

ROGER WILLIAM TUFFT

Edited transcript of a recording of Roger Tufft, at his home in Plockton, Scotland, by Chris Eldon Lee on 12th April 2011; BAS Archives AD6/24/1/117. Transcribed by Stuart Lawrence on 20th August 2014.

[00.00.00] Chris: Roger Tufft, Part one.

[00.00.11] Roger: I don't know when or if I ever made a decision about specifically going to the Antarctic, but, I grew up being aware of stuff, you know. It is probable that it was through the tales from my father, Ronald?, he was an old boy of Edinburgh who was very well read and he was interested particularly in the Polar Regions. When I finished my National Service, I finished sometime in the early autumn; I had no idea where I wanted to go, it was as if everywhere I wanted to go I; and in the end there was nothing. I had an honours degree, but, I didn't fancy most of the things that were around, not that I was offered many, and the nearest I got to that was an interview as an economist with the National Coal Board, which at that time they had various people who would allocate suggestions. Whilst I was waiting to have an interview, which very relaxed in those days, I saw this advert in the *Times*, in the last months of my Army career, as I recall it, I..... (Roger who suffers from Parkinson's disease is temporarily unable to continue and is supported by his wife, Maud, with suggestions as to what he wanted to say), I am sorry...

[00.02.05] Chris: First of all Maud you are welcome to speak out that was fine, please speak out, and Roger don't you get upset.

[00.02.11] Maud: Is that all right, can you hear me?

[00.02.15] Chris: Yes please speak out that's fine.

[00.02.17] Roger: I was offered a chance as an economist with the National Coal Board, and I had heard nothing for that, and I was in the habit of going for the paper in the morning and buying the daily *Times*, and that was completely unsuccessful, and then out of the blue came an offer from the National Coal board saying, if I was interested, to come for an interview, which I did, and blow me, no sooner had that happened, than that I got a letter from the Crown Agents for the Colonies, as it was in those days. So I had two offers all at once! Finally the Coal Board made up their mind and said you can have the job. This put me in a completely invidious position because I didn't really want the job. (Combined laughter) However, I wrote to the Coal Board who replied by all means go, but, I think they thought it was a bit bad having the idea of going having had their personal interview and yet they knew nothing about it, so they said. Anyhow then there were further delays in the *Shackleton's*, the ship the *Shackleton*, departure. It got its anchor jammed. And so I came out of the Army at the end of August, and was finally sailing from the UK on Boxing Day, I think it was.

[00.03.56] Chris: What year was this Roger?

[00.04.11] Chris: 1953?

[00.04.13] Chris: 1954?

[00.04.15] Roger: 1954 yes.

[00.04.16] Chris: Can I take you back a little bit before we get to that point? What did you study at school, what were your special subjects at school?

[00.04.24] Roger: Well in the old fashioned days our headmaster was a great believer in doing basic subjects and four subjects you were considered you were doing very well for A level. I got history, English, economics and erm....

[00.04.45] Chris: Literature?

[00.04.47] Roger: (somewhat confused repeats himself).

[00.04.46] Chris: You took two of those subjects on the Aberystwyth University?

[00.04.58] Roger: Yes, yes.

[00.04.59] Chris: With literature?

[00.05.01] Roger: With literature, yes I think it was.

[00.05.02] Chris: So how were you thinking of becoming at the point, what was your intention?

[00.05.09] Roger: Well I had an interest in trees and in the Forestry Commission, as it was then, they were; I assumed that they would have economists working there and I went to see them as a development for my idea for a career. I had never done anything so I went there in desperation almost in the hope that they would have something for me. After all I told them of my interest in trees, but they said oh no, no but if anything comes along go and buy some more on the side. (Joint laughter) He was completely laid back and a complete waste of time. Anyhow we got to Admiralty Bay in the early New Year and that year the Base took delivery of a completely new hut, which was prefabricated, so there were four of us, I think. So we spent the whole of the year building the hut basically...

[00.06.35] Chris: That's Admiralty Bay?

[00.06.36] Roger: Admiralty Bay yes.

[00.06.28] Chris: Which according to my notes would have been 1956?

[00.06.42] Roger: That would be about right yes. It wasn't a particularly happy year...

[00.06.48] Chris: Why was that?

[00.06.51] Roger: Well did you know there was a drowning there...

[00.06.56] Chris: No I didn't. Can you tell me the story?

[00.07.00] Roger: Yes. It was the last trip of the Season when it was the standard procedure for the FIDS that were going back to the UK to have this farewell party on the *Shackleton* before they sailed away and of course inevitably there was too much to drink and afterwards all of the Base members had to go back to the Base, which was about 300 yards, I think, from the shore, maybe, it wasn't; it was a clear night and everything was OK and Eric Broom thought that all would be OK...

[00.08.10] Chris: Who was it?

[00.08.11] Roger: Eric Broom, he was a big chap and he was fussing about getting into the boat and messing about, and various people were talking, with nobody in command as it where, and the boat capsized and Ron Napier, who was the Base Leader, went overboard and was never seen again. So he died and took his place in Polar history. But, anyhow we had very little time because, as I say, we had to get the roof on as well and as fast as we could. So it was also a mild winter and the result was that the sea ice didn't form, at least not firm enough to sledge on. And so, when the ship was coming down again the following summer I applied to go to Hope Bay.

[00.09.32] Chris: Why do you think, apart from the death of Ron Napier, why do you think that Admiralty Bay was not a happy Base, was there something missing?

[00.09.38] Roger: I think there was yes. I think you were so locked in you see. There had been two, was it two, fatal accidents. There was Ron and then there was somebody who just sledged of a knife cut and he just died apparently. And then there was another one, but that was later. So I think there was to quantify; there was much more variety in Hope Bay to the south. For us at Admiralty Bay that year, we were just putting wood together, it was a pretty dull procedure...

[00.10.27] Chris: You were just building the hut?

[00.10.28] Roger: Yes just building the hut.

[00.10.30] Chris: So there were no trips out?

[00.10.31] Roger: None at all. There was no where to go.

[00.10.33] Chris: No. Did you have dogs at Admiralty Bay?

[00.10.35] Roger: We had one.

[00.10.37] Chris: Oh right, so there was a lack of dogs as well.

[00.10.39] Roger: There was a lack of dogs yes. It had been a bit intermittent over its history apparently, they had had dogs but they had found them at one of the other Bases and then they came back and so on. I don't know what happened after we left but I think it was just that they kept one or didn't have any. But as I say it was not happy.

[00.11.06] Chris: Do you sense that, you have worked on a Base with dogs and a Base with no dogs, Admiralty Bay and then Hope Bay which had its own Huskies. Do you sense a difference in the mood of those two types of Bases?

[00.11.17] Roger: I think so. I never went on any other Base so I can't really generalize really, but one of the things about Hope Bay, because of its position on the arm of the Peninsula, you; it was like having a *can opener* you could go down the coast and get away and there was Duse Bay (Editor's interpretation), about 20 miles down the coast and everybody used to enjoy going there because it was a good stretch of a sledge run and we were; you got away from whatever was going on at the Base. But, I can honestly say there was never ever the amount of quarrels, there was never anything, that I remember, that could compare with what had been going on at Admiralty Bay.

[00.12.10] Chris: Let's go back to the beginning a bit, if you don't mind Roger. You were born in Newport in Gwent in 1936 and you went to Aberystwyth University, but at some point in that time you must have become aware of the Antarctic. What was the first inkling that you had that such a place existed?

[00.12.25] Roger: Well I can't in all honesty say that I knew of it from the moment I was born.

[00.12.30] Chris: No, no.

[00.12.33] Roger: I was going to say that my father was a great reader and I got from him about Scott and what happened on his voyage. So it was a slow process I suppose you might say in that case. Until I came across this advert after I had left the forces having done my National Service, until I came across that advert I honestly didn't have a clue that there were people down there, who were meteorologists or surveyors or what.

[00.13.11] Chris: What was your National Service like Roger?

[00.13.13] Roger: Well, in comparison with my previous jobs, I quite enjoyed it. (Joint laughter) I was in the airborne unit and we were transferred to the Suez Canal which we were patrolling, so we had a job to do, you might say. We only worked half of the day and then we would be sun bathing in the afternoon...

[00.13.38] Chris: You were in the Parachute Regiment weren't you?

[00.13.41] Roger: Yes, yes.

[00.13.44] Chris: The Suez Crisis was a couple of years old by the time you got there.

[00.13.49] Roger: There was a Suez Crisis just as we got into; I remember I had a word with Hugh about this...

[00.13.57] Chris: Hugh Simpson?

[00.13.59] Roger: Hugh Simpson. Because I reckoned that the Suez Crisis was a waste of time, it served no purpose and Hugh disagreed with me. So we were obviously both at Hope Bay at that time. So, as I say, it was something that impinged on my life and it was something to follow out of curiosity, but, I had no real interest in it. My group was called up for the Crisis, so had it been a bit later or a bit earlier there is a good chance I would never have got to the Antarctic anyhow.

[00.14.42] Chris: Did you see any action in Suez?

[00.14.44] Roger: No. Well when you say action; we were at a big camp and it was when the crisis was rising. There were a number of occasions at the British Camps along the Suez Canal that people took a shot at them and one or two were killed in that way, it was never ending...

[00.15.09] Chris: Snipers?

[00.15.10] Roger: Snipers yes.

[00.15.11] Chris: And you jumped, did you make jumps?

[00.15.12] Roger: Yes, and we jumped at night in the course of the training in the UK. I quite liked jumps because you get the adrenalin kicks.

[00.15.25] Chris: So when you went for your interview with FIDS, do you think that that service in the Suez area helped you get the job?

[00.15.32] Roger: Yes there were quite a few Parachutists in FIDS. In fact one of the lads who had been a Parachutist in FIDS lived just down the road from me. The ship came in and brought us a full food supply and suddenly a voice would say; and I was out handling these crates at the time; and suddenly a voice said Bombardier Tuft I presume, (joint laughter) and it was one of the lads who had been with me in the Army and quite independently we had joined and got down to the Bases. This year the sledging was, by and large, fairly straight forward, we didn't go; we stayed on the sea ice which is safer you see.

[00.16.36] Chris: This is at Hope Bay that you are talking about?

[00.16.38] Roger: This is at Hope Bay yes.

[00.16.40] Chris: Tell me about some of your colleagues at Hope Bay, who was with you?

[00.16.44] Roger: There was some bloke I was serving with who was friends with me and there was Harry. Harry Dangerfield he was the radio operator and he was a great guy, he had this enormous sense of humour as well as being sensible and he was wont to produce spurious wireless information.

[00.17.06] Chris: How do you mean that Roger?

[00.17.07] Roger: Well, it was in the telling. He would come in and say that the *Shackleton* had sunk or something and as this was in our time, I think the *Shackleton* nearly sank after that! (Joint laughter)

[00.17.24] Chris: So what was he doing, was Hope Bay the centre for the radio communications at that time?

[00.17.27] Roger: I wouldn't say it was the centre but it had an unprecedented number of operators there. It was in the time of the International Geophysical Year at that time and Harry was released, rightly, to sort of cover the extra comms. He was short and he wore thick glasses and the whole thing about him was such as to make him a best friend and a very good wireless operator.

[00.18.02] Chris: So how did he wind people up, he went on air and...?

[00.18.08] Roger: Yes he had the radio shack which was his back room, part of the main shack; it was just a sort of appendage stuck on, and the schedule of messages used to come through either in Morse or occasionally in code and Harry just took them down; the rest of us didn't know what they were of course, and Harry would come out with something completely outrageous...

[00.18.34] Chris: Right so he would tell you personally, he wasn't broadcasting these fake messages he was just mentioning them on Base was he?

[00.18.42] Roger: Yes, yes.

[00.18.43] Chris: Oh I see OK. Now Hugh Simpson was there with you wasn't he as well, and you were helping Hugh with some of his experiments?

[00.18.50] Roger: Yes that's right.

[00.18.52] Chris: Will you tell me about that please?

[00.18.53] Roger: I don't really remember specifically what he was doing at that time.

[00.18.57] Chris: Well it doesn't matter, but over the period that you were with Hugh?

[00.19.02] Roger: He was into Biorhythms and he was measuring stress, he had two experiments going, one was stress over a period and then there were the Biorhythms which were stress over a shorter period over 24 hours he was taking. He was using this to see whether he could make me, what's the word...

[00.19.58] Chris: Correlation?

[00.20.00] Roger: Correlation is the word, yes. I erm...

[00.20.02] Chris: You were his guinea pig?

[00.20.05] Roger: I was his guinea pig, yes and I got my revenge by taking his blood from time to time. (Joint laughter)

[00.20.11] Chris: Tell me about what you had to do to be a guinea pig and what he did to you?

[00.20.15] Roger: Well basically...

[00.20.22] Maud: Urine samples.

[00.20.23] Roger: Urine samples were one he took. I don't know...

[00.20.26] Maud: Has another whispered suggestion about manual skills with ball bearings and things.

[00.20.29] Roger: Yes that was the later one. There were two or three. When I went to Spitzbergen with Hugh later we did a whole lot of this same sort of thing. I can remember one of the chaps looking over his shoulder, at Hope Bay, and seeing what experiments he was doing and this chap said it all sounds pretty esoteric stuff to me. (Chris laughing)

[00.21.00] Maud: Blood sample taking.

[00.21.04] Roger: Yes there was blood. He didn't take all that much blood if I remember right.

[00.21.10] Chris: So in order to test your Biorhythms he was taking blood and urine, was there any other experiment he was doing on you?

[00.21.17] Roger: He did...(Roger can't remember)

[00.21.29] Chris: If it's not going to come clear don't worry about it Roger.

[00.21.32] Roger: No it's not coming. Anyhow we went sledging down the coast and we were man hauling then so that he could measure the stress levels; that was one of the

journeys we took. We lost one set of his stuff when we had this big blow on Victory Glacier; that was a big one...

[00.22.20] Chris: When you say we lost his stuff do you mean his experimental data?

[00.22.22] Roger: His experimental data.

[00.22.24] Chris: It was blown away was it?

[00.22.25] Roger: Well we were; the Victory Glacier was discovered in the week of the victory in Europe (at the end of WWII, Editor); it is a very prominent glacier and also renowned for being very, very windy where the wind used to pile up and come hurtling down on to the tent, and we were camping, having been held up for bad weather for ages and we finally decided to have a go at crossing it. We normally kept to the sea (ice, Editor) but it was pretty thin and we got the tent up and so on, as we were short of daylight, just before dark. This was about ten o'clock and getting on for about twelve o'clock and the wind was starting to get up and I was in a tent with Dick Walcott and we were hanging onto the walls. Having realised this was going to be a real blow, having first put my windproofs on, I went outside and tried to put snow on the flaps. But as fast as I put it on the wind blew it away. Dick was still inside at this juncture, it having eased a little bit, asking what I was doing and I told him the tent was going to go any bloody minute. Oh he replied you are just fussing. Well the word were hardly out of his mouth when wham (Chris laughs) the pyramid tent, which has four supporting poles, two of the poles snapped, and it just went over like that, and I knew it was serious because we had two dog teams and we always staked them apart at night and our top dog, his picket was blown out and he slid down the glacier into the dog team staked below. All the dogs looked absolutely fed up, which was unusual because normally they would have had a wonderful fight with both teams going for each other, but both teams just sat looking miserable. When the morning came it looked a bit like a battlefield; Hugh lost an awful lot of his films and he lost some notes and things. So I volunteered to go down the glacier to see if I could pick up anything that was worth saving; so there was myself and Hugh and Dick Walcott and Lee Rice; so I got down to the foot of the glacier, which was quite crevassed, but there wasn't much that I could pick up, but, there were three boots and when I came up to the others, who had managed to resurrect the tent, I said there were three boots down there but one is obviously no good so I threw it away, but of course I had left myself with two odd ones! (Joint laughter)

[00.26.05] Chris: Did you ever get to View Point Hut?

[00.26.07] Roger: Yes.

[00.26.08] Chris: What was it like?

[00.26.09] Roger: It was nice; whenever I got out there. It was tiny and you could warm it up in no time, and there was a good supply of seal meat for the dogs. It was always inviting for something like a day out.

[00.26.22] Chris: You mean like a holiday chalet was it?

[00.26.24] Roger: Absolutely yes.

[00.26.26] Chris: Did it serve any practical purpose as well?

[00.26.28] Roger: Only if you got caught out in bad weather, then you had to be careful about whether to make the run across the bay. Just before I came down South, I don't know whether you know, somebody tried to get back home and made the mistake of pitching camp and the whole team went down and were lost, the whole lot.

[00.27.10] Chris: The dogs you mean?

[00.27.12] Roger: The dogs yes and the sledge, the sledge load the lot. It was out near the edge of the sea ice, by the tide crack, which is always a dangerous part. It shouldn't have happened, actually, but there you are. People when there is a reef: sometimes you get these tide cracks and there was another occasion, completely different in many respects. One of the factors of the high winds in Hope Bay, and sometimes the saving grace, was that they used to come down off the plateau gathering speed, but, they also gathered temperature, and by the time they hit the sea ice often you could, literally, see the wall of snow coming down. (Editor, as an early warning) I was out with Rod Simon?? On one occasion, the two of us, I think that was his name probably, the dog man, and we were stuck on the island and we couldn't believe it but we just had to wait for it to clear. Well it was perfectly obvious to everybody what we were doing; it was a pretty basic decision.

[00.28.30] Chris: Did you spend the night there on occasions?

[00.28.33] Roger: Yes, yes.

[00.28.34] Chris: In the hut?

[00.28.35] Roger: In the hut yes. There was generally a certain amount of fuel and food and stuff left behind there so you could stay without any discomfort. Oh what I was going so say about that particular occasion was that the temperature shot up and the wind swung round and was blowing parallel with the coast about 10 or 15 miles from View Point, and it was scouring the snow off the ice and it got so that we couldn't stand, not because the ice was so thin, but simply, that the wind would smooth the surface, and there was Mike Rueby and myself and I think with about four dogs or six, and we, were only about 5 or ten miles from the Base, but as soon as it got up the wind blew us off our feet. So we literally crawled along the route, and in the end we were out there and the idea was, we should have thought of this in the beginning, we just let the dogs off and it would have been easier than it was, because although we kept falling over it would have been nothing like as bad without trying to follow the dogs.

[00.30.08] Chris: So the dogs raced back to Base did they?

[00.30.09] Roger: They raced back to Base and were all waiting when we got there.

[00.33.14] Chris: Did you let them off one by one or as a group?

[00.30.15] Roger: As a group.

[00.30.16] Chris: So they were still tied together?

[00.30.17] Roger: They were let off as group, but, they were individual dogs when they left us and as they returned.

[00.30.25] Chris: They weren't still on their traces spanned together.

[00.30.30] Roger: Oh no, no, no.

[00.30.35] Chris: They were free to go, because I think the drowning of the team of dogs that you talked about at Hope Bay was when they escaped but were still joined by their traces to the span, so when they went over the edge into the water...

[00.30.47] Roger: Was it into the water?

[00.30.48] Chris: Yes they went into the water, I think so...

[00.30.49] Roger: I think, but, I wasn't there when the team went in, but I know one or two people who obviously didn't want to get involved with what happened, I think, oh it's impossible to speak with any authority.

[0031.03] Chris: This was Julian Taylor and Alan Precious of course.

[00.31.04] Roger: Yes, yes it was.

[00.31.06] Chris: That was right I remember the story. All right. We are darting about a bit but that fine. I want to ask you about one or two more of your colleagues; there was a chap called Fritz Koerner, tell me about him, he was memorable wasn't he?

[00.31.26] Roger: He was memorable and he was there the same year, but I think he must be dead, but I have got him in my diary, but there is no sign of it. But anyhow, Fritz was a funny chap and he was a long wordy chap with long wordy moans. He was a great runner and this was in the days of Chataway and people and he used to race against them. He was never in the top grade and he was never especially interested. He came down on FIDS as a; I don't know whether he had made up his mind before he came down or what, but he has these methods of doing Met Observer and he also, there were one or two minor glaciers around, and he also took measurements of the snow accumulation. When he got back, he was doing a degree at Birmingham University at that time, and he wrote up all his readings taken at the time and he finally got a glaciological PhD. He was a very strong runner and he liked to be organized as a person running or going for jolly, he

wasn't particularly worried otherwise as well as Donald McCalman who was Glaswegian, a Glasgow mathematician who, as a matter of principal, insisted on the logistics of any sledging you were on and being correct, so he wanted to know at any time; we had ten man boxes you know as the normal estimated transit weight, two manfood, and occasionally his path crossed with Fritz On this particular occasion, this was in the summer, and they were digging a pit and Fritz had already got his axe stuck in the pit by being down too far and he couldn't get it out...

[00.34.09] Chris: He had dug himself in too far in?

[00.34.10] Roger Yes, but we weren't particularly worried; but he had spiky hair and this long thin nose; I was camping nearby and I had heard a noise or something and I looked out and it was Fritz appearing over the horizon with frost all over him. This was the famous occasion when he was sharing the table with Don and Don, who could always tell you exactly how much sugar you had left and stack it in little cubes, and I don't suppose there was one chap in FIDS who ever bothered to count, but, we more or less had fruit salad on for pudding with sugar cubes on and if they ran out a few days early well tough nobody worried. But not so Don, Don wanted to know if that is the case, where is the case located, my name is Paduella , which is all a terrible tragedy really to pass the time and to eat more than you are supposed to. On this occasion Fritz had gone and put some sugar cubes in the cocoa and Don said I hope that you realize that you have done this and put the cocoa in now, you will have to take one out later in the day. Whereupon Fritz exploded tipped the remains into a box and said for God's sake Don and used the whole lot up in one go. But he could see the funny side of it. That was the saving grace with Fritz, but he could be very rude as well as also being very funny.

[00.36.15] Chris: Was he German?

[00.36.17] Roger: Somewhere along the lines yes, yes.

[00.36.20] Chris: Yes. There was another practical joke he played as well in an upside down position...

[00.36.24] Roger: Was this about the Argentineans?

[00.36.26] Chris: Tell me about that Roger?

[00.36.28] Roger: Well we had a relationship with the Argentineans down the road, down the coast, and they used to like come up and moan to us on a Saturday night and they had various films in English in their hut that they came up with often and we used to watch them, and these films, they were years old from the 1930s and they were absolute rubbish. (Joint laughter) But we used to get them and Fritz used to do this thing; when we could see them, coming from outside we could see them from about a mile or two, we were all busy outside because very often, by and large quite an unhappy lot the Argentines, but they didn't take to it well what their people, what they were doing as they were all people in the Army, from movements I think. Anyhow, Fritz's way was; we had

these big Milky Way sculptures, great big ones that we won and we would wait until they arrived and we would hang across the door, just inside the sledge store and he would hang upside down in the do or say nothing and then say these are just for you. They got the message, but at first I think they sort we were slightly mad actually.

[00.38.16] Chris: It was worth seeing the Argentinean's faces was it?

[0038.18] Roger: It was really.

[00.38.19] Chris: You also shared some time with Wally Herbert, who became quite famous didn't he?

[00.38.23] Roger: Yes.

[00.38.24] Chris: What did you make of Wally?

[00.38.25] Roger: Well I think; I have got to declare an interest in this one. I had a quarrel with Wally. I don't know whether you know about his trip to the North Pole that he had planned...

[00.38.42] Chris: Tell me about it?

[00.38.44] Roger: Well I had sledged with Wally; Wally was a surveyor in the Army and then he came down on FIDS more or less at much the same time as I did, and he was never happy to do; he wanted to do something more spectacular, where as most of us were quite happy to get on with it, Wally wanted to do something more spectacular and he planned this Polar trip across the North Pole starting in the Bering Strait and then over the top. I had sledged with him in the Antarctic and so I wasn't particularly keen on this. I didn't like the idea, for a start it was a hell of a long journey and he couldn't do it possibly without aircraft. And I thought once you get into that you have got to get the fuel and all the other things you've got to be fitted in, it was becoming to me a trip that was loosing its shape completely. I think it would have been far better to go; to do a shorter trip, so I told him it would have been better to do a shorter trip, like the one that Tillman did in his old age, it's quite a good film that he did in the Cresta?? Crossing, I think it was the first one, he crossed the Andes ice cap, he crossed, he climbed Mount Valine?? in Guatemala...

[00.40.54] Chris: Did you express to Wally Herbert your doubts about his plans?

[00.40.56] Roger: I did, yes, yes.

[00.40 58] Chris: What was his reaction?

[00.40.59] Roger: It was very difficult because really looking back I really should have made my point clear. Most of the time, well one of the time; I had no money basically other than that which came in my monthly wage; and I was saying to Wally; this went on

over a period of years, that I tried to impress upon him that I had to have some income from somewhere or I couldn't do anything. And he kept prevaricating and prevaricating but we didn't get anywhere and he decided to close it up. Then we did this; we had this reconnaissance trip, so called, which was from Thule in northern Greenland to Devon Island and we were doing this trip. Now up to the end I was with Allan Gill in the trip to get used to the dogs because they run them in a different way from what we did on FIDS with a fine trace and with that we were the leading pair; there is a map on the bulkhead I was looking at when we came in; and the easy part was over Ellesmere Island; there is a little col, well it's not so little, it's about ten miles and it's about 3,000 or more feet, and you have to go over that, otherwise you go round but it's just not that simple. This particular area, as far as I know its happened in the past, there was no snow it was wood runners and we had to resort to a mixture of manhauling, shooting some dogs, carrying those over and watching in the end other people including the skidoo people just sailing over the top. Allan and I had been thinking it was just like they were going just like into town. Meanwhile there was no way we could travel at that time as we needed something to replace the dogs you see an one thing and another, and in the end I said I am not prepared to go on like this, I don't think this is the sort of trip I want to be on. So that was that.

[00.43.48] Chris: So what was it in Wally's personality that caused the problem would you say?

[00.43.51] Roger: Well, this seems to be a very crude psychology, but, Wally for me was at his best when we first knew him, he was very similar to me. We had both been in the Army for a length of time, we both quite liked what we were doing at the time and then this trip of his became an obsession, and...

[00.44.22] Chris: An irrational obsession?

[00.44.23] Roger: I don't know if, no, no I suppose he won't mind my saying. If he had been doing it about fifty or one hundred years later he would have been far wiser and it would have been one of the great Polar expeditions that have ever come about. So we got and I stayed up there and he went on and to my surprise I might say, I didn't think he would get the money. And he obviously managed to soft soap the right number of people. And Allan Gill, who was on the trip with me, always said that Wally would be marvelous to have on an expedition as long as you didn't expect him to do anything! (Lots of laughter) But he did get his transpolar trip but then he suffered a great disappointment with everybody saying so what. He missed his boat.

[00.45.31] Chris: Let's go back to your time at Hope Bay then and your memories of working in that Base. You had the opportunity to complain about things at the end of each Season didn't you, there was a complaints system?

[00.45.42] Roger: Yes that was a big joke.

[00.45.45] Chris: Was it?

[00.45.46] Roger: Yes. (Laughing)

[00.45.49] Chris: Why was it a joke Roger?

[00.45.50] Roger: These days there should be somewhere in the files of the India Office or somewhere somebody has got a file somewhere with a report like this product must be improved on. I forgotten who it was but somebody went somebody from the Crown Colonies, Crown Agents was it?

[00.46.28] Chris: Yes.

[00.46.29] Roger: Somebody went to them while I was there to complain about; we hadn't seen, for some reason or another, that we didn't know why, our sledges were rubbish, they were cracking and scraping and suddenly when we got back to the UK when a number of people went and complained and said that it wasn't good enough because it could be dangerous, I mean if you had a sledge crack up and you didn't have anything to carry your stuff you could be in crisis.

[00.47.00] Chris: Why were they cracking up?

[00.47.02] Roger: It was peculiar, basically the runners were just snapping. I could put it across my knee and just snap it. Who was I talking to; I was talking to someone later back home and they said that it had probably dried too much, the wood having been in the cold. So we had this complaint, as I was saying, and it went on but nobody took any notice. But I mean they were fairly minor, I mean the food was; it never worried me the food, I thought it was quite good; it was basic but well cooked. They used seal, they used penguin.

[00.48.04] Chris: So the problem with the food, if I have read this correctly, is that it simply wasn't varied enough. What were you stuck with, what was the diet like?

[00.48.12] Roger: Well we had penguin when we was there, we had penguin eggs and we had dried eggs and sugar we had dried fruit of different sorts, dried bananas. We made bread; everybody made bread, plenty of butter, plenty of margarine, currants. Anyhow the only things that I felt I was deprived of there were chocolate bars.

[00.48.52] Chris: How about keeping yourself occupied during the long winter nights, what were your favourite pastimes?

[00.48.55] Roger: Reading whilst sitting by the fire and talking about which dog was better than another.

[00.49.06] Chris: Did you ever discuss your predecessors?

[00.49.09] Roger: Not to any real extent I don't think.

[00.49.15] Chris: Scott, Shackleton and so on?

[00.49.16] Roger: Oh those yes, yes, although there wasn't a great deal to discuss, we were all sort of thought that Scott was a bit of a clot and the he didn't handle his sledges well! We did quite a bit of photography; we did black and white stuff. We had bought the materials and if you were somebody like Mike Ruby he used to take dogs on a *maniacal??* (Possibly a special type of camera or film, Editor). Mike was the odd ball and he would say we have got to go it's a quarter to twelve and you are thinking of going to bed and he would say fancy a run, I'll just harness the dogs up, and these young dogs could run a few miles.

[00.50.16] Chris: How were the facilities at Hope Bay, where they tolerable or where they fairly rudimentary?

[00.50.23] Roger: I would say they were tolerable really. We had plenty of water as long as people were prepared to dig it out.

[00.50.35] Chris: How do have a bath?

[00.50.36] Roger: Well it was a diesel drum which was split in half and bolted together and when your turn came round the bath was yours and you could heat it with a little boiler and you could heat it as hot as you liked or just leave it cold. But the only drawback was that you had to leave it the way you found it so if you filled up the drum with boiling hot water then by the time that you had had your bath, when the chap came in next he fully expected to find that he was the same on the next rotation.

[00.51.31] Chris: Did everyone always stick to the rules?

[00.51.33] Roger: Oh yes, yes. There was not a problem with that. There might have been an inch here and there. It was funny because in that sense it was a plural democracy until it was proved of course that you couldn't stand the ridicule if somebody was caught pinching snow.

[00.51.53] Chris: So there is a rigid pattern to the bath night routine and you couldn't have a bath any time you liked?

[00.51.59] Roger: No, unless you were in discussion with somebody who didn't want it.

[00.52.07] Chris: Then you could swap?

[00.52.08] Roger: You could swap yes.

[00.52.09] Chris: Let's talk a bit about the sledging then, if you can, Roger. One of the trips that you did was to go right round the James Ross Island now was that with a purpose or was that just a jolly, for jollification?

[00.52.23] Roger: Well in terms of what we did in those days it was both I would say. That was when Hugh was doing these,...Oh come on, ...he was doing these (stress biorhythm experiments, Editor). Anyhow he was taking blood and there was just myself and Mike (Rueby, Editor) with Hugh and the idea was; I don't know whether you know the history of Hope Bay do you it was the Swedish ship...

[00.52.54] Chris: Go on explain.

[00.52.56] Roger: Well early in the twentieth century there was a Swedish chap called Nordenskjold and he mounted an expedition and went down the coast as far as he could dependant on the ice conditions and then he was going to see what the outcome was. This is in 1902 and on the way down; the Peninsula runs very roughly N/S; and on the way down he dropped off a party of Geologists (at Hope Bay, Editor) and then he went further down and he built a hut, which was purpose built, but it was a bit smaller than we had, so he had some Geologists that would remain in the hut. On the way back now to Stockholm his ship was pierced by the ice and sank. They all got off, but, the situation was the chaps in Stockholm did not know where they where, the chaps that had had to get of the ship didn't know where they where, and the party that was doing the Geology they were stuck but knew that something was wrong because nobody had come for them. So they had to spend a winter in this hut,..well what do you call it,... it was a...

(Editor: From here Roger's memory of that Swedish Expedition is somewhat confused and I have amended it as necessary to make slightly more sense, accepting that the splendid part the Argentine Government and Captain Irizar of the *Uruguay* played in the rescue of the expedition is not acknowledged.)

[00.54.38] Chris: A refuge hut.

[00.54.40] Roger: In a Refuge hut until the next summer. The Swedes sent down a relief ship. And the chaps who had been Geologizing came down so all unbeknown to anyone; you had a ship coming from Sweden; the chaps from the ship that had sunk and the chaps from Nordenskjold's hut and miraculously, because there was no communication, they all met up at the same time. The Skipper, I can't blame him, was convinced that the ice was going to come back in, so he wouldn't let them take anything other than what they could carry when they left the hut and they all went off. But before hand they shot all their dogs. The people from the refuge hut; that was the one that was at Hope Bay. But the poor dogs were still left there and were mummified. They all got off except one chap that had died of T.B. So that was the end of that. The stranded crew had landed on Paulet Island the place Shackleton was making for, after the sinking of the *Endurance*. The tide goes around clockwise in that part of the oceans, but he couldn't get it right to land on Paulet Island so he was carried passed and ended up on Elephant Island.

[00.56.47] Chris: What did your dogs, when you got to this hut, what did your dogs make of the mummified dogs on the ground?

[00.56.50] Roger: They didn't seem to be affected. I don't think to them it was a bad sight. I would guess that was it.

[00.57.00] Chris: You have read about this expedition did you back at Base. You read the story of the hut back at Base in this book and in the book there were references to food dumps which he had left.

[00.57.15] Roger: Well I was going to say there are some he says in the book and he also mentions Larsen his friend, but I gave the book to an old friend of ours because he was killing time. What he said in the book, amongst other things, we were down here near Seal Island for our hut and they would go over the top of the col and come down to sea level on the other side, no way. This was a geology party that was coming down and they had a whole lot of specimens and they had a whole lot of camera equipment and when they got to the col they said this is ridiculous taking all this with us we will build a depot here and come back for it when we have got some more manpower. And they did just that and went on to the ship which had just come in, purely by chance, and there was the ship and Skipper said, get lost if you don't come with me you will get left behind so they jumped aboard the ship at the immediate opportunity, glad to be the hell out of the way, but, no one, not no one bothered to pick up all that stuff. They have offered it as an expedition to all sorts of people but they won't bite.

[00.58.38] Chris: So it's still there?

[00.58.39] Roger: Well it must be.

[00.58.40] Chris: One hundred years later.

[00.58.41] Roger: Yes well that's as I understand it.

[00.58.46] Chris: Finally on that particular trip on the way back you came across this rather sad spectacle of the; and I have read about this else where; of the Weddell Seals dying?

[00.59.00] Roger: Yes, yes. It was very sad that.

[00.59.03] Chris: Can you tell me about that Roger?

[00.59.05] Roger: (Hesitates whilst gaining his thoughts about the James Ross Island trip) Now when we were down there; this is almost the year when the *Shackleton* drove us home; and when we got down there with the sledge, it was dead flat (the sea ice); you could therefore see for a long way and could see this ocean grey in front of you; and we had to ski all the way down there. That was the chaps that had left with all the bits and pieces so they were all spread all over the Antarctic. As we went down, I would say roughly; you could say James Ross suicides were one hundred and ninety nine, and so on the two sides it was quite extraordinary. We; one of the things we noticed there was when we were down there was how quiet the Antarctic can be how absolutely quiet it was.

[01.00.30] Chris: When there is no wind?

[001.00.32] Roger: When there is no wind. Anyhow we were coming down this side, along this side (of James Ross Island, Editor) and we started seeing this dying and we couldn't think; as usual we hadn't got a clue about what it could have been. We knew it wasn't anywhere around there; Anyhow this was like; we got round and got further down towards the edge of the ice which had been eroded by the sea and so these seals had come up onto the ice itself. As far as you could see these seals were dead or dying everywhere.

[01.01.15] Chris: Weddell Seals?

[01.01.16] Roger: Weddell Seals and they were dying and the young were dying and nobody had seen anything like this before. We never received an explanation. Then I think somebody went down the following Season, but I don't remember his name...

[01.01.35] Chris: So they were just lying there and...

[01.01.36] Roger: Crying for their mothers.

[01.01.38] Chris: And the mothers were expiring and you had no idea why this was happening?

[01.01.41] Roger: No, no.

[01.01.45] Chris: Have you not read anything about it since?

[01.01.47] Roger: I think Hugh tried to get something from this, but I don't think he was very successful and somebody said, I don't know, I don't know, it may have been in one of the FIDS magazines but I am not sure.

[01.02.07] Chris: But was it upsetting?

[01.02.08] Roger: Upsetting yes very upsetting particularly the young ones. The baby seals lying crying...

[01.02.25] Chris: Just like a child?

[01.02.26] Roger: Like a child.

[01.02.28] Chris: A sobering spectacle?

[01.02.30] Roger: Yes, yes.

[01.02.33] Chris: Let's take a break Roger and come back and do some more. Thank you.

[00.00.00] This is Roger Tufft interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 12th April 2011. Roger Tufft. Part 2.

[00.00.10] Chris: Did you ever, with all due respects, do anything that was a bit silly in the Antarctic, did you take risks that perhaps you wish you hadn't done?

[00.00.18] Roger: Yes there were two incidents completely different. We are talking about Hope Bay and the Argentineans. Like all good Brits, of course, we felt very superior about the Argentineans; I think it was part of our Antarctic history. Well when it was good weather from time to time, we would put a new sheet of tarpaulin on the roof, which soon got battered by the wind was blowing, and we often used to sit out and sunbathe, and the Argentineans, who were down below a mile or so, they used to do similar. We would put chairs on the ground, like deck chairs, anyhow we were messing about doing some outdoor working and at the same time we were getting water and what have you, when we noticed there was a bit of a hubbub down at the Argentine Base. Someone remarked on it and said something is going on down there. Now by this time it was early afternoon and we weren't particularly worried until we saw somebody coming up the hill towards us and it was one of the Argies, of course. And while all this was going on it was noticed that there was a boat out there, and apparently they had either forgotten or dropped the oars so had no way of propelling it, and they came up there and said can you give us a hand and we said well boat, which was a Newfoundland Dory a good boat, was covered in snow and ice and it would take literally hours to get it ready. We said we would go down and help them, we couldn't do much we realized this, and then in the end everyone said well; and the weather that in the afternoon had been calm, it suddenly changed and got worse and before very long it was blowing out of the bay. There was a chap there, Lenvo?, I think his name was, he was a nice chap who had wanted to be a ballet dancer, he was in the boat that was rapidly going out to sea and at the same time the visibility was deteriorating. Well we phoned Sec FIDS and the phoned their home base and told them the situation. It was getting worse and worse and it was also getting dark and I thought that is the end of that chap, but me, Hugh and Mike Rueby we managed to free the Dory and go out after him in the boat. It soon became apparent that their boat was much lighter than ours and we wouldn't catch him up. So, when this became apparent, we had to turn round. Our Base Leader had phoned up Port Stanley and said this is the situation and got a traffic telegram back telling him to stop it and come inside. Well obviously we had never picked this up from the phone call, you know. In no time at all it was just like it was just like getting dark and there was this horrible blizzard blowing and we thought that's it. And then we, when we got in, wondering what we had better do next which was very little, two helicopters came over, it was an incredible feat of airmanship and Lenvo? had the sense to lie down, I think he had a bit of a canvas, and he had the sense to lie down in the bottom of the boat and that was it. And then it was night so the helicopters couldn't do anymore. So come first light, at the break of day, the Argentineans were able to find the boat and they found the chap and he was OK! Realistically his chances of survival were a few thousand to one.

[00.05.35] Chris: He just spent the entire night in an open boat?

[00.05.37] Roger: In an open boat yes.

[00.05.38] Chris: Waiting for the dawn, when the helicopters could fly in to get him and they were Argentinean helicopters were they, from an Argentinean ship or another Base?

[00.05.51] Roger: Yes I think it would have been a ship, because they had ships down there.

[00.05.55] Chris: Yes. He was a lucky man wasn't he?

[00.05.58] Roger: He was yes. I often wonder what became of him, but I haven't heard to this day.

[00.06.06] Maud: He was a ballet dancer!

[00.06.10] Roger: A ballet dancer. Stranger things have happened.

[00.06.15] Chris: What about yourself Roger was there any moment when you thought your number was up?

[00.06.20] Roger: Not really. I was once on a slope somewhere in South Georgia, I think. Anyhow it was one of the islands where there was a lot of detritus, the rocks were crumbling and very soft and it was like scree, a bit obscene. And at the base of the cliffs there was a whole lot of detritus. It started to give on me and I thought this was a bloody stupid thing to do and I had to recover my position quickly and try and go back or go forward and I decided to go forward and I slowly recovered the situation.

[00.07.22] Chris: You fell down a crevasse at one point is that right?

[00.07.24] Roger: Oh yes.

[00.07.27] Chris: You didn't mention that just now (joint laughter).

[00.07.29] Roger: Well, yes, yes. We were taking Graham Hobbs, who was a Geologist, who wanted to go to a point, which was the farthest point on the island and when we got there, there was this glacier, which was not very big, and we were going along and we didn't want to keep making detours all the time so we were keeping as far as possible to the coast and I was leading that day. It is a funny sensation, I was leading that day and suddenly it was like there was nothing there because the bottom had somehow just went, but he was behind me and said afterwards one minute I was there going along and then was gone (joint laughter). Anyhow, I was lucky because I had skis longer than I could have been using and it was the skis that jammed otherwise it could have been a hell of a job getting me out. But anyhow Hugh and Graham Hobbs got a line on me and they were able, with my own help; and the first thing that I did was get rid of the ski bindings, and then once I had those off it was far easier...

[00.09.05] Chris: Where you wedged or where you on a sledge?

[00.09.07] Roger: No I was wedged. We were going light, following the coast...

[00.09.15] Chris: Did you think you think you would get out, or was there a moment when you thought people perhaps?...

[00.09.18] Roger: No I didn't think I was going to be able to get out, it didn't feel right, I was too far down. There have been quite a few people, over the years that have been lost in crevasses, but, there was no one at Hope Bay whilst I was there.

[00.09.41] Chris: When you went down the crevasse itself you just knew that you would be able to get out it?

[00.09.43] Roger: Yes. Mind you it might have been ridiculous optimism on my part; the whole thing it wasn't like I felt that somebody has dealt the wrong cards, because it just went like that. It is so easily done, it happens and then it is all over.

[00.10.06] Chris: How long were you down there for?

[00.10.08] Roger: Oh by the time they had gone back and got some ropes and things, I think it was about four hours.

[00.10.16] Chris: Was it, as long as that, oh gosh. We talked briefly about dogs but you obviously, like most FIDS, you were very fond of your dogs, that you had at Hope Bay and you were suggesting, perhaps, that the presence of dogs mad a Bas a happier Base, is that how you feel about it?

[00.10.35] Roger: It seems to me that; I think that the trouble with Bases, most of them, is intimacy, you are all close together, well for the best part of the winter at least, and invariably you have a few differences. That reminds me, that photograph that Maud has just brought in; I don't know whether you saw the FID that was with me, that was Dick Walcott, and I used to spend a month in one tent with him and it was Dick who kind of reckoned that there was no fun in it. He worried the whole time about the tent being blown over.

[00.11.30] Chris: Tell me about your dogs who was your lead dog?

[00.11.33] Roger: Well the; what the devil was his name...

[00.11.38] Chris: Was this Vanda?

[00.11.40] Roger: No Vanda was a bit of a lass I must say; no the best dog without any doubt, although he was forever making passes at Vanda, was (Roger tries to remember the name) Spark and he was very intelligent. He was always in fights when he was younger, but, as he got older he was more circumspect. He would rule the roost and often

when we were harnessing up going to View Point, which as I say is about twenty miles down the road, and the dogs were all getting excited because it was a good free run, and seal and everything were all laid on, and Spark had seen it all, and he got in the end if he saw we were going out he would walk away out of sight and wait until the sledge was ready and then we would have to wait for him, and in the end I would get impatient and clear off and when we were gone Spark would appear and would then have to follow the sledge. (Chris laughs) until after we had gone over the hill. But Vanda was; there was some reason that Vanda could not produce much in the way of dogs and she only produced one dog in the whole time, one pup, Pongo and poor Pongo, he really suffered, he used to run alongside and he didn't used to pull at all, I think he thought we were out there for fun. He never wandered far on his own. It was funny; I think it might have been Fritz, people used to go up to the; what was the name of the place they used to go and we used to make ice observations at the top of the hill (anemometer tower, Editor); and Pongo would go about as far as that. He was black and brown, a bit of all sorts, long ends and stupid. He used to hang around this team and suddenly going up to the hill for their ice observation and whether Pongo followed them or not, I don't know, but he fell into this crevice, (Editor, a Pingo is a mound formed by the upheaval of subterranean ice in an area where the subsoil remains permanently frozen), any how he managed to fall in despite the fact that he had been back and forward across I don't know how many times. It was just too deep to get out easily and we had to get all our stuff out, and we were cursing, with ropes and crampons and that. I am trying to remember as to whether we had to get him out or whether he got out of his own accord, but we managed to get him out one way or the other. (Laughter) and we spent the rest of the day, as far as I know, looking after Pongo. That was Vanda, she was rather a stupid dog, but she had a rather beautiful coat rather like a fox.

[00.15.37] Chris: It was unusual for FIDS in your day to spend three winters in the Antarctic, yet you did, was it for a specific reason or was it just circumstance?

[00.15.47] Roger: I think it was mainly circumstance. But I had nowhere in particular in a career to go as I hadn't got very far, and I was enjoying myself so I decided to stay on, that was basically it.

[00.16.13] Chris: Would the FIDS take some persuading because it was unusual?

[00.16.15] Roger: Not that I know, but I don't know what happened behind the scenes as it were. I think quite a few people have done it now, I may be wrong there but, I think quite a few people have done it.

[00.16.25] Chris: Lets move on a bit now to talk a bit about a chap called Major Bill Tillman, who was an Adventurer in both the Antarctic and the Arctic, with a reputation, to say the least. He had a boat called *Mischief*, how did you first come across him?

[00.16.42] Roger: Well first of all he was a mountaineer and he was in charge of the 1938 Everest expedition, in china of course, but he didn't get very far because the weather was pretty bad, but that's by the way. Then he went through the war doing a number of things,

he was fighting with the Yugoslavs in Yugoslavia from 1944 and I think he has written a book about that but I forget what it is called. Anyhow he had been in the artillery in WWI and in WWII he was getting a bit past it by then...

[00.13.31] Chris: So how did you meet him?

[00.17.33] Roger: Well he was known in climbing circles and I had met him that way with people I had known and I was keeping an eye open for unusual things and Lee Rice, who was at Hope Bay with me, he was a keen sailor and had his own yacht and he had always dreamed of going round the world. He asked me if I would like to go with him, and we hummed and hawed about this and he had a copy of *Yachting Monthly* sent to him, I think it was, and he said that getting it changing his thinking because Tillman was thing of doing a long distance cruise again and if he wanted to go as crew to write to him and let him know and he went and offered to crew. Then just before the ship came back to Southampton, it would have been the *Shackleton*, when he was off West Africa Tillman sent him a telegram saying now as you are arriving back in Europe are you still interested in a long distance cruise. Anyhow Lee dropped out and that was it really; he was going to be a surveyor but he messed his ankle up. So I was left and there we were getting ready on the dockside. Lee came out and a big lad called, I can't remember, Jim, he was a big strong lad, Jimmy he was called, and there was a Dutchman called Jan and that's about it I think.

[00.19.53] Chris: And what was the expedition you joined?

[00.19.56] Roger: Well it wasn't an expedition at all in fact...

[00.20.05] Chris: What was the trip you joined?

[00.20.07] Roger: The German actually, he was only seen for a while he only went out on special expeditions to collect flowers and things. There are a group of islands called the Crozet Islands and they were fairly colonized; used a lot in the nineteenth century because that were on the sailing ship track to Europe from Australia. Now these Crozet Islands reputedly had a mountain 6000 feet with glaciers and Tillman tied to get on there. He couldn't land at first time because the boat was dismasted. So he went back to Cape Town, where my letter awaited him, so he replied and said he would go, but he was disinclined and so obviously didn't. So that was the background to that. When we got to the Crozet Islands in fact, they are quite; oh how would you describe them; I have never climbed any thing like them. They are in the Roaring Forties.

[00.21.29] Chris: South is out of it?

[00.21.31] Roger: South is out of it yes of course.

[00.21.29] Chris: And did you get there?

[00.21.30] Roger: We got there. We also were disappointed as the island was much smaller than we thought; the damned place was only 3000 feet high, but, we climbed it out of sheer cussedness, it was more like a walk. That was the end of that. But there were two factors that may or may not have had some significance. Tillman had written to the; what do they call themselves; the French Antarctic Institute, something like that, and when we knew we were going but before we left, of course, Tillman wrote and said we will be around Crozet Island and when we got in and spoke to the authorities a very snootiest reply came back asking who had given us permission, this was from the TAAF, (Editor, Terres des Australes et Antartiques Francais), and so when we came back, as I say in November, the year after that we discovered another sin, the French had put a very funny sign up that they obviously though would be of some worth and it has been there ever since. But we went on from there farther along in the Roaring Forties to a place called the Kerguelen Islands, French as well. There is a Base there and we called in and had a good meal actually. The other one was in a completely different hemisphere, in the Arctic there was a mountain called Mount Raleigh and no one had climbed it as far as we knew it's quite, reasonably, high and rather unusual, and it wasn't all that easy because we had to land on sea shore and then lug all his stuff up. So the thing was it was the bigger of the two evils. Tillman had had enough of Mount Raleigh on that side and I had had enough of Mount Raleigh on the other side. (Chris laughs) So we couldn't both be right. So we have got to do something, so we decided to climb both of them.

[00.24.09] Chris: Oh there were two mountains but you didn't know which was which?

[00.24.11] Roger: We didn't know which was which. One was definitely higher than the other. So we climbed both. That was the last trip I had with Tillman.

[00.24.22] Chris: And you also did a final trip with Hugh Simpson up into the Arctic Circle, didn't you when he was still carrying on with his physiology, stress experiment?

[00.24.30] Roger: Well I did a number with Hugh. When Nansen wanted to cross Greenland at the time, I am normally against those sorts of things, over the ice cap, and I knew what Nansen wanted to do because he tells you in his book and he couldn't do it because he couldn't get in because of the ice again. He finally got in late towards the end of the Season when they went at a chunk as it were and cut a slice off and climbed over the ice cap and down. My time was Hugh's, Nansen's time and see if we can do it from Upnarvik????? but he had already done it anyhow once across Greenland. Anyhow we climbed farther up the coast and we did this crossing where the Americans have an Air Station, called Thule, and that was another story of Hugh's but I am trying to think what, no...

[00.26.00] Chris: Can you manage it?

[00.26.04] Roger: Manage it yes. I was annoyed because I had worked it out and I knew we could do it and they said we were young and foolish, which surprised us and which is ridiculous from someone who had never traveled on ice and in fact we had the whole thing planned out.

[00.26.21] Chris: Let's wind up if we may then Roger, you talked about not having a career in mind when you were doing your adventuring, so did you actually get a career in the end?

[00.26.32] Roger: I never found anything no.

[00.26.34] Chris: You never got a career?

[00.26.35] Roger: No.

[00.26.36] Chris: So how have you spent the last sixty years? (Joint laughter)

[00.26.38] Roger: That's a secret! I have been teaching mainly.

[00.26.41] Chris: Oh I see.

[00.26.42] Roger: I didn't think in teaching I could go wrong really. There were always jobs going at that time as long as you didn't mind particularly what you were doing.

[00.26.56] Chris: Looking back over the life you have led so far, how highly does the Antarctic rate in your life's story?

[00.27.03] Roger: Oh very highly. There is a purity about the Antarctic and funnily enough it never occurred to me to feel that I was unsafe there. Provided you don't do anything stupid it is probably one of the safest places in the world to travel. If you need food you can get it on the fringes of the sea ice. As long as you don't try and do too much there is the skiing that you have got there. You have got your tent with you and you should always keep to the rule never to be separated from your tent and always keep some food outside. Preservation is the basic thing should anything go wrong. And of course the wildlife is so wonderful. You can literally walk up to penguins and pat them on the head, they won't like it but they won't run away.

[00.28.07] Chris: So it was a special time was it?

[00.28.09] Roger: Absolutely yes, yes. And of course as you say it is gone now. I suppose every generation says that, but, I think we were the last generation that; it was the same not worrying about a career; nobody took themselves very seriously then, I don't think, a few doctors and a few people who were doing research and MENSAs and a group that was trying to achieve something. But there was a whole group of people who came down, for want of a better word for the fun of it.

[00.28.51] Chris: Was it fun for you?

[00.28.53] Roger: Yes I think so. I have lost track with a whole lot of people of course, I suppose that is inevitable as you get older in life. Perhaps I shouldn't say this now, but, I

was going to say that what put me off was Don McCalman, he was horrendous on Base in my opinion, and we had to shoot some dogs and Don shot them before we left and we thought surely all he had to do was wait for a day actually. Anyway that was that, a typical bloody Glaswegian. It was so unnecessary, I think honestly I think; Don couldn't see what the fuss was about, I don't think he was a great diplomat he just couldn't see that it was a cruel thing to do.

[00.30.01] Chris: Let's leave it there Roger. Thank you very much.

[00.30.06] Roger: Thank you.

Editor's comments:

Roger's power of attention, understandably, wandered such that on occasions he did not answer Chris's question and sometimes lost track of the story he was trying to tell. I have tried to give as faithful interpretation to the interview with one or two interjections in an attempt, where I could, to clarify Roger's story. It is a great interview and Chris is to be congratulated, but, equally it is a wonderful story and was well worth the effort.