

## Victor Marchesi.

**Edited transcript of interview with Victor Marchesi conducted by Jo Rae (with input by Chris Gilbert) on 26 June 2003. BAS Archives AD6.24.1.12. Transcribed by Neil MacPherson on 6 July 2019.**

(0:00:20) Rae: Well Victor, tell us a bit about the *William Scoresby* and how she came to be used.

Marchesi: Well, the *William Scoresby* was originally built for whale marking purposes by the Discovery Investigations. She had a small laboratory on board. She was built on the lines of a rather large whale catcher and in the 1920's and '30's every year she used to go whale marking in the Antarctic. When the War came.... I should explain that she was a Royal Research Ship, not *HMS William Scoresby* until the War when she went down to the Falkland Islands as *HMS William Scoresby* and was supposed to be mine sweeping down there. Not that she did any minesweeping to my knowledge. However, the *William Scoresby* was taken mainly because the vessel *Acarey* which was a sailing ship really which had been selected by Jimmy Marr. She was re-fitted in London and we were going to sail from Falmouth down to the Falklands and then further south.

(0:02:21) However, we loaded in London and we sailed from London and I always remember we joined a convoy which was going down the Channel and the senior officer of the escort was a Frenchman and he said *HMS Bransfield*, and of course this is what the vessel *Acarey* was then known as, he said : 'Oh, hunter class destroyer'. And I pointed out to him that we ought to be tail-end Charlie if anything. By the time we got to Dover the convoy was miles ahead. You could just see them, we were all by ourselves. Of course, the vessel *Acarey* could only do about four knots and she started leaking. We went into Portsmouth for repairs, I can't remember what for now, and then into Weymouth for the same thing and then on to Falmouth. Just before we got to Falmouth the engine-man came up to me and said: 'I'm sorry, Sir, we can't keep the engines going and keep the pumps going at the same time'.

(0:03:48) So we got into Falmouth and it was decided that it was unsuitable and so we had to make other arrangements. Everybody, all the people who were going South, left the ship and I left the ship with the First Lieutenant I had, Graham who was number two, and we all joined the *Highland Monarch* to go out to the Falklands and I was to take the *Scoresby* once we got to the Falklands. And this is exactly what happened. She was really unsuitable for the job in lots of ways because she couldn't carry much cargo and that was the real reason why we took the *William Scoresby*. Then, when we got to the Falklands, most of the stores were aboard the *SS Fitzroy* which belonged to the Falkland Island Company and we sailed in company together for Deception Island.

(0:05:22 ) Rae: Let's just leave it there for a minute. I just wondered about .... you scratched your nose a couple of times.

Marchesi: I'm sorry [laughs].

(0:05:30 ) Rae: And I just wonder if we need to do anything about that. That's OK. Fine. Well done.

Marchesi: OK.

(0:05:40 ) Rae: So we've got the vessel *Acarey* and the *William Scoresby* now. Could you talk a bit about the attempt to set up Hope Bay? Jump to that little scenario.

Marchesi: I think if I go to Deception Island which was the first and then to Hope Bay.

(0:06:06 ) Rae: Yes, OK. Remember we don't need the full narrative.

Marchesi: No, no, it won't be a full narrative.

(0:06:11 ) Rae: Ok, so ....

Marchesi: We sailed from the Falklands and we went to set up the base at Deception Island. Going into Deception Island I went to action stations just in case there was anything in there but there wasn't and then we went on to Hope Bay. That was the *Fitzroy* and the *Scoresby*. We got off Hope Bay and there was ice and I took Jimmy Marr into Hope Bay in the *Scoresby* but the *Fitzroy* wouldn't go in. I didn't think it was really heavy ice but that was it, she wouldn't go in. We couldn't put a base up because we hadn't got the equipment because it was all in the *Fitzroy*. So we then went down the coast going into odd places until we came to Port Lockroy and that's where we set the base.

(0:07:28 ) Rae: Can you explain why Port Lockroy was chosen?

Marchesi: Well, Port Lockroy was taken because it was , I won't say near Hope Bay, that's not the right word, but it was the most suitable place we found down the coast to set up a base. We could have gone further south but for some unknown reason Jimmy Marr didn't want to, and we set up the base in Port Lockroy. We were there for about a fortnight setting up and all hands and the cook was mixed up in setting it up including half my ship's company. A lot of my ship's company were Falkland Islanders and used to that and they set it up. We had 'Chippy' Ashton

who was one of the shore party who was a very good carpenter and the whole thing when we left, they were living there, just about. And that was it. That was Port Lockroy.

(0:09:08 ) Rae: And can you go on to tell us about the setting up of Hope Bay, the second year?

Marchesi: Ah, now. The following year we had a sailing ship called the *Eagle* which was from Canada and they had other equipment by then and the *Eagle* took the equipment and we both went to Hope Bay and set up the base there. I should explain that Jimmy Marr, who was leader and had originated, he'd done a terrific amount of work really prior to the expedition, was unfit. He never went to Hope Bay, not as when it was set up. He came back to the UK. That was after the first year. Then the base was set up in Hope Bay and all was well. But we still kept Port Lockroy going and so we had three bases in actual fact - Deception Island, Port Lockroy and Hope Bay. The main reason we had Hope Bay was you could get in there and the survey parties could get that way. And on the Weddell Sea side there was firm enough ice to get Snow Hill Island and one or two other places. And so that was the main reason for Hope Bay.

(0:11:22 ) Rae: There was a bit of excitement, wasn't there, with the *Eagle* when she was half-way through?

Marchesi: Oh yes. On one occasion I had gone up to Stanley to get hold of .... to bring some more food down more than anything else and we got a signal arrived to say that she'd hit an iceberg (laughs). So I sailed and met her. She was on her way back to the Falklands and she wasn't badly damaged but I escorted her all the way to Stanley and then after that she went back to Canada. The following year, Shepherd, who was the Captain of the *Eagle*, came down in a ship called the *Trepassey*. It was not a sailing ship, it was a sort of coast guard, very suitable ship, and they had dogs on board for Hope Bay. I always remember the dogs because they stopped in Montevideo and I was in Montevideo refitting and *Trepassey* came in, I went on board and although some of the dogs were supposed to be in the family way, they did have pups by then. And I always remember my fiancée, which she was then, came down with me and went on board, picked up one of these pups and said: 'Oh what a lovely....' Of course it smelt like nobody's business (laughs). She had to go back and have a bath. But it was a lovely..... and those went down to Hope Bay.

(0:13:29) Rae: Great. Thank you. That's very good. I was going to go back to Marr now because you said a little bit about him, the work he did setting up the expedition. But I thought you could elaborate on that a little bit more and say how he was selected.

Marchesi: Well, I can tell you what happened. Jimmy Marr was a Lieutenant on the RNVR. This was during the War. He was somewhere, I think in Trincomalee, and he was flown back to

England to start this business of Operation Tabarin and I always remember when I met him - I'd known him many years before. He said: 'I came back in the bomb bay of an aircraft (laughs). Anyway, there was a committee set up. The Chairman of the committee was a Senior Under-Secretary from the Colonial Office. There was representative of the Admiralty, John Mossop (phonetic). Then there was Sir James Wordie, yes Jimmy Wordie, MacKintosh, Brian Roberts and a representative from the Naval Stores Department and from the Colonial Office Stores Department, whatever it was, and myself. And we used to meet I think about once a week [to] discuss how things were going. In the meantime, Marr with a chap called Berry. Berry had been the Chief Steward with *Discovery II* when I was there and had been for many years, and he was helping Jimmy Marr making out lists of stores and equipment and so forth. And that was doing his main job.

(0:15:52) Of course, Jimmy Marr was going to lead the expedition. They made him a Lieutenant-Commander of RNVR mainly because .... I think it was me (laughs). Anyway, I was supposed to be second in command of the expedition but of course when Jimmy Marr went sick Taylor, who was a Captain in the Royal Canadian Engineers who was in the shore party, very good one too, excellent chap, he did very well. In fact I think he was absolutely the right man for the job. And that was it. Whether the committee ever met again after we sailed I never discovered and I always remember it was the Admiralty .... we had to have a name for this, we didn't have a name originally... and John Mossop said: 'We're going to call it "Operation Tabarin" '. And I always remember the Under-Secretary from the Colonial Office said: 'Tabarin? Tabarin? I think I know the Tabarin'. He had a smile right over from ear to ear. I said: 'It's the "Belle Tabarin" in Paris'. (laughs) He roared with laughter and so did everybody.

(0:17:22) Rae: And did they explain why they picked that name?

Marchesi: No. I've never understood how the Navy decide what names . There must be a civil servant who sits down [and] thinks of these names. Some of them were quite good. "Mix-up" was another operation, which was really, I thought, a very sensible name for it. I won't say it now because it was nothing to do with going to the Antarctic

(0: 17:57 ) Rae: No. Ok. Let's start off with talking about the trip to the South Orkney Islands.

Marchesi: Oh. I went to the South Orkney Islands to put up a hut on Signy Island. I had all the equipment on board and I found a level piece of ground, or reasonably level, and no-one was going to live in this as far as we knew. And so this hut was constructed by my First Lieutenant and some of the sailors and it remained up as far as I know until it fell down and that was that. But the South Orkneys had its amusing points because I went to South Orkneys to the Argentine Met base there. When I got there, I went ashore and I had a carcass of a sheep with me and a

bottle of whisky. I got ashore, they fell on the carcass of the sheep and they said how wonderful it was to see somebody. Their own relief ship hadn't arrived and they couldn't understand why I'd been there. Anyway they had my sheep. They weren't interested in my whisky. In fact they gave me another bottle [laughs] and I don't know how many dozen penguin eggs. I waited until the Argentine relief ship arrived. It's on an isthmus and she was the other side of the isthmus. I made them a signal but I got no reply. I didn't expect it but that was it. I think I put out a senior officer's pennant just to show that there was no ill feeling. Anyway I got no reply from them.

(0:20:45 ) Rae: Did you find there were any times when the sort of political situation became a live issue?

Marchesi: Not really.

(0:20:57 ) Rae: What about when you went into Deception the first time?

Marchesi: Oh, in Deception when I got there first followed by the *Fitzroy*. As I say, I went to action stations. We had one gun on the foc'sle just in case there was going to be....one could never tell really. There was no trouble at all. So, that was it. In fact I had the gun removed eventually because it was a nuisance. I had it removed in Montevideo with the connivance of the naval attache.

(0:21:44 ) Rae: Good, thank you. Let's go on to some of the people then. If you could tell me something about Jock Matheson.

Marchesi: Oh well now, Jock Matheson was a .. He had been a seaman, he was a seaman, he was a fisherman from the island of Islay. And he had been South a number of (times) and he was in *Discovery II* when I was there and he was the Bosun's Mate then. He had sailed on the BANZARE land expedition and he'd ended up I think it was as Bosun on the BANZARE land expedition and he did very, very well. And then he came back to the *Discovery* and he was on *Discovery* at the time. He was one of the quietest men you could ever see. If you said anything to him he would 'Yes' or 'No'. Very polite except for one evening in Port Lockroy he came on board because just prior to the War he was going to go as Bosun on the Royal Research Ship , *Research*, which was scrapped anyway, mainly because of the War. He was talking about that and he came and saw me and he sat in my cabin and we discussed the *Research* because I'd been to the launching of the *Research*. I said: 'Have a tot'. To cut a long story short, at the end of the evening after the War he was going to go as Bosun on the *Research*, I was going in command of the *Research*. We were going to have a very happy time and there was nothing left of the bottle of whisky. But he was a very great.... I was very fond of Jock Matheson. He was a seaman to ... I'd never met a seaman like him before. And yet, he was a Leading Seaman in the RNR and the

Hydrographer, the then Hydrographer, Admiral Edgewood, tried to get him promoted to Petty Officer and they wouldn't promote him to Petty Officer. They said his leadership wasn't very good. Admiral Edgewood told me this himself and I rather politely told him that I didn't think the Commodore of the barracks at Chatham knew what he was talking about. He said he couldn't agree with me more. Anyway, that was beside the point.

(0:25:10 ) Rae: So where was Matheson based during the Tabarin?

Marchesi: Matheson was Port Lockroy and then Hope Bay. Then, of course, later on we had one or two extra people which we took down. There was a chap called Freddy Marshall who was a biologist. And then there was David James who had escaped from a POW camp in Germany and Victor Russell. I think they were the three (who) went down. They all went to Hope Bay. David James was quite a character. He ended up as an MP (laughs). He lost his seat on one occasion. So he got another seat. Victor Russell, after the War, I used to see him occasionally at Antarctic Club dinners when we had the reunion at BAS. I always remember we were in a hotel and I was walking down for dinner, I think it was dinner, and I was walking down the stairs and the sun was shining in and I saw somebody ??? [inaudible] and I heard a voice say 'Hello, Victor,' and I looked around and 'Good God, Victor'. Victor Russell, he was there with his wife. That was that.

(0:27:12 ) Rae: That was the first time you'd seen him in a while?

Marchesi: I certainly hadn't seen him in a long time.

(0:27:19 ) Rae: Thinking about Hope Bay, I was just thinking it would be nice if you could describe what the base looked like, say when you came in to relieve the base at the end. For people that aren't familiar with the Antarctic. What did it actually look like?

Marchesi: Well, a couple of huts really, just. Wooden huts. And there were bunks inside. They slept in bunks, one above the other one, that sort of business. It had a kitchen where they used to take turns on who was to do the cooking that day. Sometimes, some people's cooking was quite good, some others people didn't like very much. But when Berry was there, he was very good, he always used to make them bread. He made always very good bread.

(0:28:29 ) Rae: Any other particular meals that were memorable ?

Marchesi: No, I didn't have many meals there, I had them aboard my own ??? [inaudible]. I always think one of the amusing things really was when at the beginning of FIDS, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, I went to relieve Hope Bay. I remember I got into the Bay about six o'clock in the morning. They knew that I was coming and I sounded the whistle. Not a soul. I

went ashore. I went into the hut. They were all still sound asleep and I shouted: ' Don't any of you so-and-so's want to go home?' and they suddenly came to. And they did indeed and that was it. That was at the beginning of FIDS and they went down to Marguerite Bay. Ted Bingham was leading.

(0:30:00 ) Rae: Can you tell me a bit about Bingham? What sort of chap he was.

Marchesi: Oh, I've known Ted for years. Then he was a Surgeon-Commander, I think in the Navy. But he had been on an Arctic expedition and then he went on the British Grahamland Expedition before the War where he was the Doctor, and then he led FIDS and Ted was very, very nice chap. I'd know him on and off for years. He was an Irishman and he always... but I said to him one day: ' Ted, do you belong to the Arctic Club?' and he said: 'No'.

And I said: 'Why?'

He said: 'Well,' he said, 'I went to join the Arctic Club but they said I was not a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge'. He said: 'I'm a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, far better than Oxford or Cambridge!' (Laughs).

Anyway, I don't think he ever did become a member of the Arctic Club. Whether he did or not... anyway, poor old Ted's dead now, and there it is. He ended up as a Surgeon-Captain in the Navy and he was ... I met him aboard the *Duke of York*, and I went into the wardroom in a break we had for lunch and who should I see but Ted walking in to the wardroom wearing four stripes and I said: 'Good God, Ted, what are you doing here?'

He said: 'I'm the Fleet Medical Officer'.

I said: ' Good God, what do you know about medicine?' Whereupon he said 'Well, I don't know much really,' but he said 'I keep a bottle of brandy in the sick bay and anyone who's really sick gets tot of brandy. But he was expert on dogs. He was really expert on husky dogs and he knew more about husky dogs than he did about... (laughs).

(0:33:05 ) Rae: There is a story that the way the dogs were trained changed when Bingham joined the Survey. Have you heard anything about that?

Marchesi: I didn't hear anything. The only thing I do know was when we got them down to the Falklands, they were put on the north side of Stanley harbour in a large mesh place. They could run around and some little distance away was tethered a number of sheep, there for their food

they were going to be. They got out. How they got out nobody ever seemed to know and there were no sheep left either! (laughs). But there we are.

(0:34:15 ) Rae: Another livestock that I know was down at Port Lockroy was a pig, wasn't there? A pig was taken down.

Marchesi: Oh yes, we did take a pig down but I regret to say it didn't last very long. I think it was eaten on Midwinter's Day. Poor little pig. And I had a dog aboard the *Scoresby* called "Bosun". I only had him for one, two trips and then I sent him up to the WT station and of course it was alright when he was in the Falklands, it wasn't bad, but going south with the decks wet in bad weather when there was a gale blowing he was very unhappy and he used to come into my cabin actually and my cabin used to have about six inches of water in it and there was a radiator there and he used to sit by the radiator and of course the cabin used to be boiling, stifling with the water and the heat and the dog.

(0:35:45 ) Rae: Can you tell us the story about Jimmy Marr's bath?

Marchesi: Oh yes. When we were at Port Lockroy, we decided to go down the Peltier Channel to put up a mark at Cape Renard and off we went and Jimmy Marr wanted to be there and we got there. They put the mark up and came back. Jimmy said to me: 'Can I have a bath, Victor?' So I said: 'Yes, a salt water bath'. So off goes Jimmy to have his salt water bath and we were coming along quite happily back to port and I thought it was a little piece of ice. It was only about six feet, and it wasn't. It was a rock sticking up, a snow covered rock and I hit it. Oh the Officer of the Watch shouted down, said to me - I was on the bridge- he said: 'I can see the bottom, Sir'. I said: 'Oh my God'. And just then there was a clang and we hit this and I said: 'Oh, dear'. Poor old Jimmy Marr was in his bath, thought the clang that went through the ship was terrific, really, down below, and he came rushing up in his birthday suit, 'Are we alright?'. (Laughs). And that was the end of Jimmy Marr's bath. He was quite happy really. But I was very sorry when he went sick. There were two doctors there at the time. There was Eric Back and then Jimmy Andrew came down. No, it wasn't Jimmy Andrew it was Eric Back who said he ought to go back to the UK.

(0:38:28) We had another silly thing happened. They wanted an extra man at Deception Island and so we thought we'd engage a Falkland Islander and a committee was set up to do selection, one of which was the NOIC, who was very nice chap, and a bloke called Hamilton who had been South anyway in the *Discovery II* days and myself. And one rather an elderly chap came in who was full bounce and so forth and then there was a young chap, about 17, 18. An when we had done all the interviewing, it was between this bloke who (was) bouncing around and this young chap. I was for the young chap but the other two said: 'Oh, no'. Anyway, the older chap went and

he was only there about a few months and we had to relieve him. He had cancer. The Doctor had said he was perfectly fit. Anyway, the young chap eventually did go South. It was Bonner, who I believe is quite well known. But I've read something he wrote and he mentioned this interview he had but he wasn't selected. I'm sorry he wasn't, he should have been anyway.

(0:40:30 ) Rae: Can you tell us about Tom Berry?

Marchesi: Tom Berry. Oh well, I have known Tom Berry for , oh he was in *Discovery II* with me, and he was the Chief Steward there and he was a great man. He fed everybody extremely well and I always remember the Engineer Officer of the *Discovery* saying to Tom one day - we'd been at sea for about three months and food was a bit funny, you know, one way or the other and it was Sunday - and the Chief Engineer, old Horton, said: 'Berry, what's happened to those shags I saw hanging up outside the galley?' And Berry said: 'Sir', he said. 'I served them up as duck a week ago'. (Laughs). But he was very good, very good. Very fond of .... I don't know what Tom Berry did after Tabarin. I wish I had known, I thought he was going to take a pub.

(0:41:59 ) Rae: What do you think are your abiding memories of your time in the Antarctic?

Marchesi: Er, well it's difficult to say. Weather- wise we had some very, very bad weather at times. Not so much when we were in real Antarctic waters, i.e. around the mainland or the islands, but going between we'll say Grahamland and the Falklands you usually get some awful weather at times. And I always remember we had Jimmy Marr on board when he was ill or was going home anyway. There was a bank which rises up from about 2,000 fathoms to about 30 fathoms, I think, called the Burdwood Bank I think it was called. And going across that I'd never seen seas before or since like it. As a small boy when I used to draw seas, I used to go like that (waves arm vertically) and there was just seas like that and I was scared stiff the ship was going to broach to. And then once we got off the Bank, it eased off. It was still blowing hard but the terrible seas were not there.

(0:43:40 ) Rae: Was that your most scary moment?

Marchesi: It was a scary moment. Well, when I say a scary moment, I was on the bridge for about four hours. Then I thought well it can't be too bad but to me that was my most scary moment. The only other time, I was going to the South Orkneys and ran into fog. I stopped. I thought there's berg around and, when the fog lifted, luckily I didn't go on much further because there was the South Orkneys. I'd seen it right on the spot, more by luck than good judgement.

(0:44:43 ) Rae: What aids did you have for navigation at that time?

Marchesi: What aids to navigation?

(0:44:50 ) Rae: Yeah.

Marchesi: All I had, apart from the sextant and a chronometer - I had three chronometers I think - I had a compass. that all. That's all we had. No radar, no gyro compass or anything like that. Very basic.

(0:45:19 ) Rae: And what were the maps, the charts like that you were using?

Marchesi: The charts were not too bad. Some of the surveying was very good actually, or it had been done. Some was a bit ropey and in fact Sir James Wordie said to me, before we went South, he said: "If you go South down the Weddell Sea, try and get the positions of so-and-so and so-and-so". He said , 'When we were down there'. That was when he was down there with Shackleton. He said : 'Worsley's positions I'm a bit suspicious of'. (Laughs).

(0:46:09 ) Rae: Thank you. I'm not sure that I've got anything else. One thing that we haven't ever talked about was Tim Hooley and his family. Do you remember them being on board?

Marchesi: I remember this very vaguely. I remember we had a bit of a barbecue on some island on the way. He was on the *Fitzroy* and he was on his way to South Georgia and his wife was on board. I can't remember whether there was any children, I can't remember now.

(0:46:52 ) Rae: It's always seemed such an odd thing on a top secret mission that you'd have this family. Did it strike you as being incongruous?

Marchesi: Well, you see, everybody in the Falklands knew about (it). You couldn't help it really and really I suppose once we set up the bases there was no reason for it to be top secret, not top secret anyway. Though when I was in my first winter, when I went to refit the *Scoresby* in Montevideo, I had to go to B.A., Buenos Aires, to brief the Ambassador there on what was actually going on.

(0:47:48 ) Rae: And the first year, was there a great deal of secrecy? Were you using codes and things?

Marchesi: Well there was to begin with but it was very difficult because when you have half a dozen people who are all mixed up with it and then we had odd people come see us in the office in London. I remember there was a chap called Dick Ominey who was in *Discovery II* with us, who was a scientist. He came in, he knew all about it. How he got to know, don't ask me. He was

then a Lieutenant RNVR, Met Officer of some description. But I think it was reasonably well ... the secret was quite well kept really, I think.

(0:48:57 ) Rae: And did you ever have a real understanding of what the real purpose of the Operation Tabarin was? Could you tell us about that?

Marchesi: Well Jimmy Marr and I were summoned to the Foreign Office and we were given a talk more than anything else by.... I can't remember who it was. Quite a well known politician about the Falkland Islands really. It was the Falkland Islands Dependencies really, not the Falkland Islands themselves, and I always remember Jimmy Marr, who smoked like a chimney and so did I, this chap got out a silver cigarette case, lit a cigarette and left Jimmy Marr and I aaaah (gaping open mouth). (Laughs). We weren't very impressed with the Foreign Office but we were briefed in a vague sort of way.

(0:50:09 ) Rae: And what did they say about the purpose of you going down there?

Marchesi: Well, purely political. They were worried that the Argentines were going to set up bases down there. They didn't, of course. I'm told it was a top secret Cabinet decision and so that was it. But I'm told it wasn't Churchill who was Chairman of the Cabinet that day. It was Attlee (Laughs).

(0:50:56 ) Rae: OK. Well I don't think I've got anything else. If you are happy with the footage we've got now. Is there anything that you feel we haven't covered that you'd really like to just make sure we put in?z

Marchesi: No, I don't think so.

(0:51:13 ) Rae: No. I can't think of anything that we haven't covered.

Marchesi: No.

(0:51:17 ) Gilbert: If you could describe the *Scoresby* I guess it would be quite nice.

Marchesi: Pardon?

(0:51:22 ) Gilbert: If you said a bit about the boat itself, or the ship itself, I guess.

Marchesi: Well the ship, as I say, she was built as a glorified whale catcher really, larger than the ordinary whaler. She had no bilge keels, so consequently she rolled even in harbour just about. She had a triple expansion engine and when we set up Hope Bay, I had boiler trouble and I was very cross about it but we couldn't do... We had to re-tube the boiler when we got to Montevideo in the winter.

(0:52:21 ) Rae: And how many crew and passengers could she take?

Marchesi: Crew, there was about... I suppose about 30 in the crew altogether. The passengers , the wardroom settee, the tables, the settee in my cabin, anywhere. But I never had a great number of people although when I brought the *William Scoresby* back to England, there was my First Lieutenant and Graham, who were my two regular Officers, there was David James and another chap who had been on the staff of NOIC, the Falklands, and somebody else. Where they slept I never really .... well I think they slept on the settees in the wardroom and that was it. I always remember that trip because we got back... I put into Las Palmas for fuel. I got into Las Palmas, I got the timing wrong. They were an hour ahead of us, or ahead of me. Anyway I got in, I thought it was four o'clock in the morning and went to bed. I thought 'Thank goodness' and I hadn't been in bed for more than half an hour when there was a knock on my cabin door and the Quartermaster said: ' British Consul, Sir'. And I sat up and said:'Oh yes', and I didn't have anything on! (Laughs). Anyway, he asked me if I would go to a memorial service for a Spanish submarine which had been sunk. I did go. I didn't enjoy that trip, very pleased to get away, get back to England.

(0:54:53 ) Rae: What was it like coming back to England?

Marchesi: We arrived in Plymouth and I remember the Customs came on board and David James had bought a lot of sherry in Las Palmas and when the Customs .... anyway what happened I don't know but it all went ashore. I then went up to London to see the Hydrographer and mainly to meet a Royal Mail ship from South America, who was bringing my wife back. We went down to Plymouth and I paid off the *Scoresby*. I can't remember, it's all very vague now unfortunately.

(0:55:58 ) Rae: One thing we haven't mentioned in the description of the *Scoresby* is the cargo capacity.

Marchesi: There was no cargo capacity. There was no hold or anything like that. There was storage space but not a hold as such. That was one of the reasons why the *Scoresby* was really most unsuitable.

(0:56:30 ) Gilbert: Did you take dogs down on the *Scoresby*?

Marchesi: No, they went down in the *Trepassey*.

(0:56:41 ) Rae: Could you just describe the *Fitzroy*, because the *Fitzroy* took the cargo.

Marchesi: Yes, well the *Fitzroy* was just an ordinary cargo ship. It used to run normally from Stanley to Montevideo and back again and going around the island. That was what its main job was .It belonged to the Falkland Island Company and the Falkland Island Company .... Captain Roberts was the Manager of the Falkland Island Company. He was known as the Fuhrer of the Falkland Islands. He was far more important than the Governor, he reckoned. (Laughs)

(0:57:33 ) Rae: So what did you think about the *Fitzroy* not getting in to Hope Bay?

Marchesi: Well, it was up to them. I mean to say, insurance purposes, you see. If she had done any damage she wouldn't be covered by insurance mainly because of ice.

(0:57:53 ) Gilbert: So, were any of the vessels changed at all to work in ice or were they all standard?

Marchesi: Pardon?

(0:57:59 ) Gilbert: Were any of ships changed or ice strengthened at all?

Marchesi: No, not really. I don't think any of us really had any accidents except the *Eagle*. She didn't really hit a berg. What happened was the ... at the top of Hope Bay was a glacier and part of it broke off and I think it struck the *Eagle*, as far as I recollect. The ice... I went down one November, I was going South and I couldn't get within 200 miles of the South Shetlands. There was ice everywhere. I did get into the ice but I thought it was the beginning of the season, I thought discretion was the better part of valour. I turned back, well I was advised to turn back actually.

(0:59:31 ) Rae: I think that might be sufficient.

Marchesi: You think?

(0:59:35 ) Rae: Yes, are you happy there?

Marchesi: Anything else you want?

(0:59:39 ) Gilbert: One more thing, do you remember the first time you saw Antarctica?

Marchesi: Pardon?

(0:59:42 ) Gilbert: Do you remember the first time you actually saw Antarctica?

Marchesi: Yes, I remember. It was when I was in *Discovery II* there. Really the first time I saw it, I saw the Ross Ice Barrier. We went down to pick up Lincoln Ellesworth, an American who had flown, and we went down the Ross Sea to the Bay of Whales and that's where I really saw Antarctica, and I always remember I had my 22nd birthday. (Laughs). When we picked up Lincoln Ellesworth that was great fun.

(1:00:43 ) Rae: That's a very memorable event that he was involved with, wasn't it?

Marchesi: Oh yes, went through 500 miles of pack-ice to get there and when we got there we had two planes on board, a Wapiti and a Moth<sup>1</sup>, two pilots, both Royal Australian Air Force. When we were in the ice occasionally we sent ...the Moth used to go off to see if we could find any open water. But when we got to the Bay of Whales the Moth took off and went to Little America if they could find it because Little America by then was about six foot underground and suddenly we saw a bloke on skis coming across who turned out to be a bloke called Hollick Kenyon who was the pilot of Lincoln Ellesworth's plane. We then sent a shore party ashore, picked up Ellesworth and brought him down to the *Discovery* . I went and had a look at Little America, went down the hole where Little America was and I got sunburnt. I skied from Bay of Whales to Little America, the sun was shining, it was so hot I took everything off and I was nearly burnt. As soon as the sun went in it was as cold as ... ????(inaudible).

(1:02:54 ) Rae: And what was Little America like?

Marchesi: Well it was a hiut. There was lots of odd tins around, I can't remember very much now. It was Admiral Byrd's old camp. And from there we went to Hut Point, you know Scott's and Shackleton's place and then back. Went to Melbourne where we had jollifications.

(1:03:37 ) Rae: Right, thank you, thanks very much. We're going to call that it.

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<sup>1</sup> Both British two-seater biplanes from the 1920's.