home.

But it was a wonderful trip, and even though it was [hard work]. The sinks was very low on that old dining car. I think the dining car we were on was a small electric car. I think it was only a forty-seater—

And what kinds of things were you cooking? When you first started on The Ghan, what were you cooking?

We were cooking turkeys, and beef, and pork, and lamb, for main meals. We were cooking steaks and beef and fish for entrees, and we were cooking chops and sausages and eggs and - - No, we weren't doing steaks in the first days for breakfast, but latter times we did. No, we never. We never had fish for breakfast, only on the west line.

So were the meals always the same? Were they the same recipes?

Yeah, they used to change the block recipes I suppose every six months or something like that. It was only about five different times. If you look at the first train that went to Western Australia, I think that was 1917. I'm not sure, that might be 1919.

But the first train in West Australia they had baked snapper on the menu, and I don't know about today but they had baked snapper on the menu long after I left, and it was a fantastic recipe, a fantastic recipe. And I still make it at home here.

Was that on The Ghan line as well, the baked snapper?

Yes, yes.

So what's the recipe?

Well, you take the snapper fillet or, if you can't get snapper fillet—and it's pretty expensive today—you can use Nile perch, which is an imported fish but it's about the same texture as a snapper. And you can use jewfish, but that's about the same but it's a lot dearer than a snapper.

And you slice it down against the fillet so that you've got slices of fillet, and you lay that on the bottom of a tray. Over that fish you grate onion and tomatoes, and to each tray of fish, which I suppose to about a fifteen-by-ten-inch tray, you'd use about one-and-a-half kilos of fish and you'd use two medium onions and two tomatoes.

Then you'd put pepper and salt over that after those vegies was grated on it. And then you would cover that with milk—I suppose about three-quarters of a litre would go over that, and you'd slop it down so that the pepper and salt and the vegies got amongst the fish.

And then too, about a half a loaf of fresh bread, crumbed. So when I say fresh bread I don't mean dry crumbs, I mean the white crumbs. Say per tray I'm talking. And about two-hundred-and-fifty grams of melted butter, which you'd rub through the crumbs.

You put that over the top to a depth about three sixteenths of an inch, and you'd bake it in the oven, 375 degrees for three-quarters of an hour. And then you cut it in squares and serve it as an entrée, or cut it in fingers and serve it as a main. Beautiful fish, really, really nice.

And were there any other kind of, you know, standard recipes like that that went with The Ghan, that went with the railways, that you can think of? Or that's the signature one?

That was the main fish one. But they used to have poached fish, where the fish was just laid out in trays and poached with onions and white wine. That was on there, and that was just served with lettuce and lemon. If the baked snapper came off, the poached fish would probably go on. But I don't think the baked snapper came off too often. I think it was on most of their menus.

People would get on the train and if it wasn't on they'd say:

– Hey, last time I travelled on a train we had this beautiful fish. Why have you got this old sloppy fish out there now?

They'd crack up a bit.

But, no, sometimes they used to have lamb and green-pea pie, Spanish beef, Mexican beef; (not chilli con carne), stroganoff.

What's Spanish beef?

Spanish beef is the celery, onions, apples and beef casseroled, served on rice.

This is in the 1960s?

Yes, yep.

And that would've been an entrée?

Entrée, yeah. And they'd have casserole of lamb, and steak and kidney pie. I'm starting to forget them but, you know, they were there. We used to have a variety

And was there always a roast dinner?

- - chicken cacciatore. Always. I was only thinking, yesterday, I thought you might be interested in some figures, but I reckon on a full consist both ways up, provedoring from Pirie, I think we'd have—and I'd just about bet my life on this—fifty kilos of turkey (that's whole birds I'm talking about), forty kilos of pork, forty kilos of lamb and about thirty-five kilos of beef.

So those four were always standard, you know, on the menus. Of course then you'd have your steaks, but you used to have shin of beef and that for entrees.

And vegies, how much – – how many, and what were your standard vegies, and how much do you reckon you would've taken?

Well, we used to have fresh soup vegies, because on The Ghan the soups were always made from fresh vegetables, and the beetroot was always fresh beetroot. On the west line, very early in the piece, they come off to be replaced by cans. Peas were always frozen on The Ghan though—peas and beans, they used to come on frozen. And the same on the west line.

But the carrots were fresh. The main vegies were carrots; cabbage, lettuce, carrots, apples to go with the salads. Of course, depending on what they were, if there was Waldorfs they'd bring in walnuts. We used to make most of our own sauces on The Ghan too, you know.

In the very beginning?

Yeah. ...

with standard set menus, was there much room to be creative as a chef?

No. For the crew.

Ah. So what did you do for the crew?

I used to often do the crews a lot of different things. I used to cook things in wine. I used to like doing pot roasts on top of the stove for the crews, and I used to like doing that with wine in it, and cook with vegies in the thing instead of just doing the roast in the oven.

And I used to like doing the curries and experimenting with my own curry powders, you know, and chillies and cumin and turmeric. And doing sweets, I used to like messing round doing up the sweets for the crews, and sauces.

And fish—I used to do creoles and fricassees with fish for the crew. And spaghettis—they were never on the menu for the passengers.

» 3 @ 32:47

Risottos weren't—risottos were at the finish but not on The Ghan, but [there were] risottos on the west line just before I finished up there. But I used to make them on the north line quite early in the piece. The crew used to say, you know, it's lovely of course. I used to say:

– If you can't be home for New Year there's no spot I'd rather be than on a train.

Going north or west it didn't matter. I thought west was always better 'cause you'd have New Year's Eve at twelve o'clock, then you'd have Victoria at half-past twelve and then you'd have Western Australia at four o'clock in the morning or something, and someone'd be half-cut and they'd say:

– What about we'd better wait up for New Guinea, Paddy.

You know?

Now why was New Year's Eve on the train so good?

Well, if you couldn't be home, well, you were there, and you with lovely passengers, and I used to like getting up there, playing the piano and singing along. No, I used to get a lot of enjoyment out of that.

I got into a lot of bother in the early days because some of the conductors said you weren't allowed to fraternise, and some of the old staid blokes would come in and say:

– You're getting reported. You're in here fraternising with the passengers.

And this was going on fairly well, except Keith Smith knew I did, and I never asked him could I. But when Don Williams come along one night, when Dr Don come on the train and he come in the kitchen and introduced himself to me and - -

He was the superintendent of - -

He was the Managing Director of Australian National. A wonderful man he was, a wonderful man. He come in there and I think we had the Platters or something playing on a tape-recorder, and Don said:

– Gee, that's a bit unusual music to hear these days.

Because there was a lot of Dr Hook and all that from the younger guys.

But there was a good friend of mine, a bloke called Lance Dunn, who went to school with me, and it was Lance's tape, actually recorded on his tapes, and he liked the stuff from the fifties. Maxie Crocker was working with us, and he was another old bloke who liked the fifties stuff, and so we all the sort of blokes who liked the fifties music. Lance was there.

And Dr Don said:

– I like that music. I don't like that loud, raucous stuff they're doing.

Anyhow, so that was the first time I met him, and of course he was travelling on the train, and so that night he was in the economy lounge, sitting; he was sitting in the economy lounge and someone said to me:

– You know that bloke who's out there, that tall bloke?

And I said:

– No.

And he was talking to some one out there and he said:

– That's Dr Williams.

And I said:

– Oh, bullshit.

Excuse me.

– Bunkum (I said). That wouldn't be Dr Williams, he wouldn't be out in economy.

He said:

– That's Dr Williams.

Anyhow, it was only half an hour later he come in the kitchen and introduced himself. And he come down after and he said to me, he said:

– Listen, can I ask you a favour, Pat?

And I said:

– Yeah, anything you like.

He said:

– There's a few people up in the lounge. I wonder if you could knock up a little bit of cheese and greens or something?

And I said:

– Love to.

Anyhow I took down a platter of cheese and greens. I never told him that was something I'd often done. But most of the cheese I used to use were over-cut cheeses, because we used to have cheese and greens on for dinner, and you threw it out if you didn't use it.

But I knew that if that was my last dinner, I'd come home and went back into Port Pirie it would've gone out on the train again, probably minced up and used as cheese savouries—it wouldn't have been thrown away, although there was a bit of waste.

But that went out to the cheese and greens, and the only thing that wasn't sort of recycling was the biscuits—there'd be fresh bikkies going out.

So that was out there, and a bit later on in the night Don said to me:

– Could I ask you to get me another plate of them?

And I said:

– Yeah. You know, I often do this.

He said:

– You do?

I said:

– Yeah, I get in more trouble than Rip Kirby.

He said:

– What for?

I said:

– I get told off because I bring up the cheese and greens to the lounge.

First class, not in economy I never—first class lounge.

I said:

- I get up here and play the piano a bit and everything.

He said:

- If ever you get in trouble again, hop on that phone and you tell me who's persecuting you. That's wonderful you do those sort of things.

He said:

- What's it cost us, a lettuce and a bit of cheese?

And if we had pork sausages for breakfast, well you'd cut the pork sausages on the diagonal, you know, and then put them out round the cheese and they'd go off, just - - [claps].

Just like that. And playing the piano after hours, after you finished cooking, was that frowned on by some people as well?

Yeah.

» 4 37:21

I was going to ask you about the waste, some of the food waste. Some people have told me stories about food being given to Aboriginal communities along the way, food from the dining car of The Ghan.

Yeah, guilty.

[Laughs] Guilty as charged?

Yeah.

So what was the process involved in that? You know, can you tell me about that, what you used to do?

Well, mainly at the Finke on the north line, but the thing was that when you carved a turkey there wasn't too much left on a turkey, and there wasn't too much left on anything that you carved.

But sooner than throw it in the bin, the chefs that I sort of followed on, Dick Sea Fang, Happy Ted Kilgallon, they used to always put the things - - mainly the sausages and bacon from breakfast, which was over, and there was nowhere they could go, so they'd put them in a Weetbix packet, or a packet, and they'd put them into a box, and when we got to the Finke we'd give them to the Aborigines.

But I don't really think that was waste. I just think it was doing the right thing, and even though it was frowned on. In the finish it was said we weren't allowed to do it, because the [Aborigines] were coming to be dependent on it.

But there was one particular Aborigine bloke, and he would say to me:

- I bring you something nice next time. You know, I bring you something nice.

And you could bet your sweet life - - I don't know if he met every train, but every time he'd bring me a nut carrier, which I've still got over there. It's over in the shed. I've got a box of artefacts, and a lot of them artefacts were given to me by this one old bloke.

I reckon his name was Jimmy Menothing, I'm not sure. Something Menothing, Jimmy Menothing, Paddy Menothing, something. But he'd always be there and he'd always have what he said he was going to have for me, so I reckon he must've come to the train and if I wasn't there he didn't give it, and he didn't sell it, or if he did he went and made another one. But that was at the Finke.

Once we changed to the new line I never saw them.

That was the end of that.

Yeah.

» 5 39:13

But see, on the early Ghans, everything went out on the tracks. The tins, everything, went down what they called a chute and it went through onto the tracks.

Strangely enough, I used to say to the drivers:

– Gee there must be some rubbish along that line.

And they'd say:

– No, you don't ever see nothing.

So whether the eagles carried the cans away to pick them in, I don't know what happened. Imagine the cans that would've been there. But they say the rubbish wasn't there.

What about, can you remember any particularly – – any passenger stories? Were there any passengers that you kind of interacted on? I think you told me a story about Bob the Bikie.

Oh, yeah.

Just in terms of – – I think the question I'd asked you was why The Ghan so special.

Well, I think it was special because it chugged along nice and slow, and everybody got to know everybody because you were in each other's company.

But this Bob the Bikie, he got on in Alice Springs, and he was a rough mean looking man and he called this girl with him his mama. And he come down to the kitchen, 'cause he was an economy passenger, and he bought some beer there,

And naturally I was standing back in the corner when he was getting served, and I just give him a nod and he said:

– Good-day, I'm Bob the Bikie.

I said:

– I'm Paddy, the chef.

He said:

– Any trouble on the train, mate, I'll fix them up. If you've got any troubles you come and look for Bob. (He said): If anyone messes around with my mama, there's going to be some real trouble, you know.

Well, I don't think you'd want to mess around with his mama either. She was pretty straggly, but she wasn't ugly, she was - - she looked like she was a bit unkempt.

Anyhow we got down to Oodnadatta, I reckon it was, and some other bikies got on the train and they had no money. They had enough money to get on the train. They're supposed to either have you own meals with you when you got on as an intermediate passenger, but you weren't responsible to the dining car for meals.

You could come and buy something or you could - - You couldn't buy food in the kitchen, because at that stage on the old Ghan we never had a cafeteria car.

Well, these two blokes got on, and after I seen them I thought:

– Struth, Bob the Bikie looks like a Sunday School teacher.

You know? These were mean looking blokes.

And they came into the kitchen and one bloke said to me:

– Can you get me something to eat? (He said): I haven't got any money, mate.

The mate blew his bike up. or he blew his bike up and he said:

– We've got one of the bikes on here, but we're going to get off at Port Augusta and we'll get some money.

Somehow they were going to get some money and go on. He said:

– We're starving.

I said:

– Listen, come back and see us after.

It must've been lunchtime, I think. I said:

– Come back and see us after this meal and I'll do you something.

So there was some ham or turkey or lamb, whatever was on the menu, was over, and I just just buttered up some bread, and made a parcel of the meats and things over and gave it to them. They were very, very, very rapt, and away they went.

So the bloke come back afterwards and I said:

– Listen, come after tea tonight and I'll look after you again.

He said:

– Yeah, no worries, mate.

Well, I got talking to one of these blokes, and he was either a good liar or he sucked me in, but he was a university dropout. But he was so interesting to talk to, telling me about his travels and about - - Yeah, he told me about (in his opinion) the different classes in the university, and he really, really intrigued me.

I thought:

– Now what's going to happen to these blokes? I hope these blokes don't start perving on Bob's missus.

But when they got to Port Augusta here's the four of them, all standing there talking and walking down the platform all together. I thought:

– Here you are.

You'd think there'd be bad blood—I would've thought there'd be bad blood with different sorts of people, you know. Even if they were university dropouts, that'd be different to this big, bad Bob because he looked big, bad Bob, but these other blokes they had a ring in their nose and, you know.

These days - - people didn't pierce their body, those days. They might've had a ring in the ear but this ring through the nose and that. Of course these days that's pretty subtle, isn't it? You know, pretty subtle.

» 6 43:17

You went on some pretty special train trips. You were on the last Ghan?

Yeah.

Can you tell us about that?

Wonderful trip, wonderful trip. We left Port Pirie with a full complement of passengers, plus I had the special service car, and so I only had Mr and Mrs Smith and some VIPs. I only had about how many to cook for? I don't know. About eight.

Now I'm not sure if I had the special service car or whether I had the EI car, the one I told you was decked out for four passengers; but I did have the special coach, whichever one it was. And it mightn't have been the SS car, it might've been the EI-84 or EI-83.

But going out of Port Pirie was fairly ordinary, until we got into the lounge that night, and of course we had passengers going up on the train that were only travelling one way. Some were travelling both ways; some managed to go on the last Ghan going to Alice and flew home, and some were going to join it up there.

But on the way up, Ron Till, he was a paid piano player, and a pretty good friend of mine, old Ron. My days go right back when during the war when I used to get up on the stage and try and be the first boy to burst a balloon when he was leading the community singing to raise money for the fighting forces comfort fund. A great musician and a great man in Port Augusta.

So was he paid to play the piano?

Yeah, he was paid to play.

Just for this trip?

Just for this trip, yeah.

Normally The Ghan didn't have a paid piano player?

No, we didn't have one. Anyhow, so he played the piano, and I sort of got up there leading the community singing, and one of our blokes, called Jerry O'Brien, played the spoons pretty well—he was playing the spoons, and there was only standing space in the lounge, 'cause we sang all the old favourite songs going up.

So what were the favourite songs?

Well, all stuff from the war years, you know.

Can you tell us a few of them?

Roll out the Barrel, Kiss me Goodnight Sergeant Major, White Cliffs of Dover, Sin to Tell a Lie, you know; *Sheik of Araby, Mary, Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover*, and the parody. It runs off me a bit, but they're the sort of songs they were.

They weren't none of the Bee Gees, none of their songs. They were all songs that, you know, were the songs of the early fifties.

White Sports Coat. I think I said *Sin to Tell a Lie, Put your Lips Closer to the Phone*. They're the sort of songs. *A Kiss to Build a Dream On*, and they're the sorts of songs.

But Ron played in a dance band and he was also a good piano player. I played in a couple of dance bands too in my younger days, played trumpet. And I used to do some of the arranging for that too, which would [be] a bit like doing video transfers now. Take me a long time, because I used to sit down and work the chords out on the piano and then do it.

But on the way up Ron said:

– This piano, Paddy, isn't it terrible? How long since it's been tuned?

And I said:

– Well, I've never noticed it to be that bad.

But it was really, really in bad tune.

Anyhow, so when we got to Alice Springs, and during the afternoon before they were getting the train ready to come back at night, I said to the technician, I said:

– You wouldn't have a little shifting spanner I could borrow?

And he said:

- What for?

I said:

- I'm going down to tune that piano.

He said:

- What do you mean tune the piano?

I said:

- Well, it's not out of key, it's only out of tune, and if I can get a spanner I can get most of those notes back in.

He said:

- You can?

I said:

- Yeah.

Anyway, so in the afternoon all the crew who had any brains had a sleep, but I never. I went down there, and was sitting there—anyhow Smithy come in, and I had all the keys all pulled out the front of the piano, and all the top part sitting down on the ground.

He said:

- What are you doing, Pat?

And he played piano a bit. He said:

- Do you know what you're doing?

Friendly. I said:

- Keith, well a little bit. When I was a young bloke I restored a piano, but Hugh Usher was a piano tuner and he used to tell me what to do.

So Norma and I restored it, I should say, not me—both of us restored it when we were still going together. And I said:

- Oh, I'll get it back in tune.

Anyhow, so I suppose I worked on it for probably an hour, got it back in tune and all the chords sounded nice. Anyhow so that night ... Mrs Smith said to me:

- Can we get tea out of the road [before we] get there?

I said:

- Yeah, yeah. You tell me when you want tea.

And I forget what was on the menu. She said:

- Don't worry about this.

I think it was orange duck or something. She said:

- Just do something easy, Pat.

I said:

- Well, not much difference to do orange duck or roast duck. I mean, might just as well do what it says, you know.

Anyhow, so we did do things.

Oh, [what] she said:

- Cut some of the choices back, you know. Make it easy, make it easy for yourself.

But anyway I don't know what we did, cut back or that. I don't think we cut back too much.

But anyhow we had tea—I think they had tea about half-past five, the same as the first sitting of passengers, but normally SS car wouldn't have tea until about seven, so [they were] always the last sitting of passengers.

Anyhow, so just before tea, I thought - - everything was right in the oven, and the ducks and that would've been on, and I did lay down on my bed; and I said:

– I'll just lay down here for a while.

I set my clock, and I'm laying there and I'm thinking, you know, I thought before I went away:

– It'd be nice if we had a last Ghan song.

Because normally I can sit down and write ditties. I wrote a lot of little ditties, some of them a bit rude, some of them not. I had this little book that I said you could have. Oodnadatta 1872, it said The Ghan was laid down.

And I'm laying there trying to think—1872, The Ghan. Yeah, going to follow the camel tracks. 1872, town, Port Augusta in the north, north town. 1872, Port Augusta town, northern town, the blueprint was laid down, follow the camel tracks is the plan, call it The Ghan. Bingo.

And so the words - - in a matter of, I'd say, ten minutes, these words come to me. Then I've got to think of a tune, you know. [Sings] *Three Little Fishes*. [Sings] You know? So a bit of my own, a bit of *Three Little Fishes*.

» 7 50:07

Nevertheless, we're travelling on the old Ghan, heading down to Adelaide on a two-day plan, tonight's special, memory, history. Boom. So I'm putting in all these key words, and ten minutes later a song.

So I sat down and wrote it out and I thought:

– Have I got time to go and see Tilly?

See?

So I never had time to go and see him, but I was down in the lounge before Tilly got there. I'd written out two or three copies, and I said to a couple of my Port Augusta friends who were on the train, Bill Dedman and his wife, and Johnny Moyes and his wife. Now those wives are both mixed up in pantomimes and those things.

I said:

– Listen to this.

They said:

– Oh, Pat, that's going to be a winner.

So they took them, they wrote all these copies.

And so about nine o'clock when Tilly got down to the clubroom I said:

– Tilly, you know the tune *Three Little Fishes*? It goes like this.

He knew that bit.

And I said:

– A bit of a chorus, we're going to sing this old Ghan song.

He said:

– Where'd that come from? Why didn't you sing it coming up?

I said:

– I never had it coming up. I only thought of it a couple of hours ago.

He reckoned I was telling him skites. And I said:

– No, no, no, no. Only 'cause I went and had a bit of a lay down, just while tea was getting ready, and I couldn't sleep and this come to me.

So he sat down and he went to play and he said:

– Hey, what's wrong? The piano's been tuned. What happened?

I said:

– Yeah.

He said:

– What happened?

I said:

– I tuned it this afternoon.

He said:

– Don't tell me that, Paddy. You wouldn't have tuned it.

I said:

– I did.

He said:

– How did you learn to tune a piano?

I said:

– I didn't, but you know, you get three strings, and it's usually only one or two that go out—one stops in; and you've got the half-tones each side of it.

But if it was all loose strings then I couldn't do it, but only bringing it back into tune, well, the piano played beautiful and away we went. And during the night after we sung this I reckon twenty times—I got sick of singing the damn thing—the people would come up and give a speech and someone would say something else.

I tried to find some recordings but none of them are any good.

Do you want to sing it now?

Eh?

Do you remember it well enough to sing it for us now, the song, with the words? Are you happy to?

Yes. I haven't got a piano here though.

You haven't got a piano? How come you haven't got a piano? After all of those years – –

My piano is at my daughter's. I gave it to her, because she's a real good reader. Have to sing it without music.

Don't you miss the piano?

Can't have everything.

No, I suppose not.

I've still got my trumpet. I had two trumpets until a few weeks ago, and I give one away, but I gave it away to a bloke who's father actually bought it and gave it to me, so I gave it back to his son. He backed over his father's trumpet, and he's just started to play it.

My grandson was playing trumpet, and after two years give it away, so I got disappointed—and I got really disappointed. Never had time to practise, too busy playing the Space Ages One or whatever it is on the computer. I'll do it without the music.

Yes, please, that'd be lovely.

[Singing].

In 1878 in the 'Augusta town
The blueprint for the Alice line was first laid down
To follow north the camel track was the plan
A three-foot-six railway to be called The Ghan.

Nevertheless we're travelling on that dear old Ghan
Heading down to Adelaide on the two-day plan
Tonight is something special for in our memory
We'll remember this trip in Ghan company.

Now Bill Twilley was an engineman bold
He fired and he drove The Ghan in days of old
I asked him 'bout the funny times, he said: Oh, hell
There's so much to tell, it would take three years to tell.'

Nevertheless we're travelling on the dear old Ghan
Heading down to Adelaide on the two-day plan
Tonight is something special for in our memory
We'll remember this trip in Ghan company.

Two friends of mine are on this time from by-gone times
Senior waiter, Marty O'Loughlin and Aspro Lyons
Aspro's been here thirty years, Mart, thirteen more
They've had their good times, bad times, that is for sure.

But nevertheless we're travelling on the dear old Ghan
Heading down to Adelaide on the two-day plan
Tonight is something special for in our memory
We'll remember this trip in Ghan company.

Now she's on her final run, the end draws near
She'll be toasted and bid farewell with champagne and beer
No more will she be derailed by heat or flood
Or stranded in the desert in the sea of mud.

And nevertheless we're travelling on the dear old Ghan
Heading down to Adelaide on the two-day plan
Tonight is something special for in our memory
We'll remember this trip in The Ghan company.

Now Smithy, our commissioner, Chairman, friend
Is sad that The Ghan is destined to end
With the new line completed further out west
He's confident it's gunna be the ANR's best.

And nevertheless we're travelling on the dear old Ghan
Heading down to Adelaide on the two-day plan
Tonight is something special for in our memory
We'll remember this trip in The Ghan company.

Fantastic. Was it sad?

[Laughter] A bit of an emotional bugger, I am. Beautiful, beautiful night.

» 8 55:53

And, quickly, how would you summarise your – – you know, if you had twenty-five words or less, to say what it was like to work on The Ghan, what would you say?

Well, I would say it's fortunate. I would say it's very fortunate, and an opportunity to meet some wonderful passengers, some which remain good friends today, and most of the crew good friends today. And the hierarchy of Australian National, I reckon they were wonderful people.

Do you think you missed out at all with your family, or watching the family grow up?

Well, probably couldn't throw a ball at Kym, could you? Kym couldn't catch a ball 'cause no-one threw one at him. The girls were a bit different. They threw one at each other, you know. No, I think it was good.

It was good?

I think I've had a very fortunate life, you know, and I - - I reckon there's three great women in my life, and that was my grandmother for caring for me, Mrs Edwards for taking me from the home and my wife for putting up with me for fifty years.

[Laughs] Who's in the room now. Okay. I've got a train to catch. Thank you very much for the interview.

The pleasure is mine.

» 8 55:53