

DOUG ALLAN

**Edited Transcript of an interview with cameraman, diver and former BAS Base Leader,
Mr Doug Allan, at his home in Bristol, conducted by Chris Eldon-Lee, 19th June 2011.**

BAS Archive ref: AD6/24/1/128

Transcribed by Mike Dixon, September 2015.

Doug Allan Part 1;

[Part 1, 00.00.00] Chris: This is Doug Allan, recorded by Chris Eldon-Lee, on the 19th June 2011. Doug Allan Part 1.

Doug: My name is Doug Allan, and I was born on the 17th July 1951 in Dunfermline, in Scotland.

[Part 1, 00.00.20] Chris: And what about your parents, what were they up to?

Doug: My father was a photographer and a freelance cameraman for BBC Scotland and various other people, my mother was - initially looked after me and my brothers and sisters. I'm one of five, I've got one twin brother, one younger brother, two younger sisters, so mother was more or less a housewife for all of those but then she also went into business. She was also helping Dad with his business and then they also set up a Hairdressing business latterly.

But father had a very successful freelance photography journalist business until he unfortunately had a car accident in about 1972–73. He broke his leg rather badly and he was a long time off work and it did leave him rather unable to be as active as he was beforehand. He became a producer with Fife Educational Television Service which back in those days, Fife was rather ahead of the game really: he would record with the BBC and [with] peoples permission he would record programmes off the television and then they had a system within Fife Schools for sending those programmes out so the schools could look at them anytime they wanted.

They also produced short 10 - 15 minute pieces about local people and sometimes some celebrities. I remember he made a programme for the schools about Patrick Moore for example and he also interviewed Bing Crosby when Bing came over to play a celebrity Golf Match. Of course typically [unintell] it was my sister Judy who was at school at the time, who interviewed Bing for the schools programme and then there was also the spinoff of, 'Here's Judy Allen interviews Bing Crosby, oh we'll send that to the local papers as well', so he was very sharp and I may have - what I do now with the wildlife filming and all the irons that I have to have in the fire - I think I probably got some of that from Dad.

[Part 1, 00:02:29] Chris: Did you at any time help him with his business?

Doug: Ya, I did help him out with one or two shoots just "carrying /gofering" so to speak and then, much later on I did cover one wedding for him and I have to say that a wedding, stills

photography for a wedding, is probably the scariest thing I've ever done. I mean - it's the day of their lives and you're charged with making a record of it, and this before digital, so it's all film so you have to take it and hope for the best, in a way. I don't know if I could do it as he did, he used to do two and three in a day, and we'd turn them round. He would go shoot it - take the photographs - then he would whizz back to the shop, his assistant would get the film, process it, run off some prints, then mother would take them all down to the reception: and the secret was if you got all the family plus their friends and relatives at the reception, you got many more orders for prints than you would if you waited till later in the week: but it was a hell of a turnaround, because you had three weddings - get in there get the groups, get the fancy shots - get down to the reception that afternoon or evening and pick up the orders.

I don't think I was aware at the time just how hard they worked, and how slick they were, the sort of memories I have are of the dreaded end-of-the-month till-slips where they would go through these endless rolls on which all the transactions in the shop had been recorded and that was what you had to tally your books at the end of the month. I remember how long it used to take and my father had this frustrating habit: Mum would do the books and they might not balance up and she would spend a lot of time wondering about it she'd say 'Maurice they're not balancing...' and he would say 'Yeah, check the 17th of July order so and so, I think maybe I didn't put that one in', and sure enough, that missing order would make it all balance.

[Part1, 00:04:45] Chris: So was there a certain inevitability that you would end up working with film and camera.

Doug: I don't think so, to be honest, I don't know where I got my creative streak in a way: I mean it's great to work in the same sort of field as Dad and we still talk about it and I think he's obviously happy with the way I've gone but I have to say we did go in quite different directions because with me, Diving was the first love, then Biology, and the interest in photography actually came last of all. It really took off even when I'd left University, probably in the Red Sea when I started taking some underwater photographs, but then the photography really took off in the first year that I was in the Antarctic when I went to Signy, and it was so obvious: I went in there with a very modest camera, hadn't really thought about the photography, but it was obvious that people were very good and very keen on Base, and I picked up a lot of the basics in that first year and that was where I got the bug, and especially I think I wanted to - photographs were the only way that I knew I could capture underwater, definitely, and it was very much in my mind after the first winter that I'm gonna go back down again, not just work for BAS but with some good stills gear and come back with a good underwater record.

[Part 1, 00:06:14]Chris: We'll pick that up again shortly, it doesn't matter if we dodge about a bit, but I'm wondering where the diving came from.

Doug: I think it was I was a child of the 60's so to speak, I'm not quite sure where the adventurer streak came from but I do know that my parents, loving though they are and still are, if they had a fault it was to not realise that me and Ron my twin brother, were actually quite different people: we were always lumped together as "the twins" and we were always compared one to the other. Whereas in fact Ron and I, our talents, actually lie in very different directions and I think if we'd been given the opportunity or encouragement or what have you, and this is partly schools, its partly the folks, its partly just the culture the climate

of the time, but if we'd been given the encouragement to go our separate ways, I think school might have been very different and Diving in a way was ...I remember – I know it sounds clichéd but the Silent World [by] Jacques Cousteau, I think that was published first about '57.

My father was great. He used to get these Condensed Readers Digest Books, once a month you got four books- the best of, and I distinctly remember we had a collection of them on the wall and I cannot remember when I first read the Silent World in the condensed version, I was maybe twelve or thirteen and something definitely clicked and it was just something adventurous about it but also it was a non-competitive sport. I used to play rugby and cricket and all that kind of thing and had a great time, often playing on the same team as Ron but I wasn't quite as good or quite as keen for success, but on the other hand there was something mysterious and adventurous and romantic I have to say, about the underwater world.

In the 60's, the two big frontiers were space and underwater and if you couldn't go in space, the underwater was a pretty good second bet and Cousteau was coming through on the television, and Hans Haas was punching through, and I don't remember how much these things impressed me but I do remember we were also, we were one of the lucky families who were quite early to take advantage of cheap package-deal holidays, but I remember father - him and mum worked hard all days -Sundays were nothing special you might get called out on a job, and we had a couple of Scottish holidays where it just rained all the time, and I remember father saying 'Look I want a holiday that I can go and guarantee the sun' so in '63, '64, when those package deals came along.

I remember them taking advantage of that and so probably when I was twelve or thirteen we started going to the Mediterranean and of course snorkelling;it was a calm warmsea, it just became automatic. Ron and I were into gymnastics, we were quite good, because our uncle was into that: he was Scottish champion for a number of years so we grew up with quite a sporty background so to speak. We were both good swimmers, confident in the water so taking - going to the Med and then just taking a mask & snorkel was just par for the course.

[Part 1, 00:09:51] Chris: I remember the Jacques Cousteau television programmes, we are of an age you and I, and they were of course in black and white.

Doug: They were, up until '68 and they were re-screened again in '68 when colour came along on BBC2. I just remember diving or being happy snorkelling, etc, we took to it, both of us like fish to water, but I particularly enjoyed it.

[Part 1, 00:10:11]Chris: When you were watching Jacques Cousteau on television - be it black and white or colour were you watching it with a cameraman's eye already, were you watching and thinking 'if only he had done that?'

Doug: No, no, photography wasn't even close, I think it was just the adventure, I think somewhere I've always been from an early age this sort of being linked with Ron and being compared with him subconsciously and almost being linked with him, has given me a strong sense of contrariness and a strong sense of wanting to be my own person and doing things different and I'm sure I have done things differently sometimes out sheer bloody-mindedness and when it hasn't been maybe the best thing to do, it certainly made me try and create an identity as a teenager and if you get that frustrated then you often go down the slightly rebellious route....

[Part 1, 00:11:14]Chris: What is your first memory of being aware, that there was such a place as the Antarctic?

Doug: When I read an article, it was after I had graduated - I've only really made three decisions in my life, [laughs] and the rest has followed. The first one was not to do a PhD after my first degree; I got a good enough first degree that I was offered several PhD's but I wanted one that involved diving, and preferably diving abroad and none of the ones I was offered really had that so I decided to come out of University, give myself a year maybe find a better PhD, so that was number one decision.

It was during that year 1973, in '74 I was running a dive school in Jersey - no '75 sorry - I read this article written by a guy called Ray Townley-Mallion who had been the diving officer at Signy and I thought that sounds pretty interesting, I'll write to BAS, of course there wasn't any Internet in those days so I did some research ... So I wrote into BAS about the diving officer's job and filled in an application form, put in the referees and anyway I got an interview in the summer of '75, and I remember it was Eric Salmon interviewed me, I can't remember who else, maybe Martin White. Anyway so we had the interview and that was really my only knowledge of the Antarctic I didn't particularly - I probably should have researched more about it before I went in 'cause I tell you what caught me about the interview - anyway a month later they wrote back and said 'No we haven't given you the job'.

I think two things counted against me, number one was, that it was only when I went in for the interview that I realised it was a two and a half year post as opposed to a one year post so its slightly ... 'Oh' it slightly fazed me: and the other thing, they had concerns which might have been fair enough, was that I might be working with or under or for people who were less well qualified than I was, and that was something they went into but anyway for whatever reason I didn't get it and I remember the letter that said 'You haven't got that job' arrived in Jersey on the same day as a letter arrived from a bunch of biologists with whom I worked the year before in the Red Sea, saying 'We've got a job for you in the Red Sea - would you like to come out here for six months', so that was great: one door closed and another opened, and so I thought that's too bad about BAS, maybe I'll apply again but we'll see.

I went out to Red Sea in September and I was out there from September, October, through to January, February, and the work was finishing that I had to do there, and a Telex arrived from BAS saying, 'Unexpected vacancy at Signy, do you want to go?' and this was to me in the Red Sea it basically said, 'If you want to go then you have got to leave in about three weeks, wherever you are we would like you to come back ASAP to Cambridge for a week' so this was away from my parents and things. There was a great guy out there called Peter Ryan, he was a scientist but he was a real entrepreneur and thought outside the box. I remember him saying, 'The thing that changed my life Doug, was me doing VSO for a year in the Gilbert and Ellis Islands away out of anywhere, and it just made me different.' He said 'You want to get to the Antarctic, cause this will make you different this will be great', he was all for it, so any misgivings I might have had...

[Part 1, 00:15:08] Chris: So that was decision number two.

Doug: That was decision number two, and decision number three was much further down the line having had a really good eight-year relationship with BAS until about '84 and I think

it was at that point I was offered Rothera BC, or it might have been before Halley anyway, there was a possibility of staying with BAS but going more into the admin/summer BC type level, and I decided not to do that and to make a go of wildlife filming cause at that point it all came together so those were the only three decisions. Not to do a PhD, to go down with BAS in the first place, and then to leave BAS and do wildlife photography afterwards.

[Part 1, 00:15:46]Chris: Well I hope this doesn't make you a very short interview. Let's just go back then because when you were applying to BAS, how familiar were you with the Antarctic, had you read about the polar explorers?

Doug: No, no, not at all.

Chris: Did you know where it was?

Doug: Oh I knew where it was, I mean I knew it was at the south pole and things but it would just sound [unintell] from the article like it was a really interesting place to go and dive and I had been thinking in those two and a half years that I realised I liked working with scientists and I still love it to this day - the best thing, and it's not a small thing, that my degree has given me is an ability to think the same way as a scientist, to go to any scientist and start talking to them about their project and come up to a level where you have a good interesting conversation quickly, so the idea of being down in the Antarctic and diving underneath the ice in this small group, and all that sort of thing, it really appealed to me because I had been in small groups and with scientists in the Red Sea and found that very stimulating.

It appealed to me - I can't remember how I found out about BAS in those days, I must have written to them to get the application form in the first place and they must have sent some information back, but I don't remember being very well prepared and that's the other thing, I have only ever had one interview in my life and I failed it [laughing]. It's ironic that when I got the chance that it all clicked so well.

[Part 1 00:17:40] Chris: Did you ever find out why they turned you down, the first time?

Doug: No, not really, apart I think it was maybe misgivings about whether I'd fit in having a degree already, and maybe they thought he's not quite ready for the two and a half years.

[Part 1, 00:17:53]Chris: So it must have been a fairly hectic three to four weeks between leaving the Red Sea coming back to Britain and sailing south.

Doug: Yeh well I didn't sail south I flew south.

[Part 1, 00:17:58] Chris: Had the ship already gone had it?

Doug: Oh yeah, this was right at the end of the season, I was contacted middle of February or something, or towards the end of February in the Red Sea, and then I came back and then I went to Cambridge for a week.

[Part 1, 00:18:09]Chris: So you missed the Conference then?

Doug: I missed the Conference, didn't do anything. I flew down to Punta and got on the *Biscoe*, I think it was *Biscoe*, was it the *Branny*? whatever ship it was it was the last ship....

[Part 1, 00:18:12] Chris: I think it was *Bransfield*.

Doug: Ok - it was the last ship call so literally we arrived on Signy in the morning, and I think she left the next day, and that was it for the winter.

[Part 1, 00:18:35] Chris: So you'd had no crevasse rescue?

Doug: No, none of that, I picked up all that. I mean the guys were really good on base, but I do remember being not as fully aware as I might have been about how careful you have to be, going into Base and things that look odd are quite natural, etc, but no the guys looked after me really well and I fitted in quite quickly. I took over from John Hall: he was the Diving Officer on South G. (Georgia). The Diving Officer at Signy was a guy called Dave Marsh I think, he left half way through the season, John came in took over from him, got things kind of organised and I had a 24 hour changeover from John Hall.

[Part 1, 00:19:20]Chris: And what were you diving for, this wasn't just to take photographs was it?

Doug: No no, this was a standard Signy Diving Officers role so you looked after the equipment on Base which was pretty simple to be honest: we had some twin-hose demand valves and some single cylinders, a one man recompression chamber at that point, so you'd test that every month, you'd look after the gear, service it, look after the diving records, basically you were there to help the scientists get their work done as efficiently as they could: there was a very free and easy policy about teaching people to dive.

When people came to Signy they didn't have to have a Medical before they came, if they wanted to dive we might tell Cambridge or we might just get on with it, and I taught – I think it wasn't that year but next time I went down everyone on base learned to dive, and we would go, sometimes we would make dives for a very scientific purpose. There was a lot of interest in going along and taking photographs, and so were some of the other people, so I think in that year let's say roughly '76 and '77, the winter and the summer let's say we did about 220 dives, probably about half were scientific and necessary, and the other ones were, 'Let's go and take photographs' or 'Let's go and check out this site cause were not quite sure what's there', and so you're just gathering a database. Diving only started in Signy intensively in '68 I think, so there was a lot known about Borge Bay and the immediate environs, but there was a lot of chances to go and look at some other places.

[Part 1, 00:21:07]Chris: How far afield were you getting.

Doug: Once we went across to Coronation I remember in the summer we took – that was the year when they got a decent size launch. Prior to that they had been using either inflatables or small dory's, they got a launch which had a little cabin on it and was a bit more seaworthy, and I remember in the summer of '76 and '77 we went across to Coronation Island, cause they went across there to replenish – there was an emergency hut over there so they tried to go over there once a year just to check the stores and the condition, so we took advantage of that, myself and Gordon Picken who was studying gastropods. He said 'Why don't we go across in the boat we'll dive the cove on Coronation and see if we can find anything over there' so we went over and made a dive. We didn't find anything particularly different but it was another dive site ticked off and with *Serola* sand the backup inflatables on Base, we did one or two circumnavigations of the island when it was calm weather and again we took advantage, took the dive gear and went for a quick dive as we were went round.

[Part 1, 00:22:24]Chris: Were you in fact finding new stuff, were you discovering new habitats and new colonies?

Doug: The secret when you go diving in the Antarctic, is that a lot of the shallow areas particularly around Signy, 'cause you get heavy Weddell Sea pack ice every year the flat areas shallower than fifteen metres, get a lot of ice-scour. In the really rich places you go looking underneath the overhangs in the rocks, and there are one or two really lovely sites if you go out of Borge Bay and turn right and go along a little bit along that coast there, there's a wonderful bit of about 50 metres long which is just a big deep overhang and there's lovely soft corals hanging down there and stuff like that and I think we discovered that site first of all. There's also an amazing rock called Powell Rock, which is the far side of Borge Bay and we dived a lot there and found some faces on there that I don't think had been seen before.

Gordon turned up a new species of gastropod on Signy during his studies, so the more time you spend underwater, whether it's watching seals or grovelling around. I remember during one winter '79 or '80, we were diving under the ice and I remember distinctly seeing a little group of Krill and I went in close and I could see them underneath the three dimensional structure of the ice. There was little pockets where algae had gathered and detritus and stuff growing and I remember seeing this krill in there gathering it up with its feeding apparatus, and I said this to Andy Clarke later on when I saw him in the summer and he said 'Oh I wonder if?'

It was the beginnings of how important the under-ice episode in krill's life is, and how there is food underneath for it even though the fact that they shrink in size when it's hard, you get it all the time and it's fascinating. There's a great paper that somebody sent me just yesterday, this John Davenport a scientist in Cork, he looked at underwater emperor penguin footage that I had got for Blue Planet, and he noticed how the penguins stream bubbles as they head towards the surface very fast and he did the maths and worked it all out: he figures these bubbles actually make it slide through the water faster and therefore it can accelerate and make the jump out onto the top and he's done this paper with all the physics in it. It's really good being thinking that you're contributing towards little things like that or just simply your observations open a door, because I'm always surprised how many marine scientists don't stick their head underwater. It's just good fun.

[Part 1, 00:25:15]Chris: Generally speaking did you find that the scientists accepted you as an equal with them that although you were not a trained scientist your observational powers were the same as theirs.

Doug: Do you mean now or when I was with BAS?

[Part 1, 00:25:25] Chris: I'm talking about the BAS years.

Doug: Oh BAS, all the scientists on base through the winter were all studying for their PhD's because back in those days BAS would take graduates with a 2-1, and they would offer PhD's and some of these students would go down for two and a half years and do all their field work, and then come back to Cambridge write it up, and at the end you had a PhD, so only in the summer would you get the post-Doc's down there, people who had their PhD's already and senior scientists, so it wasn't a case of being - I had the same qualifications as them - I found them all fascinating, they were a great mix of people and they all had their quirks, etc, we just got on well and if a scientist just wanted to do his work and no more, that

was fine: we'll get the dives over as little as possible but others, I think they welcomed a diver who was willing to go and just take photographs or go and explore new sites or stuff like that.

[Part 1, 00:26:34] Chris: You did a year up to April '77 and came home, and then you hadn't been back long when you went south again.

Doug: I can't remember when I decided exactly: I came out in April '77 like you say and went to South America for four months, did the classic long Fid trail through South America and finally got home about the end of August having worked my way up through South America to the Caribbean. I think I applied to BAS in good time for the next year and so they employed me and I remember saying, 'Look, last time I got on in Punta went straight to Signy stayed at Signy until April, came out, I don't think we even went to the Falklands we went straight to Monte, so I said, 'If I go down this time, I would like to go on the ship and because I know the score on Signy, I'd like to get a Peninsula trip, do all the reliefs and stuff.' BAS were really good and so I was made King Fid on the ship which is great because it gives you a chance to really know all the people and also know the crew and officers in a different way.

So we went down, I got to go to Halley and do the relief, I got down the Peninsula to Faraday for a big relief down there, didn't go as far as Rothera because it was too early in the season. Basically got to Signy in the middle-end of January, did the changeover and then did that winter and then had the following summer, and we were going to get picked up last call but of course that was the famous year when we got stuck. [Laughing]

[Part 1, 00:28:10] Chris: I'll come back to that [unintell]. You tooled yourself up rather better for photography on the second trip?

Doug: I decided that I wanted to do Signy photographic justice, so when I came back to UK in September of '77, I found that a person I had trained or had worked with in Jersey three years before, in the Dive School, he had gone to Germany and was now working for a commercial diving company, and back in those days again, to work commercially you didn't need quite as many qualifications as you do now. So he said 'We could do with a hand do you want to come out' so I went out there and for six months: he and I and another German diver, we worked in the freshwater reservoirs and canals of Germany doing really almost like labouring work, a lot of it was either simple video surveys of damage, but we also did a lot of concreting so you build the shuttering underwater and get the stuff poured then, and I did that for six months, and as BAS said – I knew by December, that BAS were happy to take me and they said, 'Start in June or July and you'll train up the new guys'.

So in that six or seven months I worked as a commercial diver, I made enough money that I bought myself a couple of Nikon F2's and housing and arranged to buy a flash in the States cause we were going over through Jacksonville. That was back in the days when BAS had a contract with the Americans to take some of their cargo down south. The ship would leave Southampton and went to the States, picked up stuff for the Americans and then went down to South America.

So there was this state of the art electronic flash, that you could only get in America, so I phoned the shop at great expense, 'cause this was 1987 [laughing], and when the ship docked in Jacksonville, it was there for two days, I drove down to Miami, picked up the Flash and

drove back to the ship. So when I went south, I had pretty good setup, an underwater housing, underwater flash, two Nikon F2's, and really blitzed the underwater scene and topside scene too and I'm still using photographs that I took in those days for presentations: they have been scanned now onto digital. In 1981 particularly and 1980 in the winter we had an amazing crabeater seal encounter.

That second winter the sea ice broke up at one point and we were left with an ice edge going all the way from Signy, all the way across the Coronation which is about seven miles away. On the left hand side looking from Signy was good solid ice and the right side open water. I remember we woke up one morning and about two thousand crabeater seals were all hauled out on the ice, all strung out in lines, all the way across to Coronation. I think this happened about August so the visibility was great, very gin clear, and we were able to snow-machine out along this ice and then go in off the ice edge and all these crabeater seals would come and swim round about us. So I've got photographs where you can count 28 seals all round about looking at the diver from above and Rick's down there at one point he's in shallower water and he's on the bottom and there's this fur seal just putting its flippers out and just looking at him straight in the eye. It was great they were there for three or four days and we dived with them four or five times, and then they just disappeared like that.

It was a really good chance to get some good photographs and the photography did obviously come on in leaps and bounds. We used to self-process our Ektachromes down there and so you could do a dive and then by evening you could see what you'd got and therefore go in the next time with [unintell].

[Part 1, 00:32:32]Chris: You were able to photograph those crabeater seals because you had been stranded so tell me about the story of April '80 when the ship didn't get in.

Doug: I can't remember the dates but roughly say January into February, *Bransfield* was on her way to Rothera, and she hit an uncharted rock, and was pretty badly damaged: they had to get divers down from Palmer: they looked at it and luckily it wasn't holed but it was severely damaged-bashed. So she limped north to Montevideo and back to the UK and that just left the *Biscoe* down there.

So *Biscoe* re-jigged her schedule, but she was also doing a programme called OBP, Offshore Biological Programme, so it meant that instead of *Bransfield* coming at the end of March to do our final call of summer, the final ship call was scheduled for *Biscoe* round about the twelfth of April I think as I recall. So at that point there were seven of us on Signy who should have been going home on that last ship call.

We were a mix of a couple of Scientists who had been on Signy two and a half years, a Met-Man from Halley who'd come in to service the metrological equipment, who'd been at Halley for two and half years, a couple of Scientists who should have been there, who'd just done a summer and were due to go back to Cambridge, and there was me. I can't think... anyway there were seven of us. There were a number of people on the ship due to come in.

Round about the last week of March, it got unseasonally cold and lots of pack ice started appearing from the south. It wasn't uncommon in Signy through the summers, for pack ice to come and hang around for a couple of days and then winds would change and blow it away south, but this stuff came and it just hung around and the temperature started going down and by early April 5th or 6th, the pack ice had been around for quite a while and we were getting

minus sixteen, minus seventeens. We could see the stuff beginning to freeze in between and of course it was the days before satellite photography shots, and Signy wasn't a great place, lousy weather and things, but we would go up on top of the ice cap as often as we could and we'd look around and it was just ten tenths to the horizon. But of course your view to the north is obscured by Coronation so we didn't know how far north this ice field went so we were joking amongst ourselves - '*Biscoe's* gonna have some fun gettin' in through this' and basically *Biscoe* (when she tried to come in), she was working just south of South G. I think on this scientific programme, she got within about 120 miles, and was hitting ten tenths ice, too big for her to push through in conditions where the leads were freezing and it would have been far too dangerous for her to come on.

So she bashed around and stuck to the edge and made the odd foray into it and was beaten back for probably five or six days and then they had to make the decision 'Look we could hang around here for a month and nothing might happen' so we got this very good telex in from Dick (Dick Laws), which must be on your files, saying how 'I have decided in the light of conditions, there's no further purpose served in the *Biscoe* staying where it is', and something about 'I'm sure this will disappoint some people but you will all rise to the occasion as Fids probably do'. So we sent back something formal, but I always remember the one that came in from the Fids on the ship itself which was a Telex that said 'We are going north, we may be some time' [laughing], to which we Telexed back, 'Ya bastards, leaving uz here to die.....'

So instead of something like thirteen people overwintering, i.e., the seven who'd gone plus two coming, we had eighteen overwintering people. But I have to say it was just a great year - no one was duplicated with their jobs: all the people who had finished their work like the scientist (Tom) the summer people, they all rose to the occasion brilliantly and chipped in, and didn't moan about it or things like that, and because we had a good year for sea ice and because we had extra people on base with lots of experience, we just had an orgy of travelling on Coronation. We were going to places that had never been visited before, or hadn't been visited almost since the '50's, '57, '58, early '60's when they were doing the surveying over there: we went west end to the east end. I climbed Mt Sladen that winter, for the first time that had been climbed, and we visited a few more peaks which hadn't been done before, and it was just a great winter for travelling and a good winter for sea-ice.

[Part 1, 00:37:37] Chris: Also I don't know it was you that fell down a crevasse, but there were three men that went down a crevasse?

Doug: There was a few folk [laughing], well there was let me think, I went down crevasses twice on Signy, once was on Sladen and that was just me went down, but yes the other one, was that the same winter?, that was at the back of: we were trying this peak called Wave Peak on Coronation, it's not the biggest peak, it's an easy peak to climb. We were at the back of the Sunshine Glacier at a place called Hi Style, and it was pretty poor contrast and all three of us were walking along the same bridge, and all three of us went down it. [laughing].

There was four of us, 'cause one person stayed on top, three of us went down and we didn't fall that far, I don't think it was that far, and we all got ourselves out and it was fine.

[Part 1, 00:38:33] Chris: Did that feel like a close call - in retrospect?

Doug: Well I think, maybe - the more you know about crevasses, the more you think back at a close call, ya I think anytime you go down - the second one was worse, that one you didn't have the feeling you were dropping that far and we hit a big snowbridge and everyone was fine. I suppose you do think, you might think a little bit, I dunno we didn't have that sort of fatalist attitude: we just got on with it, and you might think 'Yeah well, we were lucky, let's pay a bit more attention the next time'. The second one, we were climbing up Mt Sladen and I was leading, and we were going up in file like this, and I went in one and I remember distinctly falling for long enough that I could see the blue walls going past and then I was caught on the rope, and I was hanging there and it was a long way down, but luckily the guys up on top, they were down the slope so it was easy to arrest me and I had Jumars and all the usual stuff, so I was just able to Jumar and get out. That would have been a bad one to have gone down – it's terrible, [laughing].

[Part 1, 00:39:47] Chris: Were there other tricky moments in your Antarctic experience, other moments when you saw your life flashing before your eyes?

Doug: Well I've fallen through the sea ice a couple of times: they're not life flashing through your eyes. One of them was when filming - I stepped into a slushed over Weddell Seal hole, it happened so fast – the thing that surprises you when you have an accident like falling down a crevasse or falling through the sea-ice - something you always think you're gonna get a bit more warning about but you don't, you're just bang your just there, it's almost like you watch explosions and they always happen in slow motion, whereas they don't they just 'Bumph', or an accident getting hit by a car your just hit, and if you had any more time, you might be able to avoid it.

Anyway so, falling through the sea-ice was a bit scary, just because it happened so fast, and then we dropped a skidoo through the sea ice. That kind of had a horrible inevitability about it [laughing]. We were skidooing, there were two of us on one snow-machine and the other guy was driving and we were both pretty aware, pretty looking but it had been one of these very cold spells and then a little bit of snow, and you can normally tell thin ice cause it's a little bit greyer, but this one had just frozen enough on the surface and had drop of snow on it and it just looked the same colour so we hit this bit and suddenly both of us could feel that the tracks were not biting the same.

I looked round there was a big plume of slush being kicked up - we both knew, I said 'this isn't good give it some gun, let's see if we can get out of it', but almost as he turned it, you could feel it slowing down as more and more slush got kicked up, and it was like a slow motion, it just 'bRRRrrrrrrrr' and as it stopped it was at this kind of angle and he stepped off to one side and I stepped the other side, cause the ice was just thick enough to take our weight, and we stood there a metre away and watched the Skidoo just 'blub.....' stern first, luckily it was only over about ten metres of water and a couple of days later the ice had thickened up enough that we went up and we could see an area of disturbed ice where it had gone through, and we just dived down and brought it up to the top, floated it.

[Part 1, 00:42:30] Chris: Did it work? [Laughing]

Doug: Oh ya yaya fine no problem. Before we lifted it I got a great picture of Dave Rootes sitting on it in a wet suit, underwater, "revving it up" [Laughing]. I remember also when George who was driving it - we obviously walked back to base. It happened off North Point,

neither of us was wet, we just stepped off, he even took his rucksack off the back, so it didn't go down with anything valuable on it but we walked back to base and the Diesel Mechanic, who was also responsible for the snow-machines, he had seen us ten minutes before going out with a snow-machine and now walking back so he said 'had a bit of trouble with it did you?' and George said 'ya its ok though we just flooded the engine...' [Laughing], and left it at that.

[Part 1, 00:43:23] Chris: What's this story about diving with leopard seals at Signy? According to my informant Ken Richard, you were the first Signy person to dive with leopard seals.

Doug: There had been some come into the Cove I think they had been seen by divers but there was a lot of concern about leps' at that point. Part of it came from just the reputation that they had, but also the Palmer people, they did a lot of diving at Palmer, and they seemed to have more issues with leopard seals, maybe they behaved in a more aggressive manner. I don't think so, with a lot of hindsight it was probably just curiosity. The general procedure or protocol at Signy was to be very aware of them and to leave the water if they appeared or were seen. Because we had this new bigger boat, we were able to go a bit further afield. I think we were round at the penguin colony at Gourlay Point and decided to have a Scuba Dive there looking for stuff, and when we were diving a lep' came to us. I think me and the other diver just decided that ... 'He seems to be ok, he's just curious, let's not immediately abandon the dive, let's just sit and watch him for a while', so we did and he just swam around us for a while and seemed to be fine, and then left. I think we tried again, I didn't have the camera with me that time, so I remember planning to go round again try for something but I don't think we got the chance, I think the weather was always lumpy in that corner so we didn't.

It was the beginnings of my feelings which eventually – when I left BAS and went into wildlife filming, fairly soon after that I got approached by Alasdair Fothergill to do this series about the Antarctic which became Life in the Freezer, and when we were thinking of new things that hadn't been done I said I think we could do a good job on leopard seals, because my limited experience with them, I don't think they would, I don't think they're as dangerous as you think. Had you asked me that before the unfortunate accident to Kirsty (Browne), I would have said the same, now I've to couch it in terms that she was very very unlucky but they are big animals and if they decide to go for you that's just how, they'll take you by surprise. She just was so unfortunate to meet that lep' and also a lep' that took hold of her long enough and took her down and all the rest of it. I think in many other circumstances, you could change any one bit of that unfortunate incident, had she seen it a fraction of a second earlier, had it been almost any other leopard seal as her, it might have had a very different outcome.

[Part 1, 00:46:17] Chris: When you were in the water with the leopard Seal then, what was your overriding emotion, were you timid?

Doug: Oh just excited, it was just great to have, we'd done a lot of diving with Weddell seals before then, we used to go round to the west coast and up to North Point, 'cause there was Weddell seals breeding up there. We used to take people up there and we'd dive with them, we'd find cracks or holes big enough that we'd just drop in and then we're able to work underneath them. We'd dive with fur seals as well and stuff like that. So leps' are charismatic

seals, they're clever seals, and so to get a close look at one it's that classic excitement of something new and something that's potentially dangerous. It's just a great privilege and great excitement, and there's also the bullshit element, isn't that right? [Laughing] A'hem!

[Part 1, 00:47:14] Chris: What's all this about playing the Fiddle at a Ceili in an ice cave.

Doug: Well I used to play the Fiddle, I haven't played for a long time and I sometimes wish and think about taking it up. Ya I took the Fiddle down to, I was told at Cambridge about the Midwinter celebrations and therefore bring any amusement down with you then by all means do so, so I took the Fiddle down with me I think I took it down all the times I was south but we did have a pretty good Ceili that time. I told this Billy Connolly joke, which the hero played the Fiddle, and about a Glaswegian Wrestler who was called Wee Shuggie - among some people at BAS I still get called Shug because of that joke, although Shug is actually Scottish for Hugh, but Shug sounded like Doug. Then we had a pretty big Ceili too on the *Bransfield* one year, I can't remember if it was on the way down, it was the year that Stuart's wife Sue went down, so it must have been 1980 because it was the year we had a sea-ice relief at Signy which I think was December 1980. It was pretty unusual to have to do the relief over sea-ice at Signy, usually by October into November the sea-ice had gone and it was very rarely solid enough, but I remember in 1980 that year we got stuck it was a very good year for sea-ice, and when the *Branny* came down she could nose into the ice and we brought everything ashore and so it meant relief happened quicker and so I think we had this big Ceili party after that, where everybody got drunk and got chased around by Eric Heathorne and those sort of things [laughing].

[Part 1, 00:49:04] Chris: Was it difficult to keep the violin in tune at minus 30?

Doug: No, I think we played it all inside, we didn't take it outside.

[Part 1, 00:49:06] Chris: You weren't in an ice cave?

Doug: Did I play in an ice cave? Maybe Ken is remembering better than me, maybe I did take it down at one point to an ice cave, if he remembers then I must have done it and it probably was bloody cold, it wouldn't be so much keeping it in tune, it would be keeping your fingers from freezing up. The one I remember was the Midwinter one inside, but we did have parties in the ice cave, 'cause there was an ice cave in one of the Glaciers for a year or so, these things are just ephemeral obviously the ice front breaks and that's the end of it.

[Part 1, 00:49:42] Chris: So you came away from Signy after your extended stay, back to the UK, back to Aberdeen University to write up.

Doug: They very generously gave me three months in Aberdeen, 'cause I had done a little scientific project on respiration on gastropods because I guess it took me, - I graduated in '73 and it probably took ten years to decide that I really didn't want to be a scientist. I always kept it as a backup in my mind so to speak, and going down and doing that respiration project was my idea - BAS were happy for it to be done and I had a supervisor Dominic Houlihan up in Aberdeen. So when I came back, BAS gave me three months up there to go and write it up. So we wrote it up as a Paper and it came out and all the rest of it.

[Part 1, 00:50:30] Chris: Were you always intending to return to the Antarctic again, or did the opportunity come as a surprise?

Doug: I'm trying to think, I remember Dick Laws saying to me in Cambridge when I got back from that as we call it the enforced winter - let's see, I got back to Cambridge about May or June 1981. I remember before I went up to Aberdeen to write up I was talking to Dick, and he said 'is there anything else you'd like to do in BAS' and I said 'Well I think I had a really good time on Signy, but the one base that appeals to me is Halley. I'd been at Halley to do a relief, and he said 'what!' and I said 'yeah well there's something about Halley' [laughing], everybody goes on about it being the real Antarctic, and I think I also said it the only place you can get a really good look at emperor penguins, and I just laughed about it.

So I think shortly after that they offered me a summer BC at Rothera, initially for one summer, but that was when they were just getting into full time summer BC's, so it might have been initially one year but then maybe become something permanent. I wasn't that keen on it because it was sort of Admin and things like that. Then the idea was brooked that, 'would I be interested in Halley BC during in the year of the rebuild?' and so I said 'Ooh yeah that sounds interesting'. So I re-joined BAS about April or so of '82. They had this unique innovative design with the wooden tube with the building built inside it. Nobody knew if you could actually build this, it was only on paper. The company who had put the design in, or who were going to build the pieces for it, were based in Ross on Wye. So the idea was that we would do a test-build there.

[Part 1, 00:52:52] Chris: Was this Armco?

Doug: No, Armco is the metal stuff, which the previous Halley had been made out of. This was a company called Structaply, whose previous experience extended to making fruit-bins. I don't know why, you have to talk to Al Smith why Structaply were chosen. I don't know where the idea for the design came from, I can't imagine a fruit-bin building company - but what they could make was, pre-fabricated panels of wood with insulation sandwiched between them, industrial type ply on the outside, and build the whole thing pre-fabricated.

So basically, the tubes at Halley were pretty long, I think they were about thirty metres, and there were four of them, and they were joined with connecting bits. The four tubes were slightly different and they could all be made with the same bits so the idea was, at Ross on Wye over that summer, we built one tube to see if it would work, and then we built the four buildings inside them. As we built them, we made sure that we had all the bits, that they all fitted together and we also labelled them. Each tube was colour coded and had its number, so E3 with a red splash on every corner - because we knew that one of the key things to building the thing was, it all had to come off this ship as soon as possible but then it had to get laid out on the snow so that the Builders, as they built it, could ask for bits required. So not too many bits were piling up round about the actual building site.

We ended up I remember officially - BAS finances made a screw-up, because it ended up that we all, myself and the four Builders that were going to be involved plus the Electrician, plus all the key Builder people, we ended up working in Ross on Wye for about four months. We were staying in Hotels and we rented a house for ourselves, and we were getting paid as if we were living in Cambridge. All those expenses were covered, and I think that shouldn't have been the case, it should have been worked some other way whereby we had a lot less money. I think we were given an allowance but by living in a house, we were almost making money hand over fist as well [laughing], but it was a really good summer, we had a great

time, it was one of those good UK summers, and we got on really well with the Structaply people.

[Part 1, 00:55:28] Chris: So are we now talking about Halley 3 then?

Doug: Halley 4 think. It was the biggest load that the *Bransfield* had ever carried, 'cause it all had to go on *Branny*. That's right, I was into the photography as well and I offered and was taken up. I said I think this is a big enough project we should do a photographic record of it. So I took all the stills of the test construction, and took all the stills as we built it and through the summer and all the rest. When I came back after that winter, I worked in Cambridge for a month putting together an AV presentation of it, which is in still in the archive.

So it was great and we went down, and it wasn't the easiest of winters I have to say, because there were some very strong personalities on Base. The chief Builder was a guy called Jack Scotcher, who's a great guy. Jack had done two winters at Halley, and Jacks second winter was when Miles Mosely was killed by the plane, and Jack took over winter BC, for that second winter. Jack was then the chief Builder of the project, and having been there for two winters, Jack knew Halley and the difficulties of it, physiologically and all the rest of it. His leadership style was different from mine, and it was difficult for him because having been BC for two years, he then had effectively to let me do it how I thought was best. He had issues, and also I wasn't a Builder, and the only thing I could lead was kind of physiologically. Jack had problems because not all the builders were as good as he was, and I had to do a lot of balancing between saying to the people who weren't so good, 'Can you lift your game up a bit and keep Jack happy', and then saying to Jack 'Look can you not put these people on something where it doesn't matter too much', or 'look Jack, you like to work on a Sunday, but these people like to get rat-arsed and you won't see them until 12 or 2 o'clock, that's life', 'but we've got a lot of work we should be ...' and so on.

Anyway we kinda got through it and Jack and I are friends now. We've seen each other since, and that's fine. It wasn't easy but I made no bones about – one of the attractions for Halley for me, was going to the emperor penguins and seeing as much of them as I could. Being BC you could legitimately commandeer Base vehicles, and we had a great Tractormech who was also interested in going.

[Part 1, 00:58:28]Chris: Who was that?

Doug: Oh, that was a guy called Dave ... can't remember. [Dave Sycamore]

[Part 1, 00:58:30]Chris: Don't worry. So you took your cameras to the penguins did you?

Doug: Well the important thing was I took a movie camera as well.

[Part 1, 00:58:38] Chris: Was this a new departure?

Doug:Well it was, 'cause one of the huge things to come out of my enforced winter, was that in January 1981, David Attenborough and a film crew arrived on Base from *HMS Endurance*, for about four days I think. Back in those days obviously, access to the Antarctic was much less easy than it is now, and David had just embarked on *Living Planet*, the second of his monster series. *Life on Earth* had gone down brilliantly - now it was *Living Planet*, which was all about ecosystems, habitats. Because of the kudos of the BBC, etc, they were offered a

place on Endurance for three weeks to go down to the Peninsula and South Georgia to just film what they could as they went round. Signy was on their stops and about three or four days before they were due to get there we had a radio-comms with them, 'can we come ashore for a few days, and do you think we could film some ice-fish?'

We knew how to catch ice-fish, you had to put down a net quite deep. You didn't usually get them above about 100 or 150 feet. If you put the net down one night, collected them the next day, they were pretty hardy, you could put them in the aquarium and they would stay alive. We used to send them home to Cambridge periodically.

So we said 'Yeah sure we can get you some ice-fish'. So they rolled up on base, helicoptered in, landed, they were made very welcome, because of the weather being the way it was on Signy, it was an obvious decision that they would stay on Signy rather than go back and forth to the ship every night. Not long ago, we had built a new Dive Store on Signy, so the Dive Shop was pretty big, so I said why don't you base yourself in here, you can get the gear spread out you can dry....and there wasn't much diving going on, so I said 'I will be happy to carry you to where you want, I can drive the boats and I can take you the best places'.

So I had a really good time, and in that three or four days I definitely saw how good a time they were. I also took Hugh in to film these ice-fish and went in off the Jetty, and it was a typical summer day on Signy, a bit of a slop, visibility maybe seven or eight metres. Just two months prior, I had been diving in 100foot vis with Weddell seals and I remember saying [to Hugh] 'You are in the Antarctic, but boy you should come here for a winter,y'know this is when you want to do it...', but ...they said 'oh well that's not possible is it'. And so we had a bit of a laugh about it. But I do distinctly remember carrying away from that meeting with David thinking, these people are doing something that seems really worthwhile, and they're having a great time doing it, it ticks a lot of the boxes that I enjoy doing, diving, photography, etc, and I also realised that while coming to the Antarctic to make a good record of stills, even better would be somehow coming doing it movie-wise.

So my thoughts were turning to movie at that point - I also had been given a movie camera for the winter, it was just a little Super8 thing. I'd shot some stuff but obviously I hadn't been able to process it. So I came back, and then got into Halley and emperors and things, and thought I'm gonna take a movie camera down. So I bought a 16mm Bolex, and I spoke to Dick (Laws) and he said 'Well if you can get photographs it will be fine we can use them as well', and I wrote to the same producer Ned, whom I'd met on Base, to say I was going down. He said 'Well unfortunately Living Planet is due for transmission in '83, so you'll be in the Antarctic so we can't ask you for anything, but the fact that you are going, accessing emperor penguins is pretty unusual, so I will circulate your letter amongst Producers, and see if anyone else is doing something'.

So this Producer called Geoffrey Buswells was about to embark on a programme called Birds for all Seasons, which covered birds all over the world. I met him in London and he said, 'Ok well you seem like a reasonable chap, here's some rolls of film if you can expose them then let's see what you've got', so I took down some BBC stock and some of my own, shot some and when I went back afterwards put them to Geoffrey he liked what he saw. He then asked me to do some research for some other Antarctic material that he wanted, and when I looked into it, I realised pretty quickly that a lot of what he wanted was on Signy through the summer. The problem was that he wanted early season Adele's all the way through to empty

rookeries at the end of the season. He wanted snow petrels and Pintados and 'Jeeps and various things, so I pointed this out and he said 'a bit of a problem, my budget won't extend that far' and he went away and thought.

Then he took the very big step of saying to me 'Look you're pretty naïve about film-making; some of your emperor penguin stuff's ok, but a lot of it could be improved. If I get you to go for two or three days with a cameraman who knows what he's doing, would you be willing to go to Signy. I can't pay you the proper rate', in fact, he gave me one eighth of the rate that a cameraman should have got, and the upshot of it was that I did learn a lot from the cameraman.

I went down and spent the whole summer at Signy got some good stuff and when that series came out about six months later, the first programme was the polar programme, and half of it was in the Antarctic, thirty minutes worth, and of that about twenty-five minutes was mine. Suddenly I had this perfect what we call a Show-Reel, well edited, soundtrack, David doing the narration – was it David? Anyway, a fully narrated fully finished product, which I could then take to people.

So it first occurred to me about wildlife filming in about '81. By '86 I had five years it took, in which time I did the emperors, the extra bit of shooting for Birds for all Seasons, I had decided I needed better equipment, and by '86 I had also gone to Dick (Laws) and written up an idea for two films on an Antarctic winter, and I'd sold them to Survival Anglia, and by October '86 I knew I was on my way south in '87 again.

End of Part One

Doug Allan PART 2

[Part 2, 00:00:00] Chris Eldon Lee: This is Doug Allan recorded by Chris Eldon Lee, on the 19th June 2011. Doug Allan Part 2.

There are some episodes in the archives describing some of your adventures whilst you were with FIDS, and there's this Travel Report from Signy from the winter of '79, which actually gives a much more detailed account of the crevasse rescue?

Doug:[laughing]. We always tried to get across to Coronation as often as we could, but ease of access was determined by how good the sea ice was, between us and Coronation. We used to like exploring, so four of us were up at the back of the Sunshine Glacier onto a place called Hi-style which lets you have a good view down onto the north coast of Coronation. I remember it wasn't very good contrast and there are funny crevasse lines run across there 'cause it's quite undulating ground, and I think I dropped through a bridge first, the other four were on the surface but the problem was that we were almost all walking along parallel to the crevasse, in other words, we weren't crossing the crevasse at 90 degrees, which is the safe way. Someone further back the line from me, crawled forward to get a better look at the hole I'd gone down.

[Part 2, 00:01:32] Chris: This according to the Base Report, was Ian

Doug: Ok Ian, right, and he then tumbled down the same place that I went, which pulled the third person on the line also down the hole. Luckily we all landed on a snow bridge maybe ten or twelve metres down I think, and we still had one person left up on top which I think would be Rick, 'cause it was Rick, Ian, Paul & myself. Now Rick luckily was still up on top, and he therefore was able to get a good belay in, and we were all still connected and had Jumars, etc., so we all extricated ourselves. I remember Paul hit himself with his ice-Ax on the way down, so he had a bit of a gash across the top of his nose, but we all got out and we all came back, so that was another great story for the campfire !

[Part 2, 00:02:31] Chris: The following winter, which was the enforced winter you did an expedition to Mount Napier in August, what are your memories of that particular expedition?

Doug: Napier was one of the loveliest peaks on Coronation when you looked across, it was part of the ridge that ran down from the highest point on Coronation, which name escapes me. There was a ridge ran down from the highest point on Coronation, down toward Devils Peak, it basically made up the north east side of the Sunshine Glacier. Napier was this peak that was halfway down that ridge skyline, and it had only been climbed once before by Jerry Light in about late sixties or maybe early seventies, so we wanted to climb Napier because it was one of the nicest peaks, and because it hadn't been climbed very much.

So the typical days would be -you would try to get a feel for the weather. Good weather at Signy meant looking at the pressure. So the pressure had been low, say 980, but it was climbing, so for a day it was maybe 980 up to a 1000, weather was starting to settle, blue skies, you might just begin to bet that tomorrow might be a good day. So you'd make plans and if it was a good looking morning at five or six o'clock, and the pressure was still climbing, you would set off. If you were lucky you might be able to get a snow-machine ride across to Coronation, which would save seven miles of walking. You get dumped at the bottom of the Sunshine, and you make your way up the side of the Sunshine Glacier, across the glacier and then up Mount Napier.

That was how we did it, I think it was a day ascent. Sometimes we would go across the night before and make a camp in Shingle Cove and then go out from there. But it was a rare day on Signy when you had two good days in a row. Signy was the mankiest, the cloudiest BAS Base and it wasn't uncommon even and especially in the summer, to have whole months go by with no sunshine recorded at all. There was an unwritten rule on Signy, that if the weather was good, work went out the window, everybody could just disappear, and they did.

The Cook - and once the Radio Operator had done his sched in the morning, everyone would go out to wherever they wanted, and it was such a marvellous place to travel just to go and be with the animals. An amazing place - I don't think I realised until I left Signy and travelled more widely in the Antarctic, just what a little gem that place is. The number of penguins, the species, number of birds, all to be accessible on foot, it was great. Of course, on Signy as well we had these three field huts at different parts of the island. None of them were - Gourlay was about 45 minutes' walk from Base, North Point and one at Foca was about the same, and the one at Cummings, the other corner was a bit longer 'cause you have to go over the ice cap to it. All of them were handy to penguin colonies, all of them had at least two bunks in them,

and again, we didn't have to ask permission from Cambridge to spend - it was certainly one and maybe two nights off Base, it was just something you could do.

So you could do this anytime in the summer and it was a wonderful freedom, and you could do it on your own your own, you could go away for a night on Base (off Base?) without a radio sched,

[Part 2, 00:06:15] Chris: One person?

Doug: One person. You didn't have to make a sched, you would just sign out on the book, tell the BC I'm going down I'll be back tomorrow at 4 o'clock, that was it. I think two nights you might take a VHF, but it was really easy going. It was great.

[Part 2, 00:06:27] Chris: There's another document that's been found [unintell] that concerns you being at Halley and a field trip to the Stancomb Wills Glacier, in November 1983 with Simon Goswell, Dale Hall, Dave Sycamore.

Doug: Dave Sycamore was the diesel mechanic that I told you about.

Yes well, field trips at Halley were a bit different from field trips at Signy, because there wasn't really anywhere to go. You could go as far as you wanted in any one direction, and we decided to go out on a field trip, to go and check out what they called the Low-shelf area.

If the ice conditions were bad near Halley - for Halley relief, they would rely on having a drivable snow-ramp up the back of the creek, so they would pull in and ideally this fissure in the ice-front would be still frozen solid, and at the back of the fissure there would be a ramp that would take you up onto the top of the ice shelf, and you could then drive on to Halley. Some years, that snow-ramp wasn't well enough developed, or the ice might have broken out, so you wouldn't be able to land at what they called Mobster Creek, you'd have to go to what they called the low-shelf which was much further away, about thirty miles away. That was an area where the shelf-ice dipped much lower, the ice shelf was thinner and the ship could go right alongside the shelf, and the shelf didn't come higher than the gunwales and the bulwarks of the ship. You would load-offload straight onto the ice shelf and then drive the stuff back. I think we went up in the winter just to check out the low-shelf area, to see exactly where it was so that if there was an issue with *Bransfield* having to go there, we would know what the route was like for surface vehicles.

We would take out snow-machines and camping gear as usual, and make the best we could of it and we would stop off at the emperor penguins on the way. But you were always trying to get as far away from base as you could within reason, bearing in mind if the weather got bad, you could be trapped for several days away and you had to be careful as you were going away from any flagged routes, you needed good contrast to travel, etc. 'cause you were in potentially tricky crevasse danger.

[Part 2, 00:08:59] Chris: One final note before we move forward, I was asked to ask you, whether you ever saw any scallops at Signy?

Doug: No, we never had scallops per se, there were lots of molluscs obviously in the seabed, but there was nothing that you would - there were probably relatives of scallops, but there were no scallops per se.

[Part 2, 00:09:19] Chris: Ok. I'm interested in this period, between January and March 86, when you were on the Ross Sea McMurdo area, there was an attempt to establish a Greenpeace Base. This is suddenly political activity on your part?

Doug: Well what happened was, Greenpeace decided they wanted to establish a base in the Antarctic for five years. They wanted to do it as a sort of indication, that you could have a small Base, minimal environmental impact, but they also quite honestly put it where they did, because they wanted to put pressure on the Americans, sort of 'we're keeping an eye on you'.

[Part 2, 00:10:01] Chris: So it was in McMurdo?

Doug: In McMurdo Sound, yes. I think they wanted to get close to Scott's old Base, either Cape Evans or Cape Royds they wanted to go there. They realised quite sensibly that they didn't have much experience of taking ships into ice, I'm not sure which Fid, they contacted a Fid, and he realised the best way to cover themselves was to employ some other Fids, at key places in the operation, so I think they went after an Ice Master who used to work on the ships, they - one of the chief builders for the Base was going to be this guy called John, who was at Halley with me, nice guy, a bit of a rough diamond but nice guy.

There was another Fid whose name escapes me from Halley who was going to do something with it, and they asked me because I had driven across Sea-ice with Snocats, and how to survive the cold and stuff like that, so I was just going to be – I wasn't going to be diving but I was going to be one of the four or five BAS people involved in the project. The down side was that it meant we were away over Christmas, so I think we left UK on something like the 7th December, flew down to Australia, and got on the ship there, I think it was Australia?, and we sailed from Australia down into the Ross Sea, and the ice was really bad.

That was the same year that Roger Mear and Bob Swan were trying to walk to the Pole. So we got into the mouth of McMurdo Sound and we couldn't get to where we wanted to, the ice was too heavy. So we had to, partly to kill the time and partly to keep sending newsworthy material, but we sailed along the Ross Ice Shelf it was the intention to go to the Bay of Whales, but I don't think we got that far, but we did manage to make a landing at Low Shelf ice area, 'cause they had this thing called Antarctic Day, which I think was 1st February when they wanted to raise awareness. So we all piled ashore and held up a Greenpeace flag.

The ice never cleared out of McMurdo Sound, we went all the way along the ice shelf, all the way back, the ice was still bad. By this time, Swan and Mears boat had sunk, [laughing], and the Americans were 'ohhhh, keep away were not ... y'know.....' [not getting involved] and I think they made the wise decision, this just wasn't the year to do it, so we sailed out and they cranked up their plans and they did go back the next year, but I wasn't involved, I was doing something else, but they went down and established a Base.

I went because I wanted to go back to the Antarctic again, I do think Greenpeace had some good points, I quite like the idea of being a thorn in the side of big things, and Greenpeace were very adamant that they weren't going to bother anybody which they didn't, but that was my only involvement with them.

[Part 2, 00:13:24] Chris: Ok, well obviously we can't keep you out of the Antarctic 'cause you keep on going back. At some point was it as a result of a Survival Anglia television programme that you made, that the BBC started to take you more seriously?

Doug: Ya I suppose so, I had a reputation with the BBC, I was known to them for that emperor penguin filming, and for the Birds for all Seasons. But what made the Survival connection was, when I was with BAS, I started to sell slides through a company called Oxford Scientific Films, which were based in Oxford, they had a slide library. Oxford Scientific Films also made films for the BBC and for independent people and in about 1985, Survival and OSF got together to agree sort of joint output and because of that, Survival had a producer permanently based at OSF developing ideas.

I was in OSF with a slide submission and I met the Survival producer, and started talking to him about the idea I had for a film and he was very interested. I had already spoken to Dick(Laws) and said 'I have these ideas, one about Weddell seals and one about diving under the ice, if I can get a commissioner interested, would you be willing to help me – would you approve it in principle', 'cause I didn't want to start selling an idea and then find that BAS said that you can't do that. So Dick said 'well those are good subjects Weddell seals and that, they would be good to promote the work that we do at Signy'. So he was fine it was literally that informal.

Having met the producer I wrote up the ideas for the two films and they were nice and strong ideas, because I could back them up with all the stills that I had. At that time luckily Survival were thinking of doing a two hour special on the Antarctic 'cause it was coming up for renewal of the Treaty. Survival wanted to do a sort of documentary/ newsy type thing about science in Antarctica. They were interested in not only the two half hours, but also chunks of more people working in the Antarctic, more scienceso they could have some winter footage for their two hour programme.

So it worked out ok [unintell]. I did that in '87 when I came back I then had a body of work that I could point to, so I started doing a little bit of freelance work for the BBC and for other people. Then part of it was being known for the Arctic, people get confused and start asking you to go the Arctic 'cause they haven't twigged that it's the wrong end of the world. I was asked to go the Arctic and look for some narwhals for a series called Trials of Life which was a big series, so I went and did an Arctic shoot, this was in August 1988: I did the BAS thing in 1987, and by 1988 I was doing bits and pieces freelance and was asked to go to the narwhals.

Then again, this is just pure luck I went to the narwhals to hopefully get film of them fighting putting their tusks up and waving them and bashing them. That is not what narwhals do, and I didn't see anything of it, but I did get some very nice shots of a female with her calf swimming around me looking natural and I got a lot of underwater sound. I was recording sound, and the producer who wanted the narwhals fighting, he looked at the very non-exciting stuff that I brought back, and he said we probably won't use this.

There was another film being done about communication and the producer for that programme was going to use dolphins, but when he saw my narwhal stuff, he thought this is interesting, it's a bit different nobody's seen narwhals whereas lots of people have seen dolphins. There was enough science known about the sounds so he said to the other producer, 'can I use the narwhal stuff in this other film', and that was how I got to know Alasdair Fothergill.

Alasdair at that time was an assistant producer so he had a long way yet to climb, but we got on ok and we talked about the Arctic and things. He took that footage in August of 1988, and then about a year later, when Trials of Life was finished, he came to me and said 'I want to do a series about the Antarctic', no one's done the Antarctic properly, will you help me to put together some programme ideas, and help with logistics ideas.

So I brought Dave Rootes into the equation at that point 'cause Dave was still, I think working for BAS, anyway we had the total insight to do a programme like this – he was gonna work with BAS – we said you want to be sure and make contact with these people 'cause you may want to go onto Bases and do things, but you need independent transport. BAS will have an itinerary and they will stick to it, and you might get ashore in some places you won't get [.....] so that was one of the big key successes about it.

But interestingly just as a slight aside, our first idea, Alasdair said, the thing with this series about the Antarctic is, the BBC won't want six programmes about the blue chip, we have to make it different. So Alasdair had just finished a series of a couple of big live events where they had a weekend of live transmissions underwater from the Red Sea, so he was into that technology. So he said 'What I'd like to do- how about we do this, let's call it a Week in the Freezer, and we'll have five programmes and well pre-record four of them, but then the fifth programme will be a series of live transmissions from the Antarctic;

I think we've got the technology to do South Georgia, we've probably got the technology if we get the Navy on board, to do it from the tip of the Peninsula': this is back in 1989, 'Pretty ambitious stuff y'know'. So I said fine let's do that, so we wrote up a nice project where I was gonna be chief cameraman.

BBC said 'Great idea, we love the Antarctic, but you see all this live stuff, Week in the Freezer ... forget it, just give us six half-hours of good blue-chip wildlife. So Alasdair raised twice as much money as had ever been raised for a half hour programme, and that was where Life in the Freezer came from.

Then other people were coming to me for the Arctic, so I went from Life in the Freezer to a geographic thing called Life at the Edge, which was a big well-funded special about the Arctic, which was two years of filming. Then immediately off that went into the Polar Bear special for the BBC, and then went off straight into Blue Planet which was three years of filming, and then came almost straight after that into one called, A Boy Among Polar Bears, which is about Inuit. So I've never been far from the poles - I think there's only one year since '76, when I haven't been to the Arctic or Antarctic.

[Part 2, 00:20:53]Chris: Well this is for British Antarctic Survey, so let's look at the Life in the Freezer series; how were relations as you recall them between the Broadcasting Corporation and the Antarctic Survey, was it always cordial?

Doug: I think so, I'm not privy to what might go on, I think there can sometime be frustrations with any organisation that gets involved with a filming operation because they have different priorities. Sometimes they are thinking 'Why are they spending so long doing so and so, why aren't they covering this'. Sometimes the scientists can feel short changed because they would like the film to be more concentrating on the science, but I think generally they get on pretty well, because at the end of the day particularly in the Antarctic, anything that raises the profile of the Antarctic is a good thing.

Personally I think there's a phenomenal scope for a series of programmes, you could do it with BAS or especially with the Americans, where with reality-filming, nothing is scripted, you follow the trials and tribulations of a field season in the Antarctic. I think if you chose the projects and you choose them partly for their scientific worthiness, partly for their scientific spectacularness, partly because 'You see that scientist, he would be great on camera, he's forever losing his temper or coming out with great wide sweeping statements' all these things would come together, you could really do a good number. You'd have to take a bit of a chance because you would be filming things - it's when things get tough, that when the best television comes in, but I think you could do really well with that.

I think BAS generally have always been very supportive of Life in the Freezer and other programmes that I have been involved with in the Antarctic, but I think inevitably it does depend on who is involved and wildlife filming nowadays and particularly in the Antarctic and the Arctic or with certain animals like whales your reputation does precede you. If you have a reputation as being a difficult prickly character, then you won't have doors open to you which you would have if you had been reasonable with people.

[Part 2, 00:23:31] Chris: It's interesting you talk of doing a fly on the wall documentary, I was talking to one of the Halley team from about ten years ago, and she was at Halley when they started doing Big Brother on TV. They all just hooted with laughter because here was this concept of putting people in an enclosed environment for a period of time, and seeing how they got on together, and Fids have been doing it for decades.

Doug: I agree it is mad, and I think, there is just so much that is still unique about BAS and about the people who go down there.

[Part 2, 00:24:06] Chris: Amazing characters?

Doug: There are amazing characters and for the public, you just need to talk about the Antarctic, and people are immediately interested.

[Part 2, 00:24:17] Chris: For Life in the Freezer then, what did you find yourself filming, where were you sent, and what were you doing?

Doug: For Life in the Freezer, our main ship was one called *Able J* which was probably the best ship I've ever worked off. It was 100ft long, ice strengthened, especially quiet engines on rubber mountings so we could approach whales. Me with Pete Scoones were the two underwater specialists but we did topside as well. We also worked with Jerome Poncet and his yacht the *Damian*, and those two vessels would act as a diving base, but we would also move camera crews to different locations on the Peninsula as and when they were filming things.

So we did three trips; our first trip was from January until early March of '91 I think, that was a monster trip. Alasdair spent half the budget on that one trip he was really chancing it. We had about five cameramen down there, five good people. Myself and Pete Scoones stayed on *Able J* most of the time 'cause that was our diving base and there were film crews on Deception, there was a big shoot, Cuverville was another big shoot, there were some down at Port Lacroix. Then we all came together for the big climactic shoot at the end which was the leopard seals and Adelie's which we filmed partly at Torgersen in front of Palmer Station, but more for the underwater side of things round at Dream Island, which was just round the

corner. We'd done a big job on the research at Dream. The reason we went to Dream, is because the area immediately in front of Palmer is very milky water because there are big glaciers, lots of runoff. Round the corner at Dream, it's a little bit cleaner water and it went really well.

The following season we did I think about an eight week trip to South Georgia before Christmas, and about a six to seven week trip to South G, after Christmas. It wasn't to be honest quite as exciting, 'cause the diving is lot harder there but we did different species, and Alasdair really loves South Georgia because it's got a bigger range of birds in a way.

Life in the Freezer was very very popular, it was a real –it's still the best overall programme there is on the Antarctic for wildlife, although they've got one coming out later this year called Frozen Planet which does a pretty good job.

[Part 2, 00:26:52] Chris: Which again you were involved in?

Doug: I didn't do as much for it, but I was lucky I got a very good shoot where we were looking for this great behaviour, where orcas hunt in the pack ice, and they are looking for seals on ice floes, and when they find a seal, first of all they can identify it, they are only interested in weds', if they spy-hop round about a bunch of crabbie's, they just leave them.

[Part 2, 00:27:19] Chris: Are they not tasty enough?

Doug: I don't know, I think it's a combination of things, I think the weds are fatter and therefore more food in them, I think the weds are also the least agile. Orcas are very wary about getting scratched or bitten or anything else and a furry [a fur seal], not a lot of eating on it, but its super flexible backbone, it can spin around and give you a nasty nip. Leps are big and agile, crabeaters are also quite aggressive and also flexi, I think big fat weds at that time of year are just easier to go for. So when they find a wed' on a floe, they make an area of open water around the floe, either by pushing away smaller floes or by swimming in a certain way, that the floe gets pushed toward a bit of more open water, and it's usually calm where they do this. But you're watching, and were maybe talking about a pod of about eight, nine orcas and then they disappear, or seem to for a minute or so. Then from nowhere literally out of the flat sea, a standing wave arises, and this wave will be maybe ten metres wide ... twelve metres wide, and it'll start moving increasingly quickly and gaining height towards the ice floe. And when they do it close, you can very clearly see that this wave has been generated by four or five orcas line abreast on their side swimming hard. With that wave, they can either pass right underneath the ice floe beating hard, in which case the ice floe disintegrates and breaks up into small pieces, but once the piece is small enough, they'll time that wave so it breaks on the floe and the seal will get washed into the water, and if it doesn't wallop it with the first wave, they'll do up to ten or eleven waves, to get that seal in the water and then they'll catch it and tear it apart.

[Part 2, 00:29:27] Chris: And you filmed it?

Doug: Ya we filmed that – it's been seen once in its entirety, one attack, about four years ago. There was a tour ship, with would you believe three scientists on board, and they filmed the whole thing, not very close, but they filmed the whole thing in real time and from that they wrote a paper detailing this behaviour, how many waves, when it happened, interpreting it.

It's been seen bits and pieces at other times, but we were the first people to – we went down with Jerome, we dedicated a month to it, we went to Marguerite Bay, we looked for it, I think we got just the right ice conditions, because obviously you can't do it on solid ice, once the ice breaks up you tend not to get so many floes and we may have been lucky but we saw – we gave it a month to film it, and we saw I think 22 attacks, and 150 waves with at least two different pods doing it.

We had the tools to do a proper job of filming it. We had stabilised mounts, mounted on the boat, so that although the boat was rocking slightly, you got a rock steady horizon.

[Part 2, 00:30:50] Chris: Were you filming it purely from above the water?

Doug: No we did some underwater too, using remote cameras. We did try to get some underwater going in the water, we had two very good orca biologists with us, who had studied orcas all over the world, and they were very good at it. They had seen enough orca behaviour that they knew that after a kill they tend to socialise, and they are not interested in hunting at that point. So they said if you go in the water at that point, they might come over and have a look at you but you'll be fine. In fact, if you go in the water when they are doing the wave and attacking, you'll still be fine because these orcas are so prey-specific and so aware of what's going on, that they are not going to come out of the blue and mistake you for a seal. We didn't put that to the test, [laughing], but we did put to the test the other bit but the problem was that even when they were socialising they weren't all that interested in us. They made a couple of very fast swim-by's underneath the boat upside down, looking up at us but the visibility was rubbish in those circumstances. We did get some very nice underwater stuff using a little remote camera held over the side of a Zodiac, because we found that, once they went into hunting mode, and had singled out a floe and singled out a seal, you could virtually take a Zodiac round about and they would just keep on doing it. It was a remarkable following opportunity.

[Part 2, 00:32:21] Chris: Is this behaviour – this, evolved in the last few years or has this been going on [unintell]

Doug: Nobody knows, think it's safe to say that the number of orca killer whales down the Peninsula is increasing, people are seeing many many more of them, and it's not just because more tour ships are going down there, it's because there are more orcas going there.

Now it could be that orcas took a hell of a hammering across the seas generally, but in the Antarctic too, and it might be that if you take out a population with a certain knowledge of where to go, then it's a long time before other populations – they almost have to discover it again. If the numbers aren't very big anyway then it can be a long time, but orcas are being seen more off South-G and down the Peninsula than ever before. There are a couple of American scientists who are trying to get a proper long term programme going. They saw a pod of 200 plus down there last summer and it's unusual now, to go down the Peninsula and not see orcas at some point in your tour. There are certain hotspots, in the Gerlache, north of the Lemaire, in that protected – in fact Wilhelmina Bay is being seen as a hot spot. The Americans did a winter cruise on the Peninsula, I think two or three years ago, and they went to Wilhelmina Bay in June or July, there were 300 humpbacks feeding in Lemaire Bay and a super swarm of krill. They had the means to measure the extent and density of the krill, and that's what the whales were all feeding on. This sort of thing is probably because of climate

change, probably because of the fact that the sea-ice on the Peninsula is much less solid than it was.

[Part 2, 00:34:23] Chris: So they have got more scope for hunting then, more territory?

Doug: Yes the ecology is varying, but the other thing they discovered about these orcas, the scientists were not just doing photo-ID on the orcas, they were looking at behaviour, they were putting tags on them; little small satellite tags maybe four or five centimetres long. They fire them on with crossbow, or with a modified gun and you put them on just at the base of the dorsal fin. These tags, if they get a good stick, they'll give out data for about three months and you can programme them to give data quite often. So they tagged these ones and they were giving them data of two positions per day and they found that this one pod – they assume the whole pod moves cause they tend to stick together, so this particular individual, tagged in sometime in the middle of February in Marguerite Bay. It stayed there for a month zig-zagging around then it went just north of Marguerite Bay and went 40 - 50 miles out to sea and went in a dead straight line to the coast of Brazil. It took 20 days to swim about a shade over 2000 miles. They hung around for a month in the warm waters off Brazil and they went straight back to Marguerite Bay, in a dead straight line.

The theory now, and they need more to prove it, is that orcas like that may come and go to the pack ice all year round. Because they are quite happy going into quite heavy ice as long as it's broken and they can stick their head up they can go into ten-tenths ice as long as it's not fast ice, these orcas may well come and go the whole time. Clearly it's energetically worth their while to come down to the cold water, stuff themselves with seals, and then they swim north because although they are warm blooded, in warm water, their metabolic rate drops off so a month worth of feeding will do them for six weeks in the tropics, and they come back again.

There's definitely a different species of orca, at least two and possibly three different species of orca across the world. They used to think there was just one but there's definitely an Antarctic orca that been discovered in the last few years. Partly it's been discovered because people have been seeing them and thinking 'that one looks different' but they also have a lot of catch data that's just been released by the Russians, about the whaling that they did (the illegal and often way over the top numbers) of whales that the Russians were taking and they were taking a lot of killer whales and these whales clearly were a different size and weight from other species.

What was great about the orca killer thing is you have to say that when you have been to the Antarctic as much as I have and were taking about five winters, ten summers and another ten trips filming, you'd kind of think I seen most of it, I might see something a little bit better but to see a whole new piece of behaviour with one of the Antarctic's most charismatic mega fauna was just peachy. It really was, it was like the icing on top of the cake. When it comes – well no I couldn't associate that with a second Polar Medal but you think, 'Oh, I've re-arrived in the Antarctic' it's nice [laughing].

[Part 2, 00:37:56] Chris: Where do you go from here then Doug, you'll be sixty this year, won't you?

Doug: I will be sixty this year, next month staggeringly; Well I'm still very busy filming, still getting a kick out of filming, I'm able to pick and choose what I shoot, there are some things

that I get asked to do which I'll say 'no you may not have the budget to do this properly' let's say, I've got lots of irons in the fire, I have been asked and have done a little bit of guiding on tour ships, not so much guide, but they asked me to do guest lecturer, which is great because it means your only responsibility is to give two or three lectures.

I've been to the North Pole, but I've also done a couple in the Antarctic. So you go down, you talk about the filming that you've done there and talk about the ecology, but it gives me a chance to film some stuff for myself which I own. All these BBC shoots they pay you but then they keep the copyright so it's nice to have some material of your own.

What I'd like to do now – I think there are issues particularly in the Arctic to do with not just climate change, but development in the Arctic, where I think people need to be reminded of the sensitivity of the environment and the animals, and it'd be nice to get involved with a film about that, a film with a bit more edge about it. The idea of doing a fly-on-the-wall science documentary in the Antarctic appeals to me. I think BAS has got the potential like all big organisations if it opened its doors to the right film crew, you could come up with something that would benefit everyone. You would raise the profile of BAS in the Antarctic, it would be highly entertaining.

So there's various things, I'm lucky having been so much involved with the poles, when a polar project comes up it quite often at some point will come by me and I can choose to get involved with it or not. It's also nice – when I went on a trip last year, I had a chance to visit Scott and Shackleton's Huts and did some footage,

[Part 2, 00:40:23] Chris: Was that for the Ben Fogle film?

Doug: No it wasn't actually, it was just for myself really, but I'm happy to make that available to the [Antarctic] Heritage Trust if they want to use some for fundraising purposes or things like that.

The poles are just such an important place and it's so easy to get peoples interest. I love going talking to schools and things like that, about it.

[Part 2, 00:40:53] Chris: One thing I haven't really asked you about is not only the technological advances that have taken place in filming in your period, the digitalisation of film, makes all the equipment much smaller.

Doug: Only to some extent.

[Part 2, 00:41:05] Chris: Film access to the Antarctic is easier than it was when you were a lad. Human access for tourists is also much increased over your early days down there, I just wonder how you feel about the whole business of popularising the Antarctic through either better filming or boat trips.

Doug; The Antarctic I feel, is the best protected place on the planet for its size. Scientists and Governments have done a really good job looking after it. It's cleaner now than it ever was. There's no nuclear and people are getting their dumps on top of it, etc., [waste disposal dumps being sorted out] and what I've seen of Antarctic tourism, it's very well controlled.

The tour ships have taken it upon themselves to have an accepted code of conduct, and they have people on shore who usually aren't backward about making sure that people do keep

their distance and don't disturb the animals. For every person that goes down to the Antarctic, they come away impressed by it.

It'll be very interesting to see how tourism develops, because if you accept that no more than 100 people ashore at any one time, if you accept that a visit to a place has to by logistics be four to five hours long from the time the ship draws in to the time it leaves, if you accept that there are only a finite number of places, where the ships have a better than 50% chance of getting in – there's no point on building into your itinerary somewhere you are only gonna get to once in a blue moon, it's almost like you've reached a finite number of people that can go down there and have that experience.

[Part 2, 00:42:53] Chris: Self-regulating?

Doug: Well it's kinda self-regulating, on the other hand, I think there's going to be a large increase in the number of smaller ships that go to the Antarctic, because at the moment, the regulations are such that if you have less than twelve people on board, you don't have to post your itinerary so therefore you can slip ashore under this rule.

The other thing that is developing is much bigger ships that don't make a landings at all. There gonna have to face up to something about that, because if something happens to one of those ships, there just isn't the rescue capacity to take these people off onto other tour ships, 'cause they're full. To fly them out would take forever, and if it happens in a bad place in the Antarctic, an inaccessible place, it's going to be a monster logistics hassle, not to mention any environmental impact, You have a ship going down, oil leaking, etc, it is going to be bigger, the bigger the ship there is.

The fact is too, that most of this activity is concentrated on the Peninsula for the simple reason that if you go to the other side, it takes you a long time. You got much more empty sea to get down there, and per mile of coastline, there's a lot less to see.

So it's gonna be interesting to see what they come up with next, but at the moment as I say, what I've seen most people who go to the Antarctic, they're interested, they're aware of it, they want to conserve it, almost everyone who goes down there comes back more sold than they went down, on looking after places like that.

What we need are some serious politicians who are willing to take the gamble of being unpopular, and unfortunately it seems like every time no matter which country – like were going through in this country at the moment when bad things have to be faced up to, it gets watered down [unintell]

[Part 2, 00:44:59] Chris: So are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the Antarctic?

Doug: Well... - there's optimistic, pessimistic and realistic, isn't there? There's no doubt, the climate is changing. Now if it's changing because of what humans do, then we may have already passed the point of no return, because I don't see any strong willed determination to seriously cut back on CO2 emissions, if that's what it is all about.

If that's not what it's all about, then what can we do about it anyway. One things for sure, we know enough about climate change to know that it can happen: long before humans came,

there have been some very big shifts in it naturally, so if we're in the middle of that, what do we do about it?

I don't know. We certainly can expect some massive disruption to economic and to the level of organisation we have in the world now. I just think that we need to see the Antarctic along with everywhere else, as being just a great natural place, and we should be looking after it just the same as we should be looking after bits of woodland and the sea. We should be – if we expect such a lot from nature, we should be looking after it better, and that means scaling down our own ambitions for our own prosperity. However you measure it, it's clearly not sustainable. We're really very lucky in Europe and America to have taken so much before the bad things happen, but we can't have this level of consumption in the current developing countries which have much bigger populations. They can't go down the same route as us, it's unsustainable. It's unsustainable.

And yet, every time we have a drop in consumption, they're wailing that 'we're going onto recession'. Well sorry, we're gonna have to go into what you call a recession, we're gonna have to value things differently. I think people – if big governments won't do it then individuals have to do it. That's what we are seeing in this country, that's why they're complaining 'cause people aren't going around buying stuff. But how much it makes any difference to the many hundreds of millions who don't have what we have and want it, it's difficult, it's difficult, and it's very sobering.

Someone told me - I was on Palmer last year, and Palmer winter temperatures up six degrees in the last thirty forty years. That's a huge huge thing, massive.

So anyway, it's hard, it's hard, but BAS have to keep well in there, it's good.

[Part 2, 00:47:46] Chris: Doug thank you very much indeed.

Doug: That's alright my pleasure.

END OF RECORDING

Interview recording time mark	Notable events described
Part 1 00:04:45	Doug Allen early influences
Part 1 00:18:35	Posting to Signy, as Diving Officer 1976
Part 1 00:28:10	Acquires serious photographic equipment for Signy
Part 1 00:32:32	Biscoe unable to relieve Signy April 1980
Part 1 00:43:23	Diving with leopard Seals

Part 1 00:47:14	Playing Fiddle on Base
Part 1 00:50:30	Halley 4 test construction at Ross on Wye. Halley BC 1983
Part 1 00:58:38	Earliest working with David Attenborough team, at Signy 1980
Part 2 00:00:24	Signy Island and Coronation Field Trips.
Part 2 00:06:47	Low Shelf at Halley
Part 2 00:09:35	The Greenpeace adventure 1986
Part 2 00:13:36	Oxford Scientific Films, filming narwhals, meeting Alasdair Fothergill
Part 2 00:21:07	Relations between BAS and BBC
Part 2 00:24:22	Filming Life in the Freezer
Part 2 00:26:52	Filming orca group seal-attack behaviour
Part 2 00:34:27	Reference to new behaviour - orca ocean passages
Part 2 00:37:56	Present and future filming projects.
Part 2 00:41:25	Antarctic Tourism
Part 2 00:45:03	The future of Antarctica