

JOHN GALLSWORTHY

Edited transcript of a recording of John Gallsworthy interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on 17th June 2011. Transcribed by Andy Smith, 7th April 2012.

Disc 1 [0:00:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is John 'Golly' Gallsworthy recorded by Chris Eldon Lee on the 17th of June 2011. John Gallsworthy, Part One.*

Disc 1 [0:00:11] John Gallsworthy: John Gallsworthy. I live in Horsted Keynes in Sussex, and I was born 21st January 1940.

Disc 1 [0:00:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you are now ... ?*

Disc 1 [0:00:20] John Gallsworthy: I am now the glorious age of 71.

Disc 1 [0:00:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you born in Sussex?*

Disc 1 [0:00:24] John Gallsworthy: I was born in the same house I live in now.

Disc 1 [0:00:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Even now, 71 years later?*

Disc 1 [0:00:28] John Gallsworthy: Yes. I never moved, apart from ?? [inaudible]

Disc 1 [0:00:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you have been to the Antarctic but never moved house?*

Disc 1 [0:00:33] John Gallsworthy: That is right. [laughs]

Disc 1 [0:00:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was your turn of duty down South? Where were you and when were you there?*

Disc 1 [0:00:40] John Gallsworthy: I went down '66 to '76 as a builder. So I went to all the bases. I have built on all the bases. I have built three Halley Bays, and they have all fallen down.

Disc 1 [0:00:52] Chris Eldon Lee: *But it is not your fault?*

Disc 1 [0:00:54] John Gallsworthy: Not my fault. Definitely not my fault.

Disc 1 [0:00:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was your education like, John?*

Disc 1 [0:00:57] John Gallsworthy: County Secondary School at Haywards Heath. B-stream, good at woodwork. From there I got a job as a carpenter with one of the local firms, and then went to Lewes Technical College. I got a pass in Carpentry and Joinery, and General Building. I got City & Guilds in that. Then I did my apprenticeship; and then I guess the travelling bit started. I must have been a pain to my mother because I must have been talking about travelling and she saw an advert in the paper for the Falkland Islands for a carpenter. I applied for it then I looked at the map to see where I was going, and got the job in the Falklands which was a three-year contract. I did three and a half years there.

Disc 1 [0:01:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *Before we get to that, tell me a bit about your parents. Were they professional class people, or ...?*

Disc 1 [0:01:58] John Gallsworthy: My mother was Scottish, and came down to England as a domestic servant I guess, like many people did in those days. My grandparents owned a shop and my dad worked there for a bit and then he got a job in the civil service, the Passport Office. My mum never worked, I don't think, but she was pretty bright – a good woman.

Disc 1 [0:02:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *So there was no history of secondary education or further education as we would now call it?*

Disc 1 [0:02:28] John Gallsworthy: Not that I know of, no. With me, do you mean?

Disc 1 [0:02:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well in the family I mean.*

Disc 1 [0:02:31] John Gallsworthy: Not that I know of.

Disc 1 [0:02:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was it about carpentry that attracted you?*

Disc 1 [0:02:35] John Gallsworthy: I do not know. I just was quite good at it, I think, at school. We did it at school. I was quite good at it and I was job-hunting funnily enough, and I was on the bus and one of the chaps in the village said 'Got a job yet, John?' and I said 'No, I am still looking.' He said Munnions (a local firm) take on carpenter apprentices. So I went there. I got my dad to look them up and I ended up as a carpenter with them. It was a really really good firm – top quality firm. We did really good work.

Disc 1 [0:03:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Furniture?*

Disc 1 [0:03:10] John Gallsworthy: No, it was all building, but we had a really good joiners' shop with a top quality joiner that taught me a lot. Even through my life I used to do things and think 'That is not quite right.' I would let it go and then 'No, no. Len would not let that go out of the workshop.' So I would alter it. So you had a really good training and fussing and I am still quite fussy when I am doing things.

Disc 1 [0:03:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *It sounds like it was quite an Edwardian approach.*

Disc 1 [0:03:37] John Gallsworthy: It was in those days. The old man, as we used to call him, was probably the last of the pre-war gentleman-type bosses I guess. We always used to bow and scrape to Mr Munnion. Definitely the last of that era, before the war era of people anyway.

Disc 1 [0:04:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *So was it from there that you actually went to the Falklands, from Munnions?*

Disc 1 [0:04:04] John Gallsworthy: Yes. I finished my apprenticeship and had about a year at home, then got the job in the Falklands, and off I went.

Disc 1 [0:04:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *And the attraction of the Falklands was simply that it was abroad?*

Disc 1 [0:04:15] John Gallsworthy: It was abroad, somewhere, but I did not know where.

Disc 1 [0:04:19] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did your mother know where it was when she got the advert?*

Disc 1 [0:04:22] John Gallsworthy: I do not know. Of course a lot of people took the mickey out of me, cycling friends of mine, because I said 'I am going abroad.' 'Where are you going?' 'The Falklands.' 'Ho, ho, Scotland. You cannot get much further away' I said 'No. no, it is South.' An interesting bit I found was when I went for the interview, there was another chap there. I thought 'Ah, somebody after my job.' We got chatting. This was in Crown Agents in London. I got chatting to this chap and he was a mechanic and I thought 'That's all right.' I said 'Where are you going? He said 'The Antarctic.' I had no idea. I thought the Falklands was the end of the world and this chap was going somewhere else. So that was fine. The job was fine. Later, when we had the job, I was talking to 'Dad' Etchells (who is well known). We were chatting away and we are not 100% sure but we are nearly 99% sure that we were the two people that met in Crown Agents at that time.

Disc 1 [0:05:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *What year would that have been?*

Disc 1 [0:05:34] John Gallsworthy: '66. No '62. I went to the Falklands in '62.

Disc 1 [0:05:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *Right. Halley was '67?*

Disc 1 [0:05:53] John Gallsworthy: Yes, that is it.

Disc 1 [0:05:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *And you did three years?*

Disc 1 [0:05:56] John Gallsworthy: Yes. I ended up doing three and a half years in the Falklands.

Disc 1 [0:05:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *Paint me a little thumbnail sketch of the Falklands and Port Stanley in particular, in the early '60s.*

Disc 1 [0:06:04] John Gallsworthy: Well, everybody had to go down on the *Darwin* from Montevideo and it rolled. It was flat-bottomed and it was awful. The cabins had long curtains in them from the top to the bottom of the bunks, so if you were feeling seasick, these six-foot long curtains would swing out and back and it was like a pendulum. Everybody, the Governor, had to suffer out the *Darwin*. It was very much a working place, in that you had the shepherds, the peat cutters. People worked, so if you were good at what you did, you were really admired for it. 'He is a good peat cutter.' 'He is a good shearer.' 'He is a good shepherd.' 'He is a good plumber.' Obviously there were some administration people but it was very much a working place and very ... If I said backward, it was not backward. It was not backward at all, but the telephone system was on No. 8 fencing wire and it was all done with rings on the telephone, so your phone number might be 3 shorts and a long and people knew

what it was without listening. But you could listen to everybody else's phone call as well and some of the outside shepherds' houses (because shepherds used to live out on their own in the field, in the Camp) they had the speakers on permanently, into the telephone line so you could just hear all the conversations going on.

Disc 1 [0:07:42] John Gallsworthy: Also in Town, if you were ringing somebody, you would ring the exchange and say I am so and so. 'No they are not in at the moment.' 'Any idea where they are?' They would say 'Yes she might be at so and so.' 'Can you try there for me?' and they would ring round the houses for you to know where the people were. It was really good and I loved it there. It was such a basic life, and the social life: 'What do you do? What do you do?' The social life was really good. I was keen on dancing so I used to go to the dances. Through the dancing you got to meet people, and you were socialising with people. Then I played badminton and just got to know people. It was really really good, always busy. Through my life I have been to other places. When I went to New Zealand, or sometimes the backwoods of Canada; not too happy with backwoods but I can appreciate the lifestyle of people that are living a simple life, I guess you would call it.

Disc 1 [0:08:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was there any semblance of culture: theatre, cinema?*

Disc 1 [0:08:50] John Gallsworthy: We had a cinema once a week: Hardy's Cinema. Whether you had seen the film before or not, you always had to go to the cinema. That is a nightmare. When you first went there, in the Town Hall (it was held in the Town Hall), you walked in facing the audience. The films started at a certain time. So you would walk in, facing the audience. When you are new there, everybody is looking and saying 'Who is this coming? Who is this coming?' and they would all look at you. But once you had been there for a while, the next thing was having a girlfriend. It was known among your friends that you were ... and I think for the girls: If you were seen going to the cinema with somebody, it was more or less that you were going together?

Disc 1 [0:09:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were 'an item'?*

Disc 1 [0:09:43] John Gallsworthy: That was an item. You were advertising it. You would walk in and every body would ... 'Oh he has made it tonight. She is going with him.' Then you would sit there and once you had been there a few years or a good while, you got to know the thing and then other people would come in and of course you would do exactly the same. 'Is he going to buy them sweets?' because there was a little sweet counter. So you would come in. 'Are they going to buy sweets? Oh yes, he is buying her sweets.' It was awful really until you got used to it.

Disc 1 [0:10:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you find yourself in that position yourself?*

Disc 1 [0:10:14] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes. I went out with one of the girls there for quite a long time, quite seriously. So you become part of the place as well. So you all go through it and even walking up into the town when you were first there, people would look out and ...

Disc 1 [0:10:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *Lofty Tyson told me that cinema story when he took a girl to the cinema. Does that name ring a bell?*

Disc 1 [0:10:35] John Gallsworthy: Oh Lofty Tyson? Yes, I have met him.

Disc 1 [0:10:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *He is probably slightly older than you.*

Disc 1 [0:10:39] John Gallsworthy: Yes I met him because I met a quite lot going through the Falklands.

Disc 1 [0:10:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *He also felt the beady-eyed scrutiny, of walking up past the screen with a girl on his arm.*

Disc 1 [0:10:49] John Gallsworthy: Yes, there you are you see. That was true then wasn't it? And you could not do anything without being found out – that is the other thing. Go from the wrong end of town. I lived: if you come out of the cinema and turn left-handed basically. I went out with a girl that had to go right-handed to her place and people would say 'Where are you coming from, then? Oh yes, that is why he is coming that way.' You could not get away with anything. It was great.

Disc 1 [0:11:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was that OK or was there something within you that actually resented a bit of that as well?*

Disc 1 [0:11:23] John Gallsworthy: No, not a bit. I have always lived in the country. I am a country person, I guess, living in a village as a youngster. People knew where you were. Your parents knew where you were. No it was not a problem at all. Quite fun in fact, I think.

Disc 1 [0:11:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *What about the other social aspects of Port Stanley? There were, I think, four pubs?*

Disc 1 [0:11:43] John Gallsworthy: Yes. It was a great drinking place, and I did not drink at all before I went there, not a bit. It might sound weak-willed saying this but it was actually quite difficult not to drink, because you would go to somebody's house and they would say 'Can I show you a drink?' 'I will have a cup of tea.' 'No, I meant a drink!' Gradually you would get into it and got to drink gin. Yes, I became a gin drinker, with tonic which made me ill. So somebody said 'Try lemonade.' So I drank gin and lemonade and never looked back since.

Disc 1 [0:12:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *All that drink, in fact all the supplies ... Well no, that is not strictly true. All the drink certainly would have to have been imported, wouldn't it?*

Disc 1 [0:12:28] John Gallsworthy: Yes, they all come down on the ship, the *AES*, that was Danish or something like that I think. That came in three or four times a year. That came with bulk supplies, so all the booze and that would come in. But I guess the *Darwin* would bring in a lot of it as well. But it was all brought in bulk supplies. In fact when we were with *BAS*, the *Rose Hotel*; there was *Velma Malcolm* and *George*, they ran the *Rose Hotel*. In fact they really looked after *Fids* well. All of their booze went through the *Rose Hotel*. They must have done quite well out of it

supplying us down South for years and years; really good. Everything came in by sea and you would want something and the ship would be coming in next month, so you would wait and wait for it. It was the same if you wanted film. We used to take a lot of photos and it was like a three months round trip. Because the ship was only once a month. So you would send your films off to Kodak. It used to take a month there, a month in England and a month back. So everything took three months if it was a round trip, for the sort of items that you were looking for.

Disc 1 [0:13:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *What about the electricity? Was there any general distribution, any national grid, or was it all done locally?*

Disc 1 [0:13:51] John Gallsworthy: Well it was locally to Stanley. So you have got Port Stanley with its generators that did that, but the farms all had their own generators because they were miles away anyway.

Disc 1 [0:14:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *So there was a power station, of sorts?*

Disc 1 [0:14:06] John Gallsworthy: Not of sorts, no. No, a proper good power station with good reliable electricity. No it was not backward in that way. In fact the Falkland Islanders are quite 'switched-on' people to what is going on and I guess these days they will all be into computers, emails, and ... They are right up with it and they always have been.

Disc 1 [0:14:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well in some respects, electronic communications has probably revolutionised the Falklands more than it has the UK or Argentina, hasn't it?*

Disc 1 [0:14:43] John Gallsworthy: I would imagine, yes.

Disc 1 [0:14:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *Their need was great.*

Disc 1 [0:14:46] John Gallsworthy: Well it certainly did on the bases.

Disc 1 [0:14:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *We are in Bristol and we are going to have dinner tomorrow night on the SS Great Britain, but I imagine you might have seen it in the Falklands when it was a wreck?*

Disc 1 [0:14:57] John Gallsworthy: Yes we did. Because it was in Sparrow Cove which was outside of the inner harbour, it was a little bit difficult to get to. We went out there once or twice, in a little boat. We went out and we used to go mussels on it, getting mussels off it. Just tried to get out there and climb around on it. But I do not really know that much about it. It was there and we got out a couple of times, but really, in all truth, that is all I know about it.

Disc 1 [0:15:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was there plenty of work in Stanley for a carpenter or did you have to diversify?*

Disc 1 [0:15:30] John Gallsworthy: No. Working for Government we were really busy; we were kept going all the time. There were John Collins, me, a handyman and then another chap. So there were three carpenters and a handyman, with the

government. We were busy all the time, and in actual fact, privately we used to do work as well. People often wanted jobs doing privately, although we did not do a lot. You could have done a lot more if you wanted. There was always work. I think there was always work for people who were good at what they did. No it was fine from that point of view.

Disc 1 [0:16:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you ever homesick for the UK?*

Disc 1 [0:16:12] John Gallsworthy: No, never.

Disc 1 [0:16:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *So how did that period of your life, those three years, three and a half years in the Falklands, how did that come to a close?*

Disc 1 [0:16:20] John Gallsworthy: The end of the contract. It was a three year contract and I did another six months. Then that was the end of the contract. While I was in the Falklands, I got to know all the BAS people because the ships were coming in. They used to come into Stanley at the time, so I got to know the people on the ships. Really I never even went for an interview. So I left the Falklands knowing I had got this job to go back South again.

Disc 1 [0:16:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you came back to the UK?*

Disc 1 [0:16:50] John Gallsworthy: I came back to the UK. I must have left England in September on the *Biscoe*.

Disc 1 [0:16:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *September 7th, '66, just after the World Cup.*

Disc 1 [0:17:03] John Gallsworthy: Yes, was it? I don't know; that is possible.

Disc 1 [0:17:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you came back to England. By the time you headed back to England from the Falklands, you had already secured yourself a following year's work in the Antarctic?*

Disc 1 [0:17:17] John Gallsworthy: In the Antarctic, yes.

Disc 1 [0:17:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was the attraction, because three years previously you did not know where it was?*

Disc 1 [0:17:21] John Gallsworthy: I guess just talking to the people. The people were there and you got to know about the place more, which was interesting, but as an aside to that: interestingly a friend of mine and his girlfriend (now married and lives in England). We still keep in contact with her and her husband and her family. We were chatting, not that long ago, about the Falkland Islanders and the Antarctic. I was the same. I said 'Do you know, I don't really think when we lived there, we knew what was going on in the Antarctic.' The ships came in; all these lads went South. They came back with beards and long hair. We danced and partied, and away they went. I do not really think people knew. I said to this girl about it and she said 'I think you are right.' They just went South and nobody really knew what they did. Another one in hindsight that I regret was that Dr Slessor who was there, that was one of the

early people¹, he was the doctor in Stanley. Davy Jones who was the air mechanic at Stonington.. I worked with Davy Jones (not so much with the doctor) at the hangar once. We did a job up there, and I never thought to talk to him about the Antarctic or Slessor, and they were almost historic people because they were before FIDS really got going, or it was in the early days of FIDS. They were just there. I find that quite interesting. It was only last year or a couple of years ago that I spoke to this girl and we were chatting about it.

Disc 1 [0:19:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what sorts of thing were the returning Fids saying that made you feel as though the Antarctic was worth exploring personally? What was attracting you?*

Disc 1 [0:19:18] John Gallsworthy: I think it was somewhere different to go and because it was there. I mean we were in the Falklands and we were there and it was another step I guess, to go South. It was like another step. It was not like going somewhere completely different like Africa or somewhere. I cannot really answer that, truthfully.

Disc 1 [0:19:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *It wasn't the dogs or the scenery or ...?*

Disc 1 [0:19:40] John Gallsworthy: No, no. It was just there and there were jobs to do and it sounded a good idea, and away I went.

Disc 1 [0:19:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *You had not seen 'Scott of the Antarctic' or read about Shackleton?*

Disc 1 [0:19:50] John Gallsworthy: No, there was nothing really that drew me there from a historic ... I guess you get interested in a place talking to people enough, but it was not a great passion to go, if that is the right word. It sounds a bit bad saying that but ...

Disc 1 [0:20:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *No, not at all. So you bypassed the Bill Sloman interview by the sound of it?*

Disc 1 [0:20:14] John Gallsworthy: I certainly did.

Disc 1 [0:20:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *They took you on as a carpenter?*

Disc 1 [0:20:16] John Gallsworthy: Yes, carpenter/ builder.

Disc 1 [0:20:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *At what point did you know which part of the Antarctic you were being sent to?*

Disc 1 [0:20:24] John Gallsworthy: When I came back to England. When I came back I went to the office and obviously I had to sign a contract to do it, but I did not have an interview. I knew I was going back to Halley Bay because there was a big building programme. So I became part of that building programme. Another ??
[incomprehensible] Fanny Hill. David Hill or 'Fanny' (we all had nicknames). We got

¹ Presumably Stewart Slessor who was Medical Officer with FIDS at Stonington in 1946.

to Cambridge for the induction course and this chap came up to me and said 'Are you on this bloody BAS lark?' I said 'Yes I am.' Do you know, we have been pals ever since. We are still pals to this day, which is fantastic. I think that is one of the things with the Antarctic. Some of the friends that I have met, I am still really friendly with.

Disc 1 [0:21:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about going to Southampton, for your embarkation.*

Disc 1 [0:21:23] John Gallsworthy: That was interesting. My mother came down with me; my dad really was not that well. We went to Southampton, arrived at the docks and of course Southampton docks were going somewhat better than they are now. What was amazing: as we went in, the *QE2* was in dock on one side over the sheds and you could see this enormous ship up and above you, and when we came to the *Biscoe* you actually had to step from the deck down onto it. 'Here we are, going to the ends of the world on this tiny little ship.' I think there was only about four feet of freeboard from the well-deck to the water. It was a great ship, really good. In those days, all the office staff used to come down and see you off. So there was Sir Vivian Fuchs, some of the office people, and the girls. They used to give the girls in the office a day out. They were coming from London then, Gillingham Street the office there. So they would all come out for the day. We would all see them on the ship. You would get waved off by Sir Vivian.

Disc 1 [0:22:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *Had you got to know him at all?*

Disc 1 [0:22:31] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes, over the years. Gillingham Street was really quite small. So you could really wander in and wander around and chat. There were not that many people there in those days. They were all people that were probably, not all of them but some of them I had probably met while I was in the Falklands. It was somewhere I could go in and see people and chat away. It was very small and relaxed. That was it.

Disc 1 [0:22:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *What did you make of Sir Vivian, or Vivian as he was at that point?*

Disc 1 [0:23:02] John Gallsworthy: He was a really nice chap actually, and I genuinely mean that. Easy to get on with. You did not feel in awe of him, as such. Because it was really small days. Everybody was just there. They were just part of FIDS in those days. So you really just chatted away to people. I think he was probably like a lot of people of his ilk. They are sort of driven. They have a passion. You got the feeling that he was not driven in a bad way but he had a purpose. That was it; that came through. A strong leader but a good one. Probably could be a pain in the whatnots at times I would think because of his passion. I never was on base with him but apparently he always had to be the first one up and the first one to have his porridge. That sort of thing. I guess that is where people like that have that drive.

Disc 1 [0:24:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Would he have know who you were?*

Disc 1 [0:24:11] John Gallsworthy: As time went on, yes, because of the years I spent in the Antarctic. Having my nickname was Golly and everybody knows me as Golly, so yes, he would know me. He would chat to me. Yes, that was fine.

Disc 1 [0:24:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *Once you had climbed down to the Biscoe, what was she like in those days? This was the old wooden one?*

Disc 1 [0:24:33] John Gallsworthy: No not the wooden *Biscoe*. This was the metal one. It was comfortable on board. We had: I cannot remember how many to a cabin, a little Fiddery on there and it was good. It was comfortable and very friendly of course. The crew were good. Some of the people you meet, I am trying to think of the Old Fids that were on board and I cannot think who were the Old Fids on board when we went South who teach you what is going on. I really cannot remember that but the crew were good. They had been on for years. There was Robbie the bosun, brilliant chap, and then there were the Crockfords; the Crockford Mafia they used to call them, from Tenby. They were on for years, these seamen. So you got to know all the seamen and they were really really good. The officers, they got used to the FIDS way of doing things. You would help, help the galley peel potatoes, bits and pieces. Yes it was good.

Disc 1 [0:25:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *I presume you called at the Falklands on the way down, didn't you?*

Disc 1 [0:25:43] John Gallsworthy: We went into Montevideo on the way down.

Disc 1 [0:25:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you change ships there?*

Disc 1 [0:25:47] John Gallsworthy: No. We went from Montevideo, which was always a run ashore; the first foreign place for most of us, really foreign. Then we had the trip to the Falklands. In fact I got off in the Falklands, the first trip for a month or so (it might have been a bit more than that) and did some work in the Falklands that they wanted doing, because they knew I was there. The rest of the crew went off down to Signy. Then when the *Perla Dan* came in, which was the one going to Halley Bay for the building, then I got on the *Perla Dan* and then we went to Signy, picked up the rest of the building team. They all transferred then and off we went down to Halley Bay.

Disc 1 [0:26:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *Having finally got to the Antarctic, what did you make of Halley Bay?*

Disc 1 [0:26:31] John Gallsworthy: I loved it. I got off, again with this Fanny (Dave) Hill, We got off and it was just flat. I said 'Do you know, I like it here.' He said 'What do you mean, you like it?' I said 'I like it.' I did and I never changed my mind. I never thought I didn't like it.. There was something about it. Yes, it was great.

Disc 1 [0:26:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *There was lots of work to do was there not, because we were in the middle of rebuilding Halley, if I remember correctly?*

Disc 1 [0:27:06] John Gallsworthy: Yes, that is right.

Disc 1 [0:27:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what met your eyes, in terms of the building work that had to be done? What met your eyes when you arrived?*

Disc 1 [0:27:10] John Gallsworthy: Well as you arrive, the old people, the base people that are waiting for the ship to come, they are all standing on the ice cliffs saying 'Oh they are keen.' You get ashore and it was really hectic building. We were working 12 hours a day. Really hard work. It was all manual then. There were no real machines to help you. The base got called 'Grillage Village' because it was laid on a ... We levelled out the snow and put corrugated iron down – big expanded metal – then laid all these beams out. The grillage and then these big beams sat on top. The panels, they were 8 feet apart, big steel portal frames which we all had to lift up by hand, pull them up. Then once they were up, there were beams connecting them, and it was panelled with 3-inch thick insulated panels and roofed over with a butyl roof. It was hard work and we had no real facilities mealwise.

Disc 1 [0:28:21] John Gallsworthy: We had two cabooses, two little caravan things, and the cooks would do us soup and bits and pieces. The ship would send up some goodies and so lunchtime and smokos, they were all done out of these two cabooses. The cooks did a wonderful job. We did not expect any more. It was fine. It was all there. We got plenty to eat, but it was hard work. You had 12 hours on, of really hard work. Then you would go back to the ship and probably have a few drinks. Then bed and back out again. There was a competition. There were two shifts running so there was a certain competition on how much you got done. Could you get it finished before the next shift came on, but it was all friendly. It was good, really good. I think that is the thing with BAS: it is very camaraderie. It was really good fun. I think all the years I have been there, there has been nobody that I have not really liked, not really. Most people get on. There has been a few failures, where people have got there and gone again, but it has never affected me, I must say.

Disc 1 [0:29:36] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you find your carpentry skills were being given full scope?*

Disc 1 [0:29:39] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes.

Disc 1 [0:29:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were not having to bodge for the speed.*

Disc 1 [0:29:42] John Gallsworthy: No. The building was built prefabricated. So we basically just had to put it together. But I think once the building was up, the main construction was up, the inside was to a great extent left to us to do what we wanted. Not quite what we wanted. The bunkrooms were set. The bunks were there. But there was a lot of work in the lounge where we could use our own skills. People would make things and do things. I built a record cabinet, for example. We all had records in those days. I built a big record cabinet and console. One of the other chaps (there were some clever people) he did all the wiring for it, the electrical work on it. Well really it was just wiring it in, the speakers and that. My own carpentry: the Fids would come along and want to make things. 'Can you help me make this?' 'Can you help me make that?' More the second year than the first year. There were several of us carpenters and builders still. We did it the first year but more the second year when I was on my own, as a carpenter.

Disc 1 [0:30:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you get a sense of why the others were there? Why all these chaps had gone to such a remote place? Was there a kind of a unifying factor?*

Disc 1 [0:31:09] John Gallsworthy: I think the scientists, we used to take the mickey out of them. We used to say 'Here they come, another leaf on the cabbage of knowledge.' I think for them it must have been a really good step in their career, because BAS would go round the universities looking for people. So for them to get a job down South must have been a really big deal. Some of them are obviously world wide scientists now. They were coming from university and how much they knew about it I do not know but other Antarctic botanists or zoologists: they would have been working with those in England before they went, and they would have a project to do. So that was their drive, I guess, to do a good job with that.

Disc 1 [0:32:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you swap information with scientists? Did you learn about the science they were doing?*

Disc 1 [0:32:06] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes.

Disc 1 [0:32:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was that a big thing?*

Disc 1 [0:32:09] John Gallsworthy: Yes. I found it really interesting, that you were mixing with such a diverse group of people. We would get people to give lectures in the winter. The doctor would give a talk and the geologist. It was really interesting. You do not learn everything but you certainly learned a lot about what other people were doing and it did help. The conferences we used to have in Cambridge were slightly that, to tell you what other people were doing, so you could interact with them a bit. 'Why do you want the rock from the top of the mountains when there is a load of rubble at the bottom? We could just pick it up from there.' Then they would tell you why they needed it so you understood why you had to go up this damned mountain to get the rock if you were going to do that.

Disc 1 [0:32:54] John Gallsworthy: It was just interesting talking to other people and what they did. I guess I have got an interest just in general knowledge. I am not that bright but just to know what other people do is interesting. We would talk about things we did, hobbies, give a talk on cycling. Then people know why they have got to knock you off the road when they are back in England in their cars. It was just general knowledge among ourselves. You were mixing with them all the time. We did not have 'the support staff' and 'the scientific staff'; we did not keep separate. So you were mixing all the time and talking about what went on.

Disc 1 [0:33:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *But did not the scientific stuff actually stay in the old hut for quite a long time, whilst you began to start living in the new hut you were building? They stayed in the old underground hut for a while, didn't they?*

Disc 1 [0:33:52] John Gallsworthy: Well that is right, yes. What happened was: as we were building the Grillage Village, as we got on, the old base was falling to bits. We had the IGY hut, International Geophysical Year, which was built nineteen fifty-something². That was 60 feet down by then. That was amazing going down there.

Disc 1 [0:34:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *You went to it, did you?*

² Actually 1956.

Disc 1 [0:34:16] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes.

Disc 1 [0:34:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me what that was like.*

Disc 1 [0:34:18] John Gallsworthy: Well, when you first went to the old base, you went down a shaft, a 6 ft square shaft. They actually had a disaster with what we called the old living hut, which was meant to be two storeys but half the bolts got left behind, apparently, in the build. So it was a single storey hut with a flat roof. It fell to bits. Ceilings used to collapse in on you. So what they then had to do: they built the 'office block' which was nearest the surface. They went down the shaft, into the office block tunnel, and then you went down again into the old living hut. It was like going down into the Gnomes because we used coal for heating still a lot of it. So the corridors were dark and black, and there were stores in there. So you were going down like these little gnomes, down stairs, then into the old living hut. The IGY at this time was still used. Some of the scientists still had rooms down there in places. But it was cold down there.

Disc 1 [0:35:24] John Gallsworthy: The living hut was really falling to bits and it was freezing. When we were building, we needed more materials. We had the buildings, Grillage Village, but there were always extras. So Dave Hill and I used to go down the old base and Ricky Chinn who was the Base Leader there, he said 'Right. From such and such a date, the IGY is shut. That's it. You have got to be out.' Gradually people were moving up to Grillage Village. We did the bunkrooms. Once we got the dining room and that done, the bunkrooms were then being done. So people could then move up and we were working on the offices. Gradually there was a move away. Ricky said 'The IGY is shut.' So when we wanted stuff, we would go down. They did not want to leave because they had been there a year. We would get all their stuff, put it in the middle of the floor and then take the walls out. The scientists would come back. 'The bastards, they have stolen my office.' We had taken it all out.

Disc 1 [0:36:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *For raw materials?*

Disc 1 [0:36:33] John Gallsworthy: For the materials, yes. We had to use the materials. Then, in the end, that shut. The living hut, we used to go down there for films on Saturday night and every ten days we went down for a bath or a shower. It was freezing. You would go down to the hut for your shower and you would have 5 gallons of water in a 5-gallon oil tin with a garden hose rose on it. You would go down in the bathroom and the bath was cast iron. So you had to put a plastic bowl in the bath, put water in it, or you would have got frostbite on your feet, truly. You would get 5 gallons of water and you would make it sort of warm enough. It was very cold down there – freezing. Turn the water on. Too hot, and even at -10C the water takes a long time to get cold, so you tip it away, and water was a goody. You did not want to waste it. You would throw it away and put more cold in and have your shower. I think we all did it, and kept quiet. You could not say 'I have just wasted 5 gallons of water.'

Disc 1 [0:37:44] John Gallsworthy: Then, as I say, the base gradually broke up. When Dave and I used to go down there, we would say to the cooks 'We are down. Can we have dinner with you?' 'OK, fine.' As the base was breaking up, all the tables were on

a slope. They were Formica. You never wiped them because it would freeze, and you would put your plate on the table and it would hurtle off down the end. You would say 'What time is dinner?' 'One o'clock.' You would be down there a few minutes and there was nobody there. 'Where are they, then?' But they would all come from the office block then. They one come down at one o'clock. Whoosh, eat their meal; five past they had gone.

Disc 1 [0:38:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *Into the old hut and then back up again? The kitchens were in the old hut still?*

Disc 1 [0:38:28] John Gallsworthy: Yes, they were still in the old hut. The cooks would be there in their outdoor gear, nearly. We had these big commercial cooking trays. I saw a cook actually open a big tin of peas and shoot it into one of these things. It went Shh and froze; he put it in the oven. Tea towels were frozen on the front of the Aga. It was really cold. This must have been May time I would think. It was certainly before Midwinter. But the temperature was getting cold and they gradually shut the base and people moved up into the office block then. The office block then became the old base while we were still building. Then gradually, as we got on, they did not actually close that base because they used it for dogs in the end. I think it might have gone for another year, I cannot remember. The office block became the base and that was fine.

Disc 1 [0:39:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *That was also under the ice, was it?*

Disc 1 [0:39:25] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes. That was probably 20 ft, something like that.

Disc 1 [0:39:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you ever have any awkward moments whilst you were salvaging materials from the IGY hut?*

Disc 1 [0:39:35] John Gallsworthy: Sort of. The shaft up from the IGY was obviously long and wasn't quite straight with the ice in it. Dave Hill and I had to haul it all up this shaft. One of us would be on the tractor, pulling, and the other one was down below. You could not see what was going on, so you would tow it and you would feel the rope go tight and you would ease it off a bit if you were driving, wait, loosen it off a bit and then you would go on. One day we had it pull up with tins of paint. I was driving, and the bottom of the shaft where the ice had gone down, it had made a curve. I was towing this up and something happened and it tipped all these tins of paint up. Dave Hill was down the bottom with all this paint hurtling down and it hit this ramp. He was legging it off along the corridor with these 2-gallon tins of paint going after him. 'Hey, you are trying to kill me!' 'Oh, I didn't know.' I think that was the only time we had ... He has never forgiven me for that either.

Disc 1 [0:40:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *He certainly has not. He says they were 5 gallons.*

Disc 1 [0:40:41] John Gallsworthy: Well probably some were.

Disc 1 [0:40:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *'If one of them had connected with me, I would not be writing this now.'*

Disc 1 [0:40:47] John Gallsworthy: No, that is right.

Disc 1 [0:40:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *When you were building the Grillage Village base, was it intended that it would not sink below the ice?*

Disc 1 [0:40:54] John Gallsworthy: No.

Disc 1 [0:40:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *You built it knowing it would go down.*

Disc 1 [0:40:57] John Gallsworthy: Yes, knowing it would. When the IGY was built originally, it had windows because it was a traditional Peninsula hut, if you like. But of course it got buried, so the building did not have windows at all. There were no windows in it at all. It was built to bury. It had big thick refrigerator doors, not wooden doors for the in and out, the corridor access doors. No, it was built to be buried.

Disc 1 [0:41:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did it work as a building?*

Disc 1 [0:41:28] John Gallsworthy: Not entirely. The beams in the roof, that the roof sat on, were notched out and in fact the engineer that designed it was there, a really nice chap Colin Baldwin. He really made a mistake, actually. He did his bending moments and all that and he notched these 6" x 2"s or 6" x 3"s over each of the steel beams. Of course it made a weak corner in the timber and they all split so the roof, once it started to get buried, started to break quite easily. The chap that took over from me did a really good job because they would hang down. He got just blocks of wood and he drove them in between the flanges of the steel and the wood, just to hold that piece up. That was a bit of a weakness in it, but the rest I think worked quite well. I do not know how long they designed for; seven years? Something like that. It lasted quite well apart from that.

Disc 1 [0:42:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was it like to live in, when you finally started using it properly?*

Disc 1 [0:42:41] John Gallsworthy: Well originally, when we started the build, we did the kitchen, dining room. There was an office and an entrance hall initially, and we all lived up in the loft. Another chap, Tony Baker, who had been down before, he set it up in the loft. We each had an 8-foot bay. He got up there and because he had been there before, he knew the set up, and he got the paper from the mattresses, the carded paper, and he divided it up between each bay, so you had a paper wall between each of us, which actually made it quite private. So we had our Lilos. We each had this 8-foot bay as our bunkroom for a long time. Then because some people went to bed earlier and some stayed up later, I think about ten o'clock we had to put the record player off and try to be quiet. Then we just lived up in the loft. The table was some of the doors we had not put on, on packing cases. I guess it was fairly rough living because we did not have any facilities there really. That was why we used to go down to the old base every ten days to have a shower and a bit of a change. I think we probably did laundry as well. That was during that time. It was quite rough living but it was fine. It was warm in there and we worked away.

Disc 1 [0:44:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about the 'Black Gang'. I may be getting a bit mixed up. There was a 'Black Hand Gang' and a 'Black Gang'.*

Disc 1 [0:44:19] John Gallsworthy: It is the same thing.

Disc 1 [0:44:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *Right. So who are the Black Hand Gang?*

Disc 1 [0:44:24] John Gallsworthy: The Black Gang were the mechanics, basically. They were the mechanics.

Disc 1 [0:44:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *They had oily hands then?*

Disc 1 [0:44:29] John Gallsworthy: That is it. They were the dirty men; not like us carpenters with clean wood.

Disc 1 [0:44:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *Right, so you were not part of the Black Hand Gang, then?*

Disc 1 [0:44:38] John Gallsworthy: Not in itself no. The only reason we were part of it was ... Well what happened was: there was no carpenter's shop allowed in the garage. So plying Dad Etchells with gin, he let us have two bays of the garage, as a carpenters' shop, because we really needed one to start with. So then because we were practical people, the support people, you tend to stick together a little bit. So we had the workshop there. Then for another bottle of gin, Dave Hill and I, we were stealing stuff from the old base, we built an office for them. So we had this office at the end of the garage. It became their office and a meeting place and it came to be known as 'down with the Black Gang'. Other people used to come in. It was not only the mechanicky, builder type people. It was not like you couldn't go anywhere else but people did sort of tend to stick together, The office people, the met men and those people, they had an office, the whole block at the end, so they sort of stuck together and we sort of stuck together.

Disc 1 [0:46:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *It wasn't cliquey?*

Disc 1 [0:46:12] John Gallsworthy: Oh no, it wasn't clique-y. No not at all. That was the Black Gang. We stuck together. We were just known as the Black Gang,

Disc 1 [0:46:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were they rebellious?*

Disc 1 [0:46:22] John Gallsworthy: No no, of course not. Come on, please! Not a bit of it. It was all very friendly, very friendly indeed.

Disc 1 [0:46:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *By the time you had finished taking stuff from the previous base, what was left of it down below? Was it all recycled?*

Disc 1 [0:46:43] John Gallsworthy: No, none of it. None of it was recycled at all.

Disc 1 [0:46:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were taking stuff for raw materials, weren't you?*

Disc 1 [0:46:51] John Gallsworthy: Yes. We just took what we needed. One of the other jobs we did was the garage ramp. As it got buried, the base, to get the vehicles in and out of the garage there was a ramp. We used to build snow walls. The bulldozer would bulldoze it out from the ground up to about roof level, so that was ten feet say, 10ft of accumulation, to get the vehicles up. We used to hang tarpaulins down to try and stop it. As it got deeper, we had to make the ramp longer. So then I used to build snow-block walls. But then we needed heavy timbers across the top to support a roof. Then we would go and get the old material from the old base to form a roof over it to try and stop the snow coming in. So gradually we would build the roof up and the ramp got longer. So a lot of the material from the old base was used as roofing for the ramp.

Disc 1 [0:47:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you were building a sloping tunnel?*

Disc 1 [0:47:56] John Gallsworthy: A sloping tunnel, yes.

Disc 1 [0:47:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *But if I went down now, to where the old base had been, would I find anything left of it at all?*

Disc 1 [0:48:04] John Gallsworthy: Well it might well be out at sea, because when I went down one of the other trips, one of the other bases, you could see it coming out of the ice cliffs. The ice is always moving out to sea. So it probably would have gone to sea by now, in an iceberg somewhere. All the stuff that was useable was saved, but the construction and the rest of the building was not. You could not get it out anyway. I mean you had a six foot square shaft that was not very straight to get it out of.

Disc 1 [0:48:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *And did you see this kind of profile of the building sticking out of the ice cliffs?*

Disc 1 [0:48:43] John Gallsworthy: Yes. The end of the building was hanging out. I just about remember that.

Disc 1 [0:48:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *When was that, roughly?*

Disc 1 [0:48:48] John Gallsworthy: It must have been when I went down to do Halley V, I would have thought.

Disc 1 [0:49:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *In the '80s?*

Disc 1 [0:49:05] John Gallsworthy: Yes. I think we had to move the ship because the cliffs were all breaking up, because Halley Bay broke up while we were there. That was how Halley Bay got its name. That is why it is now only Halley instead of Halley Bay. So they had to move round to what they called the Third Chip, which was further round the coast, so probably we went in and I saw the base coming out. Just those few hours, probably more hours than anything. We had to move the ship round so I probably never saw it again, but it was coming out of the ice.

Disc 1 [0:49:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Tell me about 'Golly's Folly'. Everybody mentions Golly's Folly. I have no idea what they are talking about.*

Disc 1 [0:49:51] John Gallsworthy: Well I think that is quite a pride of mine. It was a Rollalong caravan caboose which was just used, one of these things which I mentioned earlier, it was a kitchen; it was used as that. When we did the big field trips the experienced people before ... With the tractors you can keep going. You do not have to stop. Rather than camp, we would drive for 12 hours or whatever, all sorts of silly hours. Rather than keep stopping and camping, it was decided to convert one of these Rollalong caravans into a caravan to live in, with bunks.

Disc 1 [0:50:36] John Gallsworthy: So I converted it into a 6-berth caravan, and across the back were three bunks about 2 foot apart, something like that. There were seats each side which formed a bunk (that's five) and then one bunk was high up so you sat underneath. So that was the six of us in it that could sleep in it. I built it with quite a lot of thought. There was a kitchen in it. Quite a lot of thought and design went into doing it. Anyway we used it really successfully. It got the name 'Golly's Folly' because it was this folly that I had been doing and it was used very successfully and it is still being used after all these years. I think now it is in the Falklands. I think it came up to the Falklands four years ago. People say 'I stayed in Golly's Folly' and I am really quite proud that it has lasted so long and been quite a feature of the place. It is quite an achievement I think really.

Disc 1 [0:51:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was it like to look at? Did it resemble a gypsy caravan or just a box on wheels?*

Disc 1 [0:51:51] John Gallsworthy: No it is a box on a sledge. You know the square profile, corrugated iron shape, that is what it was, with a flat roof. Just a box really. We put it on a sledge. Of course there is no suspension in it and when we were travelling – we used to drive 12-hour shifts when we went out on these big field trips – if you are in bed, and my bunk was right at the bottom, and if you were travelling the thing used to climb up over the sastrugi and then drop the sledge. It used to fling you up and you would hit the bunk above you. You would think 'That was a big one.' and turn over and go back to sleep again. Yes, it really worked well. We could just keep travelling. We used to stop for an hour on the trips, change drivers and get something to eat. One driver was having breakfast and one driver was having his evening meal. As I say, it really worked well and I understand it is in the Falklands now.

Disc 1 [0:52:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *So it never came to grief? It never went down a crevasse, tipped over?*

Disc 1 [0:53:00] John Gallsworthy: No. I have got a feeling somebody said they found it. It might have been put away from base as a depot. Whether somebody left the door open or something, I think it got filled up with snow some time but I am not sure about that. I have got a feeling it did. It got used an awful lot as a field base. It was put out so people could use it while they were working away from base.

Disc 1 [0:53:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Where did you get your raw materials from for that?*

Disc 1 [0:53:30] John Gallsworthy: Probably part of the old base and stuff that we had around as well. There was a certain amount of material there anyway. We were not completely devoid.

Disc 1 [0:53:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *How far did Golly's Folly go? Did it get as far as the Shackletons?*

Disc 1 [0:53:47] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes, it went to the Shackletons, the longest trip. Yes, that is another thing. That trip was the longest one we have ever done unsupported, that BAS has done. It went right to the Shackletons with us, yes.

Disc 1 [0:54:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you on that trip?*

Disc 1 [0:54:02] John Gallsworthy: Yes I was.

Disc 1 [0:54:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about that.*

Disc 1 [0:54:04] John Gallsworthy: Well I was lucky in that with my job I did not have a programme to do exactly, whereas the scientists had a programme they had to follow. They couldn't not do it. Also, doing two years (because I was doing a second year) I could stay out over the relief season. So I went out with the tractors to start with. I actually built a dog kennel as well because Dad Etchells, who was well experienced in field travel, used to tow the dogs before. They used to run behind the tractors. Of course that meant they had to stop every few hours. So I actually built a dog kennel out of dunnage from the ship, the old dunnage to put between the oil drums. So all the dogs were then in kennels, and so we could then just travel. We used to travel until we decided to stop. It could be 12 hours, 14 hours sometimes. We just did it.

Disc 1 [0:55:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *So the kennels were on sledges were they?*

Disc 1 [0:55:11] John Gallsworthy: The kennels were on sledges, yes.

Disc 1 [0:55:13] Chris Eldon Lee: *The dogs were in there having a ride?*

Disc 1 [0:55:14] John Gallsworthy: The dogs were having a ride, yes. We put netting over the top but that did not work. They would sit there and look out and think 'This is a good deal.' Anyway we did a trip out and there was a group of people out there already that had been taken out on the first trip, geologists and surveyors. They were taken out. Then the tractors came back and they picked me up and we went out with dogs. We were trying to get to the Shackleton Mountains. Nobody had really been there before, so we were doing a lot of surveying to get round the Slessor Glacier. But we had to go up the Beardmore Glacier. I might have got that wrong. It had never been done and we had to double-haul the tractors up there because sometimes you would look out and you did not know if you were moving, actually look out of a tractor and see if you were actually moving.

Disc 1 [0:56:06] John Gallsworthy: But in the end we used to put two tractors on one sledge. We got up the Beardmore Glacier. We had to leave sledges behind. Then Dad Etchells and I were relaying them. We went back and relayed them; went back on

again while the others were continuing on. So we did that and while we were doing it, we were driving along, Dad Etchells and I. We used to say 'When shall we stop?' 'What time shall we get up?' 'What is the time now?' It did not matter because it was daylight. 'How many hours do you want in bed? Eight?' 'Make it ten. We have had a long day.' We were in bed one day and we heard an aeroplane. 'What is this going on?' and this aeroplane went over which was very unusual. It was only later we found out it was when ... John Brotherhood and another chap fell over the ice cliffs at Halley Bay. So the plane was going to pick him up.

Disc 1 [0:57:05] John Gallsworthy: But apparently at the same time Deception Island blew up, so they were all onto Ted Clapp in Stanley Office. They said 'Emergency! Emergency!' Ted Clapp said 'Get off the line. The doctor is on. We have got an emergency at Halley.' 'Yes, but Deception is blowing up. We have got an emergency here.' I think they were both going on at the same time. But we heard the plane which was very unusual. It was the one going to Halley to pick up Dr Brotherhood. So what happened: we drove the tractors down to our main depot where the tractors then had to turn back. Then four of us: Mike Skidmore, Pete Noble, Nick Mathys and myself stayed out with the dogs. We tried going round the glacier; we just had to go round the edge of it until we got so far. Then we were managing to get round it and poor old Mike Skidmore, the geologist, had not seen a rock. So we tried to get him to the mountains, him and Pete Noble.

Disc 1 [0:58:21] John Gallsworthy: They went south. We relayed for them until we had to turn back. Then we turned back. Then we had to wait because we wanted to wait, to be as near to them as possible in case anything happened. So we had ten days, something like that, just to wait and you are in the middle of nowhere. What do you do? 'I think I will build a cairn so they can find their way back.' I built this enormous cairn. It was 10 foot square at the bottom and 12 feet high. It stood out like a sore thumb and when they were coming back, they said they could see this darned thing. 'What the devil is that?' What we did was: when they were coming back, Nick and I then headed ... We had done two sides of a triangle by this time. So we then headed back to the top of the crossing zone, what they called '01'. So we just did a bearing for that.

Disc 1 [0:59:16] John Gallsworthy: We did 50 miles across country; nobody had done it before. Then when Pete and Mike were there we turned round. We had run out of supplies. That was as far as we could go anyway. So we turned and came back and we all met up and then we sledged back to base getting back late. The following year when we went out, Norris Riley the surveyor, who was doing our navigating, when we were at '01' he said 'Right, go that way.' So away we went. Then every now and again he would do a sun shot. And he said 'Just tweak the left hand lever a bit. We've tracked east of here. Just tweak the lever and keep going.' Anyway we stopped after 200 miles and in the morning we got up and somebody said 'I can see a cairn over there.' and in 200 miles down and 50 miles up we had missed by half a mile or something like that. Fantastic, and we were doing it just with a prismatic compass. ?? [incomprehensible] and then we went back to this base and continued on from there.

Disc 1 [1:00:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you involved at all in the Brotherhood episode?*

Disc 1 [1:00:24] John Gallsworthy: No, I wasn't.

Disc 1 [1:00:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *Because you were away from base?*

Disc 1 [1:00:26] John Gallsworthy: I was away from base at the time. No, I had nothing to do with that. It was only really when we got back, because radio communication with us in the field was quite difficult at that time. We all had to learn Morse code to a certain extent. I am not quite sure if we knew something had happened or not until we got back to base, but I certainly had nothing to do with it, no.

Disc 1 [1:00:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. There was another tragedy we mentioned earlier.*

Disc 1 [1:01:00] John Gallsworthy: Neville Mann?

Disc 1 [1:01:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you around for that?*

Disc 1 [1:01:03] John Gallsworthy: No I was not there again, but during my time in the Falklands, as I said earlier, I got to know a lot of the people who were coming through, and Neville Mann, I got to know him quite well because he must have been up and down a few times. He got quite friendly with one of the girls in the Falklands. Then we heard that him and his dog team were lost. So when I went South, they had actually built a memorial to the people on a sledge. They brought rocks from somewhere and built a memorial on a sledge which they used to move around so it did not get lost.

Disc 1 [1:01:42] John Gallsworthy: This girl said would I take a wreath down for him, which I did. I took this wreath down and put it on the monument. That was really touching to do that, but it is nice to know that the people are still remembered. I think the monument is still there too. Which almost brings me to one of my most frightening times down there. During the first summer we were building, but to give us a bit of a break some of the dog people were going out onto the sea ice and shooting seal and then bringing them back with the dogs. To give us a run out, a day off from work, they would take us out sometimes. We went out with a chap. I am not saying any names but he should have known what he was doing As you go off Halley Bay, the cliffs, the snow blows off the top, and if it starts to blow off at about 20 knots, then you think 'No, it is not time to go on the sea ice.'

Disc 1 [1:02:48] John Gallsworthy: Anyway we went on the sea ice. He said 'That's all right. I will set the compass.' I think they were about 5 miles out. Anyway he set the compass and away we went, loaded the seal, and when we came back we could not see the darned cliffs and we could not see the tracks either. I was terrified, knowing Neville Mann had got lost. You have got a very small gap to hit because the cliffs are 80 feet high so you have got this small slope to get up and I was terrified there for a while. Luckily we picked the dog tracks up because people had been in and out. Luckily we picked the dog tracks up and then we were fine and we were away up. But that was a big learning lesson. Do not go on the sea ice when the drift is going over the edge. I think that was probably my most frightening time in a way.

Disc 1 [1:03:36] Chris Eldon Lee: *So in those days there was no kind of ...? It was not forbidden to do that kind of thing? There were no written down rules about where you can and cannot go?*

Disc 1 [1:03:42] John Gallsworthy: No.

Disc 1 [1:03:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *Which there would be today?*

Disc 1 [1:03:44] John Gallsworthy: I guess so. They needed the seals for the dogs, so somebody went out and shot the seal and brought them back to feed the dogs. Yes, that was frightening.

Disc 1 [1:03:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *I am not surprised. You did a third summer at Halley. Is that right?*

Disc 1 [1:04:05] John Gallsworthy: Yes.

Disc 1 [1:04:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *And then found yourself at South Georgia? We will perhaps talk about that in a moment.*

Disc 1 [1:04:10] John Gallsworthy: OK. Right.

Disc 1 [1:04:12] [End of Part One]

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is John 'Golly' Gallsworthy recorded by Chris Eldon Lee on the 17th of June 2011. John Gallsworthy, Part Two.*

Disc 2 [0:00:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *You called at South Georgia on the way back from your term at Halley. Was that for a particular purpose and what did you make of the place?*

Disc 2 [0:00:20] John Gallsworthy: That's right. When we went South first, we actually called in to South Georgia, on the way down. Unfortunately the whaling had finished then, so I never ever saw the whaling, but the station was still in quite good order and I think with a little bit of effort it could have been up and running. I went to Halley and when we came back, the Government had decided to pull out of South Georgia. There was no whaling so the administration was being moved. I do not know the ins and outs of it but anyway BAS were going to take it over. So that summer, Dave Hill went in with a group of people to start converting Shackleton House to suit BAS needs. So when I came up from Halley I then took over from him because he went down to Adelaide. I then continued at South Georgia for the rest of the summer, with two or three other people.

Disc 2 [0:01:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Doing what?*

Disc 2 [0:01:16] John Gallsworthy: We were converting Shackleton House into ... because it had a huge games room at the end of the building. So that was converted into offices basically. They had actually put up some aerials as well, which I was not concerned with. That was already finished, so it was finishing off the inside of

Shackleton House ready for BAS and the scientists to come in the following year. So I did that for the rest of that summer and then I went off to South America. I got off the ship in Montevideo and travelled round South America in which time I worked with the missionaries. I am not religious but I met these missionaries and I spent some time working with those which was really interesting.

Disc 2 [0:02:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well I had heard that John Gallsworthy ended up in a convent. Is that right?*

Disc 2 [0:02:04] John Gallsworthy: Well no, it was a mission station. They were really good people.

Disc 2 [0:02:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *How did you fall into that job?*

Disc 2 [0:02:12] John Gallsworthy: Partly through the Falklands because the Falklands in those days came under the Diocese of Argentina and again, the Falklands being such a small place, you got to know people. Our foreman at work was in fact a lay preacher. You would have never thought so but he was. So it was this tentative contact between the Falklands and Argentina really, and I got the name of this chap up in the north of the Argentine. Off I trotted expecting to go to a church but I ended up in this mission station which was quite difficult. They were great people. I am not religious and I let them know I was not religious and we got on fine. I actually ended up building a lorry for them. They had a lorry, just a chassis, and so I built the back of it for them for general cargo. I did that for 3 months with them up there and then continued on round, and went up to Paraguay.

Disc 2 [0:03:07] John Gallsworthy: Then back to Montevideo to go South again. It was quite funny. I never had a contract again. There was a bit of a mess-up actually because a contract got sent from Rio to Montevideo I think, and I never caught up with it. Ricky Chinn, who was going to be base leader again at South Georgia, he was in the office saying 'Will he be there?' 'If Golly said he would be there, he will be there.' So when I got to Montevideo and I am there and Ricky walked through the square, I said 'Ricky!' His face lit up. 'You are back! You have made it!' Then we went down to South Georgia and took over from the Government. We had 18 months taking over from the Government, and a lot of alterations to the base. It was a big base to run. It was quite hard work actually. There was a lot to do for us and some of the equipment was not in too good a condition.

Disc 2 [0:04:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *I was going to ask you if it was pretty run down, by the time the Government finished with it.*

Disc 2 [0:04:13] John Gallsworthy: Some of it was. The mechanic, a chap called John Quigley, he was brilliant. He was very good. The engines that Dad Etchells looked after, they were fine, and the fridges. But it was a lot of the bits and pieces, like the cement mixer. A silly story: the cement mixer had a flat tyre. It took us all day to mend a puncture because the wheels would not go round. A lot of it was run down. I think they had let it go a little bit. It was just a big job and the changeover to what we wanted, from what the Government wanted was quite hard work again but it was a great place to be.

Disc 2 [0:04:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Why?*

Disc 2 [0:04:56] John Gallsworthy: South Georgia has always been a really popular place. From the days I lived in the Falklands, everybody wanted to go to South Georgia to work, despite the manager there: a chap called Coleman. Nobody liked Coleman; he was a bit like the 'king of South Georgia'. What he said, went. I think he could be bloody difficult too. 'King Coleman' they used to call him, but everybody wanted to go there. It was great: the skiing, the animals, bird life, and you could go hiking and get around. When I was there, in all the time I was there, we never did any big trips because we were confined to the station. We had not got the infrastructure to go too far. We went out and we went camping on the Barff Peninsula. We could get across there and go camping and reindeer hunting. The reindeer there, we used to go over and get those and then other bases wanted them. Once BAS was there, 'Well can you send us down reindeer?'

Disc 2 [0:06:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Some venison?*

Disc 2 [0:06:03] John Gallsworthy: Venison. We used to go shooting reindeer. Fortunately there was Owen Summers, who was the met man, a Falkland Islander. He was a young chap but he had lived on the farms and knew how to kill sheep and skin sheep and that. So he taught us all how to butcher the reindeer. So that was another string to my bow, butchering reindeer.

Disc 2 [0:06:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you imagine, as a carpenter signing up to go to the Antarctic, you might end up ...*

Disc 2 [0:06:32] John Gallsworthy: Not a bit. I mean it is amazing what you do. Another thing at South Georgia was tying the ships up. The ships all came in and we had to tie them up. You have just got to do it. I quite liked the boats as well; I used to run one of the boats around the bay, under Ricky's tuition. Ricky was an ex- Thames bargeman, training I think it was.

Disc 2 [0:06:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *How busy was South Georgia then? Was Grytviken still reasonably well-populated?*

Disc 2 [0:07:02] John Gallsworthy: No, no, it wasn't.

Disc 2 [0:07:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Deserted, was it?*

Disc 2 [0:07:04] John Gallsworthy: No. Well, yes, it was except that there were Thorsen and Louis. Thorsen was a Norwegian man who had been there for 30 years I think, as storeman. He worked like hell there. Him and Louis stayed. The story I think was that, the Russians ... We used to get Russian ships coming in to take on water, because everybody wanted South Georgia water – it was so good. They would bring the Russian trawlers in, give them a run ashore. What I think was: the Russians were looking for a base in the South Atlantic, and they were looking at South Georgia to have a base for summer use. Thorsen was going to be showing them round I think.

Disc 2 [0:07:50] John Gallsworthy: But the Russians never ... So the *Biscoe* came in, and left, left Thorsen and Louis there because the Russians were going to come in. He

was going to show them round, and they were then going to take them back to South America, but the Russians never came, so these two got stuck for the winter. So we had two Robinson Crusoe's with us for the winter, which worked fine. Thorsen, in the end, went and lived on his own over in the whaling station. I don't think he could put up with us youngsters, but they worked like hell on the boats and paint the boats and keep them going, turn the engines over. The boats ?? [incomprehensible] I am sure they would have gone; they would have started up (well they did). They kept them in really good nick.

Disc 2 [0:08:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *So the population of South Georgia in the immediate post- government period, when BAS took over the base, it was simply the one building? Nearly everybody lived in that one building?*

Disc 2 [0:08:46] John Gallsworthy: What happened was: the Government left. So there were all the Government houses, but we lived in Shackleton House which was built for the single men of South Georgia. So we all lived in there. Then the houses were turned into ... One of them we turned into the met office and of course that created a lot of work for me to build benches and stuff. One of the other ones was turned into more of a science thing but of course these scientists, all of a sudden, had all these buildings they could use. They went empire building. 'Ah we need a whole house. We can't have one little office.' There were ten of us, then Louis and Thorsen, twelve altogether there for the winter. So we worked and did things. Dave Walton was with us; that was his first trip South, who became an international star of botany in the world, and other people. Other little things that are funny with BAS. They had a chap called Clive Stevenson. We used to call him 'Ents' because he was our entertainment officer.

Disc 2 [0:10:01] John Gallsworthy: This is one of the silly things he did South. His sister had a birthday. We said 'You are going to send her some flowers, aren't you?' 'Oh no' he said ' No I am not.' 'You have got to send your sister flowers.' 'No you send them.' 'Well OK then.' He did not have a sister at all, not at all.' So Dad Etchells and I sent a cauliflower through Interflora, and apparently it all came crimped nicely, all beautifully done. The next day we sent her a bunch of flowers. This is the daft thing you do. We had no idea who the girl was. We met her later, in actual fact. She took it all in good part.

Disc 2 [0:10:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *So how did you contact Interflora in 1970 from South Georgia?*

Disc 2 [0:10:43] John Gallsworthy: Well it was all Morse coded to the Falklands, and then the girls there would type it up on airmail letters and sent it off. Well I am not sure how it went from the Falklands. Our air letters were all typed. I think they probably sent it airmail. Probably an airmail letter.

Disc 2 [0:11:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *And money would disappear from your account?*

Disc 2 [0:11:08] John Gallsworthy: That is it, We did not worry about that too much, provided the money went.

Disc 2 [0:11:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *I think you went to South Georgia on the way back from Halley.*

Disc 2 [0:11:21] John Gallsworthy: No, I had a summer.

Disc 2 [0:11:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *They took you back for the summer? OK. Then you came home again via Ushuaia.*

Disc 2 [0:11:28] John Gallsworthy: Then I came home.

Disc 2 [0:11:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *And you thought you had finished with BAS but you had not?*

Disc 2 [0:11:31] John Gallsworthy: No, I had not given up BAS but I had been out of England then for five years. I got back to Southampton and Bill Sloman was there.

Disc 2 [0:11:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *This time you did have a Bill Sloman interview?*

Disc 2 [0:11:44] John Gallsworthy: I did have a Bill Sloman one then. He said 'Now then Golly, you are just the chap I want to see.' 'Oh what have I done?' No, Bill was a great bloke. He was magic. 'We are building at Stonington.' That is another place down the Peninsula that people wanted to go. 'OK Bill, I will go!' 'Well let me know.' 'No, put me down. I will go.' He was really good because everybody got enthusiastic and then they would get home and meet a girlfriend or back into their life and then 'I don't think I will go.' But I knew I would go. 'No, I will go Bill.' 'All right, let me know then.' Anyway I got home; my dad had died a few years before, so it was just my mum. I had not got the heart to tell her I was off again in a few months. Anyway when sufficient time had gone by, I said 'I am going back South again. I am going to Stonington.' So at the end of that year again – I had a few months at home – and then I went off down to Stonington. I stopped at Signy on the way.

Disc 2 [0:12:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *How was the maternal reaction?*

Disc 2 [0:12:47] John Gallsworthy: From my mother? Oh she thought I was nuts. 'What do you want to go and lock yourself away down there for?' She thought I was nuts doing it really. You are down there. You are with a few chaps.

Disc 2 [0:13:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *But she did not kick up a fuss?*

Disc 2 [0:13:05] John Gallsworthy: Oh no. She was fine. She just thought I was nuts shutting myself away for another few months.

Disc 2 [0:13:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *So Bill organised you to go to Stonington. What year would that be? This was summer only?*

Disc 2 [0:13:22] John Gallsworthy: Yes, it was a summer job.

Disc 2 [0:13:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *What were you doing at Stonington?*

Disc 2 [0:13:26] John Gallsworthy: The base was a big dog base. A lot of people there and the base really was not big enough. So we put a huge extension on, a big double-storey extension on the end of it. There were three of us went down to do that. Because it was quite far south, we actually stopped on the way down. We went to Argentine Islands and put some buildings up. We put a store hut and an extension to the balloon shed for making the gas for the balloon's hydrogen shed. I think we went from there straight down to Stonington. So we put the building up through the summer. One chap stayed down and I came out.

Disc 2 [0:14:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *This was your first time down Marguerite Bay, on the west coast?*

Disc 2 [0:14:29] John Gallsworthy: Yes.

Disc 2 [0:14:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me what you felt about the relationship between what you were seeing now, on the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, and what you experienced at Halley. Was it completely different worlds?*

Disc 2 [0:14:38] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes, and it was quite different with the people as well, because with Halley Bay, the ships used to go in later, and the *Perla Dan* and the *Kista Dan* prior to that, used to leave England later and so only the Halley Bay people would be on it, in the main. The Peninsula people had gone earlier and so they were all scattered round, changing around the bases. People swapped around bases, if they did two years. So the Halley Bay people were quite out on a limb on their own and were not really known by the Peninsula people, but that did change as time went on, and so you did get to know other people. So you were in a slightly different world, being ...

Disc 2 [0:15:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Second class citizens?*

Disc 2 [0:15:28] John Gallsworthy: That depended which side of the coin you were talking about. If you were at Halley Bay, you were definitely first class. If you were Peninsula, you were definitely first class. The Stonington people thought they were a cut above everybody. They were big dog people. There were some good dog people down there. They spent their lives travelling, down there. They were almost a little group of their own, the Stonington people as well. Everybody wanted to go to Stonington; that was another place.

Disc 2 [0:16:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Because of the dogs?*

Disc 2 [0:16:02] John Gallsworthy: Because of the dogs, the travelling. But Argentine Islands was nice; that was a good base.

Disc 2 [0:16:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was good about Argentine Islands?*

Disc 2 [0:16:10] John Gallsworthy: The scenery round there is just fantastic, and it is fairly land-locked. So the sea was calm and we had canoes, and you could go canoeing round the icebergs and stuff. But the base was really well-run. Bases go through periods of good and bad, but generally good. Stonington went through a bit of a bad patch at one time. But Argentine Islands, the chaps were really really proud of

it. If you were on the ship and you were going to Argentine Islands, you would say 'Ah, I had better dress up, better put a suit on.' Because the Argentine Islands people would all come on the ship dressed up, and the base was spotless. They would have it spotless. After relief, with cardboard and mess, they used to actually go up the jetty and around with a magnet on a string and pick up all the nails and that. The place was immaculate there, for a good few years, and it was just a good place to be. We had some good fun there. The weather was generally a lot better because you were quite well north too. That was a good base, a good crowd of people.

Disc 2 [0:17:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were building at Argentine Islands as well, weren't you?*

Disc 2 [0:17:21] John Gallsworthy: Yes.

Disc 2 [0:17:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *What were you doing there?*

Disc 2 [0:17:23] John Gallsworthy: That is where I put the store-shed; Signy was the generator shed. I think that must have been from the Armco that came up from Halley, after the Armco base, because I had just summered there. Then I came up and then I finished a summer at Signy with Jack Temple, who unfortunately has just died. I helped him and his mate and we built the genny shed at Signy that year, or for the rest of the year.

Disc 2 [0:17:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *So let us go back to Halley, then, and the Armco Halley, which was Halley-IV, III?*

Disc 2 [0:18:02] John Gallsworthy: Three.

Disc 2 [0:18:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was your experience of doing the Armco work? This was Big Al's idea for these motorway tubes, effectively, motorway subway tubes. Did that work OK?*

Disc 2 [0:18:17] John Gallsworthy: I think they worked quite well, in fact. It was quite hard work putting them together, because they are quite hefty chunks of corrugated steel, and we actually had a ... Well Dad Etchells made a sort of a crane on the front of one of the tractors, to lift them up. So we built the tubes first, and then had to blank the ends off. Then we built huts inside and there was a sort of steel grillage framework. The bottoms were round, so we had to build up this metal latticework base for the hut to sit on, and build the huts in there. I was just there for the summer. Basically we got as many of the tubes and the huts up as we could, and then it was left for a gang to do the ... But I think they were quite successful. The next time they did wooden tubes, which I did not have anything to do with. I do not think they worked too well. The interlocking did not work as well as was hoped, I think.

Disc 2 [0:19:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about Big Al, and the other building guy you must have come across was Jim Shirtcliffe?*

Disc 2 [0:19:25] John Gallsworthy: Oh, yes. I know Jim. I knew Jim from the Falklands. I have known him for years and years.

Disc 2 [0:19:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about Big Al first of all, then. What were your feelings about him? This is Al Smith.*

Disc 2 [0:19:37] John Gallsworthy: Big Al, yes. He was a great bloke, both in size and ... Very enthusiastic. In all honesty I do not think he was all that good at looking after men. Because he drove himself, he did not give you breaks either. We all got on well together; it was fine. We all worked together. He was good, but I think he should have given us breaks, like having the day off and doing something different, or whatever. It would have been a little bit better, and even the last time I went down, to Halley V, Ben Hodges and I went down to the old base, but we had to do it at night. We had worked 12 hours; then we had to go and do it at night. I think just to have said 'You have been there before; you helped build it. Have half a day off?' For the other people as well. But otherwise he was fine. If I could fault him, that would be a little bit of a moan, if that is the right word.

Disc 2 [0:20:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *And Jim Shirtcliffe who you have known for donkey's years?*

Disc 2 [0:20:43] John Gallsworthy: Yes, I met Jim in the Falklands first. He came down with Ben Hodges. Ben was another chap that spent many years down. He came down and came back many years after he was meant to. They got a job in the Falklands building some houses. I met them in the Falklands while I was there. Then we wintered together. Yes, Jim is a chap that I got on well with. I still see him. We are still friendly. Send Christmas cards to each other. Yes, he was a another good fellow, yes.

Disc 2 [0:21:13] Chris Eldon Lee: *What finally brought you back north? Was there a point at which you felt your Antarctic time was drawing to a close?*

Disc 2 [0:21:22] John Gallsworthy: Let me just think how this worked. I came back and Aldabra was being run, which is in the Indian Ocean. It was going to be the American base for the Vietnam war, I think. They were going to flatten Aldabra and turn it into an airport, but then the scientists got there and decided it was of scientific interest.

Disc 2 [0:21:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was it called again?*

Disc 2 [0:21:59] John Gallsworthy: Aldabra. They needed people to go out there. I know it is not the Antarctic in the Indian Ocean, but you needed people who were used to going to odd places. So they got on to the Survey people. There is still the university link. People know what is going on. So they got on to the Antarctic people, and so Big Al, through a chap called Len Mole (he was another base leader down there), he got a job with the Aldabra people that were running it in England. Then they needed people to do it so Big Al went down to do the building, the initial building of the station. Then I came up from the bases and I was just at the right place at the right time. They needed somebody to go out as a manager to run the place. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time, so I got the job then to go to the Seychelles. So I went out there for 18 months. You think, I had just come from the Antarctic and I was in the taxi going from the airport into Mahé, and there were palm trees, and the sea. I thought 'Man, this is living!' The job: you put your bathing

costume on in the morning, and that was it. I think that was really what stopped me. That was the end of my Antarctic trips, apart from going down to Halley V later.

Disc 2 [0:23:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *And you worked also in Kenya and South Africa.*

Disc 2 [0:23:37] John Gallsworthy: Well yes, What happened was: one of the doctors from South was South African. He said 'Come and meet us.' So my air ticket from the Seychelles, from Kenya home. I thought 'That is silly.' This was how I took my chances, how I travelled in South America. So I said to the Seychelles people 'Can I go from South Africa? I will pay the difference in the air ticket.' It was next to nothing. I think it was the same anyway. So then I hitchhiked and bussed down through to South Africa. I was a year late getting home that time. So I ended up going down through Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and into South Africa. I went through Rhodesia during the war, which was quite interesting. While I was there, I met some people buying some curios and souvenirs to take into South Africa. I ended up going on a farm near Johannesburg and met this chap who was one of the main curio dealers and I ended up staying there. In the end I managed to get my visas and work permits. I went back to South Africa for 12 years. I travelled all round South Africa with a ten-ton lorry, about as big as a double-decker bus. It was set up like a warehouse. So I would go round all the outlets: Kruger Park, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, all over with this lorry, selling. I was basically a salesman. I lived on the lorry, had a cabin on it to live in. It was great.

Disc 2 [0:25:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you ever feel threatened at all in that time?*

Disc 2 [0:25:18] John Gallsworthy: No I didn't. It was before the trouble started, really. A lot of South Africans carry guns and this chap I worked for was a little bit of a gun man and he said to me about carrying a gun. I said 'Frank, if I have got to carry a gun, I am not here.' So it was fine and I used to park anywhere, down the roads between Johannesburg and Cape Town, I would just pull in laybys and park for the night. It was fine.

Disc 2 [0:25:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what dragged you back to the Antarctic in the era of Halley V?*

Disc 2 [0:25:53] John Gallsworthy: Knowing people. Basically people were looking for people to go South again and help with Halley V and I was still in the running. So I was contacted to go back down and help with Halley V.

Disc 2 [0:26:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this was a formal contact from BAS?*

Disc 2 [0:26:10] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes. Yes, it must have come through the grapevine. I was contacted to go back to Halley V again. So that was just being in the know, and so down I went. It was a difficult year that, I must admit. It was not as easy as it might have been. I went down initially to be just in charge of the carpenters but when I got there I ended up being in charge of the day shift. There were Army people there. I have never been in the Army. I had no idea about the Army, how they work, how they think. It is always quite difficult to be in charge. I was not really in charge, that was the trouble. It got thrust on me so it was quite difficult trying to do bits and pieces, and there were almost too many other people over me in charge. There was

Big Al and there was the surveyor for the company and there was another chap who was going to take over, and I tended to be a bit 'end of the line' with certain things.

Disc 2 [0:27:22] John Gallsworthy: We were trying to put these containers on, that was one of the things. It was a nightmare. I said 'You won't put them on like that.' They were trying to get them on too perfect, onto the building, onto the platform. They were really well-made, these containers, but they were trying to straighten them up too perfectly and it was never going to work. In the end I said to Big Al 'Look, I am having nothing to do with these containers. When they are straight, then I will carry on.' 'Just pull it this way.' 'Pull it that way.' Then they would go away and the ice moved them. By the time I went back 12 hours later and they would be different anyway. So it was a little bit difficult, but it was fun. It was not quite what I would have ... I am pleased I went. As I said, a lot of it was the Army. Now I am not knocking the Army, but they definitely think differently from an ordinary person. So that made it a bit difficult, their reaction. It was well worth going; an experience I would not have missed. But a little bit difficult.

Disc 2 [0:28:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *So was that an unhappy ending to your Antarctic relationship? That was the last time you worked there?*

Disc 2 [0:28:34] John Gallsworthy: I have been to South Georgia since. No I would not say it was an unhappy time at all. It went well; it was just a little difficult.

Disc 2 [0:28:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *Alright. Tell me about the model of Halley V that you built.*

Disc 2 [0:28:51] John Gallsworthy: Well, I am a good fiddler and I built a sledge at Halley, Blowing my own trumpet I think it is the best model sledge that I have seen, in actual fact. I still like fiddling. I still fiddle with stuff. They needed a model of Halley V being built so they got me to go up to Cambridge and work in one of the places to build this model which I think is still around somewhere.

Disc 2 [0:29:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was it in that showcase in the foyer at BAS now?*

Disc 2 [0:29:26] John Gallsworthy: I do not know where it is. I heard somewhere that it was put on show somewhere, so maybe it is. I really do not know, but it was interesting doing it, because I am a good fiddler to do it, and build it. Well if it is still going, it must have been quite successful really. It was an interesting thing to do.

Disc 2 [0:29:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well there is a model in the foyer at Cambridge now but I am not clear whether it is Halley V or a futuristic model of the next.*

Disc 2 [0:29:51] John Gallsworthy: Well, is it on legs? If it is on RSJ looking legs, metal legs, I guess it is it, yes. Yes, it must be it.

Disc 2 [0:29:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *Yours?*

Disc 2 [0:30:00] John Gallsworthy: Yes, I would think so in that case.³

Disc 2 [0:30:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well, the next one is on legs as well, isn't it? Number VI.*

Disc 2 [0:30:05] John Gallsworthy: Well, the next one is on feet more than legs. I saw a picture in the last BAS Magazine, and I think they were on more feet than legs.

Disc 2 [0:30:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Weatherhavens? I do not quite know what ... There is a note here about Weatherhavens.*

Disc 2 [0:30:21] John Gallsworthy: Ah yes. Now this is another little difference in the building. As I said earlier, when we did Grillage Village, we had two cabooses and the cooks put on primuses. When I went down with the Weatherhavens, they were already built, because we were the second year building Halley V. I think the Weatherhavens are Canadian Army tents, and I think BAS said to the Canadians, I guess, 'We need accommodation for 40 people.' and that is what they did. They supplied two tents for 40 people, with all the equipment. They were really well fitted out: the bathrooms and the toilets – the washrooms were really good. Allan Wearden was cooking down there. He had a really good kitchen.

Disc 2 [0:31:18] John Gallsworthy: In the past with BAS, there has always been a problem with power, not the power so much as the diesel to run the power. So it has always been a little bit short on power. As the years have gone on, it got better and they have got better methods of transporting it. What amazed me (because power is always short on bases really) ... What really tickled me: one of the first things I saw when I went in the Weatherhaven was a hot air hand dryer, and I thought 'I cannot believe it.' There was this darned hot air hand dryer. They were really good. They were double skin canvass: a material tent with a floor. The bunkrooms were set out, as I said the washrooms ... The other one had the kitchen and the lounge in it, and they worked really well, and they were comfortable to live in.

Disc 2 [0:32:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *How did they cope with high winds?*

Disc 2 [0:32:10] John Gallsworthy: They seemed fine, yes. I am not sure about the burying, because that is usually the problem at Halley, the weight of the snow on the top. At the end of the first year, when we went, they were fine, still out of the snow. I think they were used the next year as well and I am not sure whether they started to collapse with the snow weight on them. I was not there then but they were very good.

Disc 2 [0:32:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *There are a couple of stories from Dave Hill, which I am going to throw at you. One concerns Gorgonzola cheese. Do you know what I am talking about?*

Disc 2 [0:32:51] John Gallsworthy: I do indeed.

Disc 2 [0:32:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *'A strange smell in the bunkroom.'*

³ The model in the foyer at present is of Halley VI. A model of Halley V was made for BAS by 3D Services, Peterborough, in June 1999 and was used at an exhibition at the Royal Society in London, after which it was in the BAS foyer for several years.

Disc 2 [0:32:55] John Gallsworthy: Like I said from the word go, we met at Cambridge and we have always been pals. We shared a bunkroom, this was '67, and I had this Gorgonzola cheese given to me to take down, which I kept in the bunkroom, and I used to bring it out – just bits of it. I suppose over the time, it got riper and riper, and it gradually got smelling more like socks I guess. I was on the top bunk, so whether the smell got him a bit before me. That was certainly true, the story of the cheese, me and my Gorgonzola cheese that I had hidden in the bunkroom, which people enjoyed. They did not complain about the smell when I got it out.

Disc 2 [0:33:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *'One day I went in and Golly was already there, in the cupboard, on his hands and knees, in the wardrobe.'* That is how you were rumbled.

Disc 2 [0:33:53] John Gallsworthy: That's it. They found out what the smell was.

Disc 2 [0:33:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *There was an instance on the maiden voyage of the Bransfield, on her return to the UK, when you got sucked into the air conditioning?*

Disc 2 [0:34:02] John Gallsworthy: Oh yes. Dave and I, we ...

Disc 2 [0:34:04] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about that.*

Disc 2 [0:34:06] John Gallsworthy: Well, the *Bransfield*, the air conditioning was not quite good enough, so the engineers got Dave and I to build some ducting. Of course we had these great sheets of plywood and we were down in the engine room, and there was this huge fan going. Luckily it had got grilles over. We carried this board in and the fan sucked us, and we sort of ended up between the plywood and the fan, flattened against this blooming thing. Of course Fanny always makes a big story of it anyway, but it was quite funny. There we are: 'Get it off. Push it off,' I do not think we would have ended up chips, but we certainly ended up flat against this cowling for the fan, yes.

Disc 2 [0:35:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *What were you doing dressed as a Bunny Girl?*

Disc 2 [0:35:02] John Gallsworthy: Ah well, you see. People have been talking, haven't they?

Disc 2 [0:35:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *It is hardly the right temperature for a Bunny Girl, is it?*

Disc 2 [0:35:11] John Gallsworthy: No. The first winter we were there, it was in the days of the Bunny Girls and the main Hugh Hefner time. *Playboy*, obviously, was quite a popular magazine. Midwinter. Christmas was always a little bit of a non-event because it is the middle of the summer. We were always busy. There were a lot of people coming and going. But Midwinter, June 21st, which we are now celebrating, was the main party. The cooks would put on a really good spread. I thought to myself one day, 'How about if we dressed up as Bunny Girls and did the serving?' So I got a couple of other chaps to do it with me. We had this highly secret sewing Bunny costumes, making the ears and all that. Nobody knew. Only one chap walked in on us

one day and found out, but he was vey good. He did not say anything. So of course when we came out to serve the meal, we did not know what to put on our feet so we all had these big boots that we worked in. We had the ears and the cuffs. We cut out some material to make the costumes there, bust and all that. Well it went down really well. People kept playing with your tail. 'Get your hand off my tail.' But it was really good fun. It was fun making them. There was Bill somebody, one of the scientists⁴. We all mixed together. Bill, one of the scientists, did it. Who was the other one? Not Paul Coslett. I cannot remember.

Disc 2 [0:36:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *It does not matter.*

Disc 2 [0:36:54] John Gallsworthy: I selected the people through the base, and so it was really good fun.

Disc 2 [0:37:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *There is one little bit I have missed out here, which I think is quite important to talk about. This was when you went to South Georgia in the '90s, You were working with Ben Hodges and you actually – were you not helping to restore the whalers' church?*

Disc 2 [0:37:10] John Gallsworthy: That's right. I am a little bit out of date with BAS because it is a long time, but the whaling station now is such a tourist industry down there, that the whaling church has always been well looked after and the chap Tim Carr down there, with his wife, they did a lot of work. He was a shipwright, a very good builder anyway. He had done a lot of work on strengthening the church. Buildings tend to fall over so they needed somebody to re-roof it. So the South Georgia Government (by then) got together with Bob Burton who was running it and they needed someone to go down and re-roof the church. Again my name came forward. So I got the job to go down and then I needed people so in fact I got Ben to come as well. We were looking for somebody so I got Ben to come and a couple of others.

Disc 2 [0:38:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was it a big challenge to repair the church?*

Disc 2 [0:38:15] John Gallsworthy: It was, yes.

Disc 2 [0:38:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *In what respect?*

Disc 2 [0:38:17] John Gallsworthy: It is quite a big job and South Georgia is very windy, extremely windy. Luckily what made it easier: the Army were there still. It was the end of their time but they had scaffolding, so we were able to scaffold round the building and get up to the right height. But we still had no real materials. We had to make roof ladders out of stuff, but Tim had gone round to the other whaling stations and got lots of timbers to make the main beams that we needed to replace. So it was a question of stripping off the roof but with the wind and the weather, so that the wind and the rain did not get in. Or the wind does not get in and damage more to lift the roof off. So we had to try and work by stripping bays of the roof, then re-doing it. The ceilings from the inside were nailed to the beams that we had to take off, so we had to prop the ceiling up inside, so that did not all fall off. But you were quite high

⁴ Bill Laidlaw.

up. I do not worry about Health & Safety. I think Health & Safety is a bit crazy but we were up there. We made all these wooden ladders, and you are walking up the planks. South Georgia weather can be quite indifferent so you are working in quite awkward conditions. If the wind got too much, we just could not work, but fortunately we had work indoors or you could prepare things, but it went really well, in fact.

Disc 2 [0:39:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you restoring it to its original condition or just making it weatherproof?*

Disc 2 [0:40:03] John Gallsworthy: No. The Army had done quite a good job on saving the roof, really, some years before. I think they had done a saving job as much as they were able to with the lack of materials but we were trying to do a good replacement job for years to come on it. So we did as good a job as we could. A lot of the buildings had got felt roofs, so it was put back with felt; it was put back to its original design, how it looked in years gone by.

Disc 2 [0:40:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Who was paying the bill?*

Disc 2 [0:40:43] John Gallsworthy: The South Georgia Government footed the bill, a lot of it. A firm called Jotul supplied the paint (who had supplied it from Norway before). I think the Norwegian Government – there is quite a whaling interest still in Norway – I think they supplied money as well. Bob Burton is quite well-known down South, so he managed to scrounge us transport down on the tour ships, which was quite good. It was fun. We had to give a lecture, give a talk on it. As you are probably aware, I can chat away, so it was not too difficult.

Disc 2 [0:41:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was that the last time you were in the Antarctic?*

Disc 2 [0:41:29] John Gallsworthy: Yes it was.

Disc 2 [0:41:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *You have not been back since, in 20-odd years?*

Disc 2 [0:41:32] John Gallsworthy: No

Disc 2 [0:41:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you came back to Britain at the age of 50, I would guess, looking for a job?*

Disc 2 [0:41:40] John Gallsworthy: Not really. I think what really made me come back was: I was in South Africa basically and it was when things were changing, with the black government coming in. It was a world recession as well and doing curios, it was one of the last things people wanted to buy. So it was sort of going through a little bit of a bad patch. But really what brought me home was my mother. She was obviously getting older, and I had not lived in England for 40 years basically and I just thought I would like to come and spend time with my mother and live in England. That is what brought me back in the end. That was from Halley, in actual fact. I had come from Halley and I was in the Falklands and I was going to go to South America. Sally, my present girlfriend, phoned me and said ‘Look, your mum is not well. I think you had better come home.’ So I went home from the Falklands, from the Halley job. My mum in fact died just after I got home. That is what stopped me really because I had come home with Mum and then I had gone just or the summer to Halley. So I was

in England basically except I had done the Halley contract. So that was really it. Of course you get older and they do not want you any more. [Laughs]

Disc 2 [0:43:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you actually get gainful employment back in Britain?*

Disc 2 [0:43:12] John Gallsworthy: Yes, I did. When I was an apprentice, when I talked about this firm Munnions, there was another carpenter worked with me whose father owned a firm in the next village. He then took the firm over. I knew this firm Combers and I ended up working with them. I saw Steve. I think I was up the yard scrounging timber. He said 'We are working in your village.' 'OK, then.' I ended up going back with Combers and I have been there ever since, until I retired.

Disc 2 [0:43:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *How was that? Was it a bit of a comedown after the excitement of overseas travel? A carpenter back in your own ...*

Disc 2 [0:43:56] John Gallsworthy: It was. It was really difficult. South was definitely different. You are there and you are not your own boss exactly, because you are doing a job, but basically you are your own boss. It is different; it is just different. Then I went to South Africa and I was doing the curio selling, so I was in offices ...

Disc 2 [0:44:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *Is it the scale that is different? It is more parochial, more petty? Less challenging?*

Disc 2 [0:44:24] John Gallsworthy: I think a lot of it is more parochial. One of the things is: it is really difficult with the ex-patriates. It is the 'When I's. Have you heard that before? 'When I was here' 'When I was there.' You get that, and I bump into people and I am probably quite bad at it. It is really difficult not to say where you have been. When I came back, people would see me and say. 'Hello, where have you been, then?' 'Oh, I have just come back from the Antarctic.' 'Oh where's that? Is that where the polar bears are?' 'No, no, it is the penguins. It is South.' 'What are the women like?' 'No, there's no women.' 'What, no women?' Basically they had got you north or south of Brighton. There were not women. Then they said 'Did you see *Coronation Street* Saturday?' That was it. After mixing with all these people and an interesting life, it was quite a shock and working in England was quite difficult to start with, too. I have only realised over the years: you have got this lifestyle you have had for 40 years, and you come back and work on a building site in England, and it was quite difficult to get back into it.

Disc 2 [0:45:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *[inaudible]*

Disc 2 [0:45:48] John Gallsworthy: I guess it is sort of conditions in a way. You end up eating your sandwiches in somebody's garage. It was still building South, but here it was just different. We had a good job and you get into it. I worked in a lot of houses; nice people. But it was quite a shock, getting back into the English way of doing things, and I was a bit out of touch with what help people want and how they did it. It did not take long to get going again really, and I enjoyed it in the end. I really did enjoy what I did in the end. I still do little bits now with the firm.

Disc 2 [0:46:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *So looking back over the 71 years that you have been pottering round the planet, how highly does the Antarctic period rate in your scale of life experiences?*

Disc 2 [0:46:38] John Gallsworthy: Oh definitely at the top. The Falklands is very high as well. I had such a good time there. I have still got friends from there. I think with the Antarctic, again, it is such a different life. It is just a wonderful place to be. What is there and the animals, to be able to just see these things and work among them, live among them; the penguins, the seals, the icebergs, the scenery. It is just wonderful. I think it is the people you meet. As I said, like Dave Hill. I met him when I first went. Still really friendly with him. Dad Etchells, the three of us were particularly friendly together. But there are other people that I have known all those years. I would not say we are not quite so friendly with Dad, Fanny and I, but I am still equally friendly but we do not see as much of each other perhaps. So you have got this lifelong contact. What you have all done together.

Disc 2 [0:47:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *Shared experience?*

Disc 2 [0:47:54] John Gallsworthy: Shared experience, and of course the longer you are away and chat about him, the better it gets. The stories get longer. Girlfriends and wives go: 'Not again! I have heard that before.' But I think it is just such a good experience; the people I have met.

Disc 2 [0:48:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *You say you are out of touch with BAS but you get the Magazine. What do you make of BAS today?*

Disc 2 [0:48:23] John Gallsworthy: That's what I mean by out of touch, I do not really know what it must be like on the bases with the Health & Safety, the communications. When we did it, it was 100 words out, in Morse code; 200 words in, done through BAS Office with the girls. They used to say to my mum 'Don't put anything silly in the airletters, because everybody will read them.' Now it is instant communication. The other thing we have lost: if we went down on the *Biscoe*, various ships, you got to know people. You were with them for a month at least on a tiny ship. Now they fly in, and when you read the *Magazine*, it seems like the wintering people have a really good time together. I doubt it has changed an awful lot apart from the communication. They can be in touch with home.

Disc 2 [0:49:15] John Gallsworthy: I am not sure, I do not really know enough about it with the Health & Safety: what you can do, what you cannot do, where you can go. Things we probably did horrify people these days, leaping on and off the boats. Transfer; a raging sea, and we would be leaping off the boat into the launch hoping somebody caught you. I guess those days are well gone. I try to chat to people at these reunions like we are going to have tonight, to try and get a feel for what is going on, but it is quite difficult at the moment to know. I am not sure ... I think my age is against me now, anyway. I think there would be too much of an age gap. But I am not sure in a way, now, if I would want to go back again. I would like to go and see it again, possibly, see what it is like. But I think the working: what we did to what goes on now, I cannot really relate to it, because I do not really know enough of what is going on. There you are.

Disc 2 [0:50:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *John, thank you very much.*

Disc 2 [0:50:24] [End of Part Two]

ENDS

Snippets:

- Life in the Falkland Islands. Disc 1 [0:06:04]
- Fids in Stanley. Disc 1 [0:17:21]
- The John Biscoe in Southampton. Disc 1 [0:21:23]
- Sir Vivian Fuchs. Disc 1 [0:23:02]
- Building Halley V. Disc 1 [0:27:10]
- Taking the mickey out of the scientists. Disc 1 [0:31:09]
- The 'old base' (Halley I). Disc 1 [0:34:18]
- Problems of having a shower. Disc 1 [0:36:33]
- Cold in the dining room and kitchen. Disc 1 [0:37:44]
- A close encounter with paint tins. Disc 1 [0:39:35]
- The 'Black Gang'. Disc 1 [0:44:10]
- 'Golly's Folly'. Disc 1 [0:49:51]
- Deception and Brotherhood compete for radio time. Disc 1 [0:57:05]
- Neville Mann. Disc 1 [1:01:03]
- Work with missionaries. Disc 2 [0:02:02]
- Hunting reindeer and running boats at South Georgia. Disc 2 [0:06:03]
- A cauliflower for an invented sister. Disc 2 [0:10:01]
- Superiority of Stonington people. Disc 2 [0:15:28]
- Building Halley III. Disc 2 [0:18:17]
- Big Al. Disc 2 [0:19:37]
- Aldabra - great contrast with Antarctica. Disc 2 [0:21:59]
- Selling curios in South Africa. Disc 2 [0:23:37]
- A difficult time building Halley V. Disc 2 [0:26:10]
- Luxury of the Weatherhavens. Disc 2 [0:30:21]
- Gorgonzola cheese in the bunkroom. Disc 2 [0:32:55]
- Nearly sucked into an air conditioning duct. Disc 2 [0:34:06]
- A Bunny Girl at Halley. Disc 2 [0:35:00]
- Re-roofing the whalers' church at Grytviken. Disc 2 [0:37:10]
- Reflections on how BAS has changed. Disc 2 [0:48:23]