

ALLAN WEARDEN

This is Allan Wearden interviewed at his home by Chris Eldon Lee on the 6th of June 2012. BAS Archives AD6/24/1/168. Transcribed by Allan Wearden July 2014.

Wearden: Allan Jeffrey Wearden, 22.9.47, Blackburn Lancashire.

[Part 1 0:00:19] Lee: So you haven't moved much in your life then?

Wearden: Well I have, I've been all over the world, but have ended up back, not in the same house, but certainly a house I spent a lot of my childhood.

[Part 1 0:00:25] Lee: What was your first inkling of a place called the Antarctic actually existed?

Wearden: Well it probably wasn't the Antarctic it would have been probably Everest, I remember the film of the *Conquest of Everest* being shown 60 years ago, when all's said and done, and Edmond Hillary! Then I'd heard vaguely about Scott, not really Shackleton but Scott and then the 'Trans-Antarctic' with Fuchs and Hillary, I'd heard of Hillary so I was quite interested in that, and they also issued stamps!

[Part 1 0:01:02] Lee: You'd be 9 years old?

Wearden: Yeah about that.

[Part 1 0:01:05] Lee: So were you following it on the radio or on *Pathé Newsreel* at the cinema?

Wearden: It would have been the radio and the newsreel at the cinema. My father had a coach firm and a lot of the work was in the summer, so quite often myself and my mother would go to the cinema on a Saturday evening, we did have a TV after the Coronation, but just one channel. But myself and my mother did tend to go to the cinema quite a lot!

[Part 1 0:01:38] Lee: Do you remember being particular inspired by those images, of man against ice?

Wearden: To a certain extent, and they also did toy soldiers and they actually did a dog sledge with all the huskies and a man behind and a man on skis, that would be a collector's item now? But I did get one for a birthday or Christmas one time so I always got a bit of an interest at the back of my mind, and one of my brothers was a very keen climber.

[Part 1 0:02:11] Lee: Tell me a bit about your brother, this is Frank isn't it?

Wearden: Frank yeah! Well all my brothers were a lot older than me, and Frank was the only one left at home. He'd been a potholer then he gave up potholing much to the relief of my mother! And went climbing, which in the end wasn't a good idea, because, we'll get to that first.

I spent quite a bit of time with him probably about 1954 or 55, he'd fallen off on a climb and broken his leg, and he spent quite a lot of time at home that summer, and he did take me climbing once, up to a local beauty spot that unfortunately became the council tip, and was filled in. But it was a lovely spot, but he could go up sheer faces whereas I struggled but granted I was only 7 or 8 years old. But he had a big motorbike, a 750 BSA Gold Star or Flash one of them, but he was quite a hero! But then they would always go away for holidays, in 1956 he and 4 friends or 3 friends, yeah 4 friends went up to Scotland.

And next we heard the police were, one chap had arrived in Fort William and he had walked down and they were all stranded on a mountain on Christmas Eve, Ben Nevis! And the chap who had got out and raised the alarm Tom Carrol, I still remember his name! He was from the Blackpool area, but all the others died! Unfortunately I mean, Frank was the leader of the party so he stayed, when they found them about Boxing Day, they had all died. The mountain rescue was very involved, one of the bodies was brought back to Fleetwood because he was a Catholic, and they didn't bury Catholics with Protestants in those days! But the other 3 were buried in Glen Nevis, the grave is there to this day.

[Part 1 0:04:27] Lee: Was it hypothermia or did they fall?

Wearden: One of them fell, Sumner fell but the others it was hypothermia, he had got delirious the one that fell and they surmised afterwards he just wandered off, and fell a long way down. A big tragedy, Christmas Eve they had gone out for a little practice climb, they didn't take any kit. You don't do that, but a lovely day Christmas Eve they should have known better, but in those days there wasn't the lightweight stuff there is these days!

[Part 1 0:05:02] Lee: Did any of that come back to you while you were in the Antarctic going on trips, making decisions on what to take?

Wearden: Not really, but well I was careful, always careful. But the tragedy did upset my father he started having eczema it was a big jolt to my parents, no I never really went climbing I did a lot of walking in the 1960's.

[Part 1 0:05:30] Lee: I get the impression that Frank was quite of an idol of yours?

Wearden: Well he was, he was 20 when he died I would have been 9 years old, when he died so big brother, big motor bike! Yeah I suppose he was, he was the type of person who would have been a Fid in a way but he never got that far!

[Part 1 0:05:53] Lee: Was your father an educated man?

Wearden: No he was a local business man, a picture on the wall there, that's him in 1927 they had a coal business, but they branched out into, well the first picture there is a charabanc it was a coal wagon during the week, then at the weekend it was scrubbed off and they put the chassis on, and it became a coach! At that's they're picking up a party to go to Blackburn Rovers, that was a promotional picture. No he wasn't but he'd done quite well for himself and had four sons. Yeah but it did upset him the loss of Frank, it was a big shock.

[Part 1 0:06:37] Lee: Were you pressed to educational goals at all?

Wearden: No, no I had one brother who was quite bright, he went to the grammar school, Ron, who you met yourself on the 2000 trip. He wanted to be a policeman, he went to do his National Service came back and he was a quarter of an inch too short, wouldn't happen these days but in those days it did. Been a cadet, so he went into banking but turned better for him, this is before the banks had all these problems, he ended up with a hell of a pension. On the 2000 trip he paid my bar bill and Judith's which had all gone on my bar bill anyhow, which he paid the bar bill for us, all very nice and helpful at the time, all unsolicited!

[Part 1 0:07:29] Lee: And quite big I would imagine!?

Wearden: It was about \$400!

[Part 1 0:07:37] Lee: So what happened to you then you went to school?

Wearden: Went to school got involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, went right through bronze at school a local 'Sec Mod' Bash Street! Actually it was Bangor Street always thought of it as Bash Street it was that type of place, I did the bronze and think I was part way through the silver and then I finished school and went to technical college to learn catering, and the YMCA got involved and they pushed people on, and I was among the second group from Blackburn to get the Gold Award from Buckingham Palace from Mr. Edinburgh himself! Which was quite a nice thing, one of the same group that started the same time as me got one as well, but he was a bit behind, I think the rest dropped out. It was quite a thing, think there had originally been 2 from Blackburn but think when we went there was 5 so that was quite a big thing at the time 1966!

[Part 1 0:08:46] Lee: So where did the career in catering emerge?

Wearden: Well when I was at school, I could have gone to be a joiner, my brother Frank had been a joiner and there would have been a job for me at the gas works doing joining as he had been very well thought of, but I was never that practical! I wanted to be photographer for *Playboy* but the openings are very limited!! [Lee: Ha ha!] So I don't know where the catering came from, but I thought I'd give it a try! But luckily I had an aptitude for it, but there was nothing to point me that way. Went to college 2 years full time and did a bit work in a local hospital in the holidays, but it was a good career for me really.

[Part 1 0:09:37] Lee: Had that aptitude demonstrated itself in your childhood?

Wearden: No, no! I don't know where it came from really nothing had pointed me that way. Was quite good at cake decoration probably when I was going to college, but it was a good choice from my point of view.

[Part 1 0:10:00] Lee: What was your first job?

Wearden: It was at, [cough, cough!], this crops up in the going to the Antarctic, it was at a local mental hospital. And in the pen picture of me in the Antarctic, in the 1969 *Illustrated Gallindez News*, the midwinter magazine, it says 'Went straight from a mental hospital to the Antarctic'!

[Part 1 0:10:26] Lee: No adjustment required!?

Wearden: Well that's how it sort of panned out! Yeah I was there for three and half years doing a lot of walking and the previous year I had been to watch an England international in Spain in 1968. So I was getting quite adventurous, because I went on my own, got a ticket, went on the train and met a couple of other people there, and we'd had a trip to Norway 3 of us in a car the previous year, so sort of getting adventurous! I wanted to travel and the Antarctic job, I'd known about the Antarctic jobs for 2 or 3 years but you had to be 21 and I'd known about them since I was 18 and things being equal I could have probably have applied then and might have got taken on, as they were always short of cooks. But I applied in 1968 and got taken on but they did struggle for cooks in those days!

[Part 1 0:11:33] Lee: Did you know why that was, why were they short of cooks?

Wearden: Don't know really, but I do know somebody contacted me when I got back, and he had gone down as a cook to Halley, and he'd been a plasterer and he told me when he first went into the kitchen at Halley, he'd never been in a kitchen by himself!! [Lee: Ha, Ha!] And actually Big Al Smith told me he used to make the most wonderful bread, must have been something to do with him being a plasterer I suppose!? Doctors as well they used to struggle for doctors in those days. I don't know how many people applied, but I certainly was taken on, how many were taken on that year? Myself, Dickie Bird probably 3, there was 4 because Martin Pinder who you have already interviewed, was taken on late, so someone possibly dropped out at Halley?

[Part 1 0:12:35] Lee: So they took on 3 or 4 cooks that season?

Wearden: And Halley carried 2 cooks at least, 1 at Adelaide 1 at Signy and 1 at Argentine Islands, Deception because of the eruption the year before, I don't think they were going to winter at Deception? The only cook I can remember at the Cambridge at the conference was Dick Bird who was going to Adelaide, Martin certainly wasn't there, so maybe they took 2 on, and then needed another one which was Martin Pinder?

[Part 1 0:13:15] Lee: Do you remember the interview?

Wearden: Oh yes Bill Sloman and Maurice Sumner yeah obviously I did OK as I was taken on, it was at Gillingham Street and you knew you'd got on as they sent you for a medical. Overlooking Victoria very basic medical touch your toes, cough! And that was it, then I had to go for a chest X-ray at Harley Street somewhere, but it was all done in a day, interview and medical, chest X-ray and whatever! I do know that night I was quite hopeful because I paid £4.4s to have a room at the Charing Cross Hotel which was quite a lot of money in those days! But think I was quite hopeful and pleased with the interview, and I suppose a couple of weeks later, I was taken on. The interview was probably August and was invited to the

conference in Cambridge which was a week at Corpus Christie College in Cambridge in September.

[Part 1 0:14:25] Lee: At the interview itself did they quiz you deeply about your catering skills or were they more interested if you'd mix in socially?

Wearden: [Sigh!] Well I'd got my City & Guilds so I think it was more about mixing in, they were very impressed that I'd gone right through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme so that obviously counted. The catering was touched upon, but as I'd got my City & Guilds. There's a little story about the City & Guilds, there was a mechanic going from Blackburn and I met him in Cambridge. He was a married man which was very unusual and he was going to Adelaide and he was sailing on the *Biscoe* and I was sailing on the *Shackleton* and he was quite upset I was getting £50 a year more than him, because I had got my City & Guilds certificates and he wasn't, and in the end he didn't go! And his replacement was Barrie Whittaker who lives in Accrington and Barrie sailed down on the *Perla*, but I think that guy was upset! I suppose it was just it was just a pound a week more in those days, but I don't know why it just came up in a conversation, as we travelled home together from Cambridge on the train, yeah Cambridge was good the best thing about Cambridge was the talk by Priestley!

[Part 1 0:15:55] Lee: Yeah, you met him didn't you?

Wearden: Oh yes, he came in, limped in after the V.D. lecture [Lee: Ha, Ha!] The V.D. lecture was, oh I was quite innocent in those days I was only 20, I'd had my 21st birthday shortly before we sailed. He limps in and he said 'This is nothing to do with the previous lecture!', as one the problems you can get with gonorrhoea or syphilis, is gout or problems with your leg! He limps in and it's nothing to do with the previous lecture! But the V.D. lecture was funny because there was several secretaries, and they got all the women out of the room, when they told us about it!

[Part 1 0:16:37] Lee: They did?

Wearden: Oh yeah they did in those days, they got all the girls out and it's 'What happening here?' Then the doctor told us about the perils of Montevideo!

[Part 1 0:16:45] Lee: It was just about that one location wasn't it, as I guess that scoring anywhere else was pretty limited I'd have thought!?

Wearden: Oh yes it was just about Montevideo, it was all Montevideo in those days. Yeah it was a pretty interesting talk, but a bit of an eye opener! But then Priestley limps in afterwards, and said 'Nothing to do with the previous lecture'!!! And he gave his talk.

[Part 1 0:17:08] Lee: About Scott?

Wearden: Well not about Scott, but about the 'Northern Party', the only time Priestley is mentioned in *Scott's Diary*, is 'Priestley was seasick again!' So he certainly, don't think either of them were each other's favourite people! But Priestley had a hell of a time with the

‘Northern Party’, Campbell was in charge think about half a dozen of them? They had a hell of a time, but they all survived they lived on seal and penguin! I have just been to the Scott exhibition in London recently and they were just black when the ship picked them up from the seal blubber stoves and everything! But it was quite something to meet someone from the *Terra Nova* expedition, probably several around then, but Priestley was quite a character!

[Part 1 0:18:00] Lee: Did he actually have a sense of humour?

Wearden: Oh yes, limped in and said ‘Nothing to do with the previous lecture’, oh yes he was very, very good, took over from Fuchs when Fuchs was on the ‘Trans-Antarctic’ but he was quite a bloke was Priestley!

[Part 1 0:18:20] Lee: You were intended to go one place, and got diverted to another?

Wearden: When I was in Cambridge for the conference Bill [Sloman] said, I think it was probably on the notice board down for Signy, and I was slightly disappointed because there was no dogs, and during that week Bill said ‘Down for Signy but it could change but it could be Argentine Islands’ And I knew about Portwine being ‘airvacked’ out and died in B.A., think he died in about October, so the conference would have been September, so it had just happened. So when I joined the ship I knew I was going to Argentine Islands, and I was happy about that, as they had dogs there.

[Part 1 0:19:05] Lee: So was the Ken Portwine disaster, or tragedy is a better word, openly talked about, or was it all hush, hush!?

Wearden: It was in the newspapers a little bit, but I knew there’d been a problem and he’d been ‘airvacked’ out, but it wasn’t mentioned in Cambridge, if it was I didn’t hear it. But I knew he’d died in B.A. and that must have been probably just after the conference.

[Part 1 0:19:28] Lee: So you got that news from the newspapers?

Wearden: Yeah, yes, I don’t know how much there was in the press, there was probably more in the ‘red tops’, but I tended to get the *Daily Mirror* in those days. But probably something in but I knew about it and I was going to Argentine Islands as opposed to Signy. That’s probably why Martin Pinder was taken on, that solves that story doesn’t it?

[Part 1 0:19:58] Lee: I seem to remember him saying that, along those lines?

Wearden: Because he went to Signy, and when the conference was on he hadn’t died!

[Part 1 0:20:06] Lee: So what was it that was drawing you south, was it the idea of working with dogs or the cold?

Wearden: Just a bit of adventure I guess, and it would be nice to get the chance to work with dogs, which we did. But it was a whole new world, I wanted to travel and I sailing on a ship to Montevideo. And we went down to Southampton and we were tied up next to the *Queen Elizabeth*, and the *Shackleton* was a 1000 tons and the *Queen Elizabeth* was 82,000 tons, I’ve heard this story before in interviews you couldn’t see the ship when it was low tide at

Southampton, so that was through the tropics I don't remember a lot about the trip. Fanny [Dave] Hill was 'King Fid'.

[Part 1 0:20:58] Lee: Dave Hill, this is October '68?

Wearden: Yeah, About October 8th when we sailed.

[Part 1 0: 21:08] Lee: It's quite an early departure, isn't it?

Wearden: In those days, probably that was about par for the course and the *Biscoe* went 2 weeks later, I mean we sailed and it was great the first night, then I was seasick for the next 3 days, then you got your sea legs and it was great. Did a bit of work on the ship, but the actual trip is a bit of a blur in a way, and it just seemed to go by and then we were in Montevideo. I was a very good boy in Montevideo!?

[Part 1 0:21:35] Lee: Oh you were a good boy, you'd listened to the lecture?

Wearden: A very good boy and there was a guy called John Edwards and we sort of looked after each other, I'd learned my lesson on the way back though!

[Part 1 0:21:49] Lee: Ha, Ha! Probably outside the scope of this interview!?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah!

[Part 1:0:21:53] Lee: Tell me about me about Turnbull, the captain?

Wearden: 'Frosty' was alright I never had a problem with him, Dick Harris and one or two others had a problem with him, but he was fine with me. Never had a lot to do with him, he was the Captain! We used to do wheel watch in those days, so if you'd volunteered you'd do an hour on the wheel maybe every other day. And it was the first year of the 'Sat-Nav!' on the ship and it wasn't very successful, sometimes as they would plot the position and it would be half way up a mountain in Turkey! But they were trying it, the wheel watch was good fun!

[Part 1 0:22:33] Lee: Were there other duties to be performed?

Wearden: Well you'd do a bit of paint chipping and things like that as you went along, nothing too arduous.

[Part 1 0: 22:41] Lee: So largely it was a holiday!?

Wearden: Yeah, I got to appreciate that over the years, but that first time because it's new you don't really know.

[Part 1 0:22:50] Lee: Were you, part of the advantage of sailing down you, kind of gelled into some sort of working unit among the Fids, is that right?

Wearden: I used to work this way when I was 'King Fid' in the '90's, to a certain extent we were all going to different places, who was on board going to Argentine Islands? [REDACTED]

Wearden: Oh yeah, yes there was a shop on the end of the public jetty in those days right in the centre, 'Des Pecks' lots of people bought a 'Chay' hat, like a seaman's hat with a peak on, and he sold stamps as well. It was a duty free port in those days, lots of people bought watches, I bought a good watch there, and cameras, Falkland Islands store [FIC] and 'Binnys' yeah people would spent some of the money they hadn't actually earned but you knew it was going to go into your account so there was no problem. And the office was quite big in those days, they was quite a lot of girls down there. In later years it was Miriam and one but certainly in the 60's & 70's there must have been, I say about 10 girl's working there, Ted Clapp was in charge with his number 2 Clem.

[Part 1 0:27:24] Lee: What did you make of Ted Clapp?

Wearden: Ted Clapp was good, still friendly with Ted, still talk to him on email, because he was an ex-Argentine Island Fid, he had been a radio operator, could be a bit officious sometimes! But in those days all the traffic went through Stanley, from the bases. It went from the base to Stanley and then on to London. So he had quite a big job had Ted! And from Stanley we went to South Georgia, which was quite an eye opener as we saw penguins and seals really for the first time. Don't remember seeing a penguin in Stanley, no the first ones was South Georgia.

[Part 1:0:28:06] Lee: You also saw the tail end of the whaling industry?

Wearden: It had closed about 2 years ago the Japanese had had it but the whaling station in Grytviken. Grytviken in those days wasn't a BAS base it was a government settlement, but the whaling station was ready to go, a couple of weeks it could have been up and running! They had 2 caretakers a guy Thorsen and a guy called Larssen. And you could go over and wander round, and all the machinery was ready oiled it certainly could have been up soon, 3 whale catchers on the jetty they were quite elderly whale catchers I found out after, but it was always said you could have bought one for £1500! I think you would have got them for less to be honest. They were the ones that used to bring the whales in once they'd been shot. Because they were the pensioned off ones, one was called the *Albatross* I remember that. And just the whole thing, we were very lucky as we got taken round to an old station called Prince Olaf Harbour which had closed in the 1930's. There must have been some reason why the *Shackleton* went round there. Maybe some scientist or biologist wanted a look round, but it was quite a goody to go there, it was very rare and as quite derelict but we got to wander round there was no health & safety in those days, the was a bonus was Prince Olaf!

[Part 1 0:29:48] Lee: You met Eric Twelves in a ...?

Wearden: Eric Twelves, sailed down with me to South Georgia.

[Part 1 0:29:55] Lee: South Georgia, he sailed down with you?

Wearden: Eric he was on board, but he was a biologist going to Signy. I remember him catching fish off the jetty in South Georgia!

[Part 1 0:30:04] Lee: Any particular kind?

Wearden: Notothiodei! [Correction: Nototheniodei.]

[Part 1 0:30:04] Lee: Ice fish?

Wearden: Yeah, ugly looking fish but actually not bad to eat, as we caught them in later years, but I do remember him, catching one straight off the jetty, huge head!!

[Part 1 0:30:18] Lee: Tell me you experimented with them sometime in your cooking career, with cooking those?

Wearden: Yes, in later years we caught them off the jetty at Adelaide and I think we caught them off the jetty at Argentine Islands as well. They were quite good, you would get 2 good fillets, very bony but if you got the fillets off they were fine, and they cooked up quite well!

[Part 1 0:30:41] Lee: But I mean did your job generally have scope for experimenting with unusual foods?

Wearden: Oh yes!

[Part 1 0:30:48] Lee: What else did you work with?

Wearden: Well!!

[Part 1 0:30:51] Lee: What you hadn't done before?

Wearden: Seal, penguin, shags! When after South Georgia, well we went to Signy first real base and we unloaded there. And they use to have a railway which went from the jetty up to the base, in those days. But that was quite interesting doing the relief, but when I got to base itself, they use to take seals for the dogs. But we use to take seal, for ourselves as well we'd always take a couple of joints or steaks for ourselves. Never that keen on penguin, very fishy, very dark, but the seal was good! Roast seal meat, steaks and the liver was very good, and the heart was very good! But we only used to have, the previous year they had got a freezer, but in the summer they had run out of gas. So even when we got the freezer going and got the gas in, we'd only enough meat for twice a week, so it was all tinned and dried really. But the wild life did supplement the diet especially as we were taking seal for the dogs anyhow! Well if we saw a seal at Argentine Islands we went out and shot it! Because we had about 15 dogs, and nobody did any sealing for us, we used to do all our own, if we didn't take any seals the dogs would have starved!

[Part 1 0:32:34] Lee: If you were feeding the Fids unusual food, were you always up front, about what it was?

Wearden: Oh yes, yeah I mean they knew what it was! There was no problem with that.

[Part 1 0:32:47] Lee: You couldn't keep a secret!?

Wearden: No, no just say 'We are on seal tonight', and they used 'Elsan' buckets in those days, and well they always knew when there had been seal on, because it was all BLACK SHIT!! It was very strong it went straight through people!

[Part 1 0:33:08] Lee: Oh, I see!!

Wearden: And you could tell when seal had been on or penguin! But the shags or cormorant was usually popular, the seal was reasonably popular but like I said the penguin was never terribly popular.

[Part 1 0:33:22] Lee: How would you cook the seal, would there be a 'Wearden' signature seal dish!?

Wearden: I had Gerry Cutland's book *Fit for a Fid*, I've been trying to find my copy of that for all day, but I haven't done so but there was a book on base called *Fit for a Fid* written by Gerry Cutland who'd been the cook at Argentine Islands in the 1950's. And it told you how to cook seal and penguin, but we'd just roast it, and treat it like a joint of beef, same with the steaks the only thing is you didn't have rare ones, make sure they were well cooked!

[Part 1 0:33:58] Lee: Why was that, about disease?

Wearden: Possibly I think they may have been a bit 'lurky' we never tried doing them rare I suppose nobody particularly wanted them rare in truth.

[Part 1:0:34:16] Lee: So what did you think of these Fids when you first got to see them I think your first encounter with Fids was on Signy really, seasoned Fids!?

Wearden: Yeah, they didn't say a lot because they'd just got relief and they'd got the stores and a lot of them had beards and you had a quick word but not a lot. It was different when I arrived at Argentine Islands, first went to Deception after Signy and we opened up the base which had been evacuated because of the eruption.

[Part 1:0:34:51] Lee: The previous year?

Wearden: Yeah, in 1967.

[Part 1 0:34:52] Lee: So what kind of condition was it in?

Wearden: It had been damaged, but not as much damaged as it was afterwards!! Yeah, part of the base had disappeared but it was still liveable in and the bar was still good, bottom ends of ties in the bar that impressed me. Was the first I tried to light a stove, the cooking was on anthracite, the stoves were 'Esse' stoves which was like a big 'Aga'. First time I tried to light one, it's like anything else if you are shown how to do it properly, you know what you are doing! And Dick Stocks, who had done several winters, came in and showed me how to do it and I was fine, think I did what 3 nights on Deception. But at some stage Captain Turnbull, 'Frosty' came ashore and said 'The *Endurance* is coming in and they are taking you to Argentine Islands by Helicopter'!! I said 'Oh'! So he said 'Be ready to leave', so got my kit ashore. I then went back, and the *Endurance* picked me up and I was on the *Endurance* had a meal there, and at about three o'clock in the morning, got in a helicopter, I think we must have been about Palmer Station and I know we landed on base at 4.30 in the morning, the entire base was up, of course it was complete daylight!

[Part 1 0:36:25] Lee: And noisy!?

Wearden: Yes, so they got their mail, the first priority was the mail, the second priority was me, and then 2 bags, a bag of cabbages and a bag of cauliflower from Lady Haskard she'd put on board, some fresh veg! I was quite prepared to start work that day, but John Dudeney the Base Commander, said 'No take today off and start tomorrow', so nice day so one of the lads said, 'Oh we'll take you skiing!' Oh I've never been on skis, and this was a guy called Richie Hesbrook, you've met Richie, he's what 6ft 8in? So another guy Paul who was a radar mech, he was 6ft 6in luckily the diesel mech. came who was not as big! We had a 6 mile round trip to a place called the Yalours which was a penguin rookery, so still penguins there and they'd had really good sea ice that winter, so we got there and back, absolutely knackered when I got back!! And it took me, oh about 20 months to get that far off the island again! Because a week later all the sea ice had gone, but I was lucky as I got there December 6th so I got to know all the winter team. But I was a bonus because they'd lost their cook they'd got quite good at cooking, but quite pleased to get a cook in!! But I remember making Christmas puddings and a Christmas cake, we had a good Christmas.

[Part 1 0:38:17] Lee: Was there any kind of left over feeling from the 'Portwine' story?

Wearden: Relief I think because he had gone!

[Part 1 0:38:22] Lee: They weren't depressed or?

Wearden: They weren't depressed, I think it was relief that he had gone, because it had been a hell of a year for them! Yeah I think relief that he'd gone really, unfortunately he hadn't been a particularly popular man I know Brian Gardiner when I talked to him, he got on with him OK, but one or two of the others hadn't been too keen on him. He was a lot older than everyone else, but he'd made things hard work for himself, not declaring he was ill a lot earlier than he did and things like that!

[Part 1 0:38:57] Lee: He'd let the side down?

Wearden: In a way yeah, he'd made it hard work for himself and everybody else, yeah because they did really work hard, really it was relief that he'd gone, obviously sad that he had died but they could get on with things really. They'd managed and yeah, it had been an odd winter and I know you have recorded Brian and John Dudeney and Dick Kressman but it had certainly been an odd winter for them, and they were looking forward to starting again I suppose?

[Part 1 0:39:49] Lee: And they'd also been fending for themselves hadn't they?

Wearden: Yes that's it, that's why I was a priority, the mail was a big priority and also that I was a priority, and that's what had been agreed with Cambridge [London] obviously not Cambridge in those days, but with Bill Sloman, 'If we can get the chance to get a cook in, we'll get him in!' And *Endurance* turned up and they'd got the helicopters, that was the first season of that *Endurance*.

[Part 1 0:40:17] Lee: Had you been able to order the food for that season?

Wearden: No, it didn't work like that in those days it was all on ration scales.

[Part 1 0:40:25] Lee: What do you mean by ration scales?

Wearden: Right! One man his ration of corned beef for the year, I think was 24 cans. But you weren't actually given that but we had my first winter, we had a base of 12 men which worked out quite well. So each week from the food loft which was above the kitchen, I'd take maybe 6 cans of corned beef, 6 cans of stewed steak and put them in the pantry for use that week, because if you over used something, because it was all on ration scales and indents, say you used all the corned beef that year? And if you, say, had double the ration, you might end up with no corned beef for the following year! Or as an example there was booze in those days, I can remember these 4 cases of beer per man per year, 3 bottles of rum, 3 pints of rum sorry as it was gallon jars, 3 bottles of whisky and 3 bottles of gin but again it was not given to the individual! But that meant for 12 of us on a Saturday night we could have a case of beer and 2 bottles of spirits and also if you had a surplus of booze, you always wrote it off you didn't say you hadn't used it! Because it was always good currency, I mean there's the stories about Stonington cleaning their windows with gin because they had so much, because nobody drank it!

[Part 1 0:42:06] Lee: Which also it didn't freeze!

Wearden: No it was good for cleaning windows but it never happened at Argentine Islands! Because I was shown how to drink gin! [Lee: Ha Ha!] This again was Saturday nights, people could bring in a certain amount of their own booze in, but the BAS supply was Saturday night plus a bit extra for parties and things like that. But Brian Gardiner and Brian Gilbert didn't drink for their entire time south, and we also had some soft drinks 6 cans for a Saturday night so they had that, several people only drink beer like Dick Harris so they had 2 or 3 cans of beer, 2 or 3 people drank whisky and a chap who's coming this weekend, Dick Rumble, drank gin. So I said 'I don't know if I like gin?' 'Oh, right', he showed me how to drink gin. So myself on Saturday night, always had Sunday off when wintering, we drank the gin getting on for half a bottle each! Possibly somebody else might have a couple. But there was no tonic in those days it was gin, lime cordial and soda 'Sparklet' siphon. But yeah you got used to it, but the booze came out on Saturday balanced out, so everybody would have what they wanted, I think we had enough gin for a bottle every Saturday, so there was a surplus of gin so we had we had one every Saturday, so that worked out!

[Part 1 0:43:47] Lee: Talking about the alcohol, but the food was of course equally important and you had no control over what you had, you had to work with what you had?

Wearden: Yeah of course you had, but as I said it's all ration scales and you use obviously, if you seal or penguin that supplemented it, because that wasn't on a scale, and when we got the freezer going we had enough fresh meat for twice a week. And we'd also had some from the Americans which again, was above the ration scale. But yeah, you started to make good things with the corned beef and even Spam!

[Part 1 0:44:24] Lee: So was there any scope, did you feel hemmed in?

Wearden: No, no I'd never really made bread before, but you got used to it, I'd had a practice, yeah, you used what ingredients that there were. Now there's a funny story about the marmalade, I discovered. 'Oh! There's not very much marmalade there', and we were going through a can a week, a 2 pound can. But also the jam was supplied in cases of 24, 6 strawberry, 6 raspberry and 6 blackcurrant. No, no there were 4 [6 actually!] different kinds, but these different kinds included gooseberry and greengage, nobody wanted them so I had a surplus of jams not red! So what I did for 6 months, it took them 6 months to crack this one. I use to put a marmalade label on the gooseberry jam, now Brian Gardiner doesn't remember this, but I remember him discovering it, must have been 6 months into the first winter, it was 'smoko' in a morning and he was putting marmalade on his toast, which was gooseberry jam! 'This marmalade is green!' It was gooseberry jam, but by then we could go back to the ration scale! I admitted what I had done, said 'You've eaten it for 6 months and you didn't say anything!' But, yeah the rations were there and you adapted them to what was there! I think every other week we would do spam fritters, corned beef fritters things like that you adapted to what was there, we did Chinese food with the dried vegetables, chopped Spam up and things like that, it worked!

[Part 1 0:46:36] Lee: Was there demands for certain foods among the workers because people were working pretty hard, so were they wanting chips?

Wearden: Chips was a funny one because we'd no potatoes only we had, tinned new potatoes which was a bit of a goody and some dried diced potatoes and dried matchstick potatoes, which took a bit of reconstituting you had to soak them for at least 24 hours! But we'd no way of frying them, the first winter was a big pan filled with lard, no oil in those days on 3 Primus stoves and dip these things in it, I use to do that with a fire extinguisher in my back pocket!! Very, very dangerous 3 Primus stoves!!

[Part 1 0:47:28] Lee: Really!?

Wearden: Oh yeah 3 Primus stoves big pan of fat on top, very, very dangerous! And that was the only way I could fry anything, if I did fritters I did that the same way. After the first winter, I'd ordered a little fryer and that came in and made it a lot easier! But they used to get some 'Accelerated Freeze Dried' [AFD] cod and steak, they'd tried it and it had been discontinued, I think we had one tin of steak which we used up, but cod think we had a reasonable amount, but it was cod steaks with a bone in the middle, but if you took the bone out and cut the up you got 2 fillets. And they battered very nicely, but again this was a Primus stove job. I do remember going down to Stonington and doing that with the dried potatoes and wrapped them in newspaper and they thought it was marvellous! Yeah, you adapted, the food there was plenty of it, it was adequate! And there was a huge tobacco ration as well in those days, and quite a lot of chocolate, tobacco was always good for trading with the Chileans and Argentines because a lot of people didn't smoke. And talking about ration scales every man was allowed half a pipe a year! That was the ration scale, but not

everyone would smoke a pipe!!! But we had a dozen pipes and if someone wanted to smoke a pipe they could do.

[Part 1 0:49:08] Lee: There was occasional guests coming in from ships, weren't there, to cater for, as well as the regular men on base?

Wearden: Since my arrival that first summer, we had a very good relationship with the *Endurance* so when the *Endurance* came in for real, we did a party on base for the Captain Buchanan, who'd been on the Royal Yacht and he brought some officers ashore and that was quite good. Then the survey launch, the *James Caird*, their party lived in Wordie House, that happened a couple of times, but they lived at Wordie and I supplied them with bread, and they had 'Compo' rations. Now another funny one that cropped up over the years was dried egg, now we occasionally got penguin eggs which were quite good to use. But the dried egg had a real funny taste to it, except when you got it out of the 'Compo' rations it was very good, as no taste to it. I have since sussed this one out, and 'Andrew Lusk & Company' who supplied all the food, I think they had bought the entire wartime stock of dried egg, and it was stale!! And every year they put it in a new tin, 1967, '68 and it was still the same stale stock!!! But I only sussed that out fairly recently as to what this taste was, and it was just stale because he must have made a fortune out of Fids!

[Part 1 0:50:45] Lee: You tried growing your own salad?

Wearden: I had my own greenhouse, I took over from Paul Burns the radar mech, not sure why I took over, I suppose because I was going to use it. And I didn't know much about horticulture, but Dick Rumble who was the diesel mech did and he was very helpful and he put some more glass in, and I could grow a lettuce from seed in 3 weeks!! And we also grew cucumbers there you are [showing photo in NG magazine!]

[Part 1 0:51:23] Lee: National Geographic!?

Wearden: Now I'm not mentioned by name, but it is me!?

[Part 1 0:51:35] Lee: Yeah!

Wearden: BAS were very upset with the whole article there is 2 pictures of BAS in about 20 pages!?

[Part 1 0:51:44] Lee: Yeah!

Wearden: The dogs at Stonington and me watering lettuce!! [Lee: Ha! Ha!] So allegedly they were a bit upset about it, so they didn't mention me by name!?

[Part 1 0:51:53] Lee: So when you built the greenhouse did you know did you know in advance you were going to grow veg?

Wearden: No the greenhouse was already there it was on the side of the hut.

[Part 1 0:52:00] Lee: So it had been used previously?

Wearden: Yeah Paul Burns had been doing it, and he had done a few things, but we did more. Because we had cucumber seeds, and I grew cucumbers! Now I didn't know you had to sex cucumbers, because flies do it normally!

[Part 1 0:52:19] Lee: When you say sex, you mean pollinate!?

Wearden: Yeah, that's right but I didn't know. But Dick said 'Oh no! I'll give you a little paint brush and take the pollen from the male to the female', 'cause they might have tried before, but wouldn't have got any cucumbers if we hadn't done that! But we did and we had a fair success with cucumbers, but I was the only one having sex on base!!

[Part 1 0:52:44] Lee: Ha! Ha! So were you producing enough salad to feed everybody all the time? It would be a summer only thing wouldn't it?

Wearden: No, no! We could do it 12 months a year we probably had it once a week or once every 2 weeks? We could also do cress, what did we do!? We did lettuce, cucumbers, cress, mustard, radish, some spring onions never did tomatoes not sure why, might have not had the seeds? Like I said could grow a lettuce in 3 weeks. But Lady Cosmo, Sir Cosmo and Lady Haskard came around in 1971 and were most impressed with the greenhouse. And quite impressed with it, and we did very well. The guy who took over from me was the diesel mech Ron Gill and he grew quite a lot of tomatoes, but he went on to, (what's the word?), growing on cultures, as opposed to using the soil and he was quite successful.

[Part 1 0:53:56] Lee: Hydroponics?

Wearden: Yeah, that's the word, because the light was there and copper wiring under the soil, pretty warm in there. In summer, sometimes I opened the door because it was too hot! [Lee: Ha! Ha!] It really was could get over a 100 degrees in there!

[Part 1 0:54:12] Lee: So you were actually putting wiring in the soil in the greenhouse?

Wearden: Yeah this was all done and Dick did a lot of work on it for me, yeah it was all there.

[Part 1 0:54:22] Lee: I see OK..

Wearden: A couple of years later it was all taken out, I don't know why if it was a problem with the power or whatever, probably about 1974 or so, it had all been ripped out.

[Part 1 0:54:35] Lee: What was the standing of the cook on base? Because, were you the butt end of jokes or were people ever so grateful to you?

Wearden: I was never the butt end of jokes really! No I'd have a laugh, but generally I know cooks that have certainly got stick, but I was always happy with what I produced and I think people were quite appreciative.

[Part 1 0:55:03] Lee: On certain occasions you had to take avoidance tactics, producing bread before, which was being eaten, I suppose I will rephrase this. Your bread was very popular, so you had to take special measures to stop it being eaten?

Wearden: No! No that's the red, white and blue bread! That was special one for Midwinter!

[Part 1 0:55:28] Lee: Oh I see!

Wearden: No, no often I would bake everyday so bread would be the first job in a morning.

[Part 1 0:55:38] Lee: I thought you talked about making green bread?

Wearden: No! No I made red, white and blue bread at Midwinter and it was in plaits so you cut it and had a slice and Brian Gardiner fried it up, as no one cooked, he went in and did some breakfast and it looked quite odd when he fried it up! [Lee: Ha, Ha!] No it might have happened the odd time at other places, I do remember on the ship once they upset the ship's cook and he gave them green semolina! Because they had kept him awake at night, but I never actually had to resort to that! No, you made enough as you needed and kept it ticking over. In later years, I always made rolls as well and had them ready for morning 'smoko' and you just did the same again next day.

[Part 1 0:56:31] Lee: Did you get out much, out of the kitchen?

Wearden: Yeah!

[Part 1 0:56:36] Lee: Into the field?

Wearden; Well I always did breakfast, they were doing the 'Radio Sondes' at Argentine Islands so that was 8.30 in the morning, so I'd do the majority of my work in the morning, so after lunch I'd got 2 or 3 hours free, so I'd go skiing or go ski-joring with the dogs and then go back and do the evening meal.

[Part 1 0:57:03] Lee: You'd wanted a base with dogs, so did you make the most of them when you got there?

Wearden: We didn't have a lot of sea ice the first winter, but you'd take a couple ski-joring just up the island. But they'd brought a new base commander in because of the problems with Portwine, Dave Salter, and to be honest I didn't know any different in those days. But he wasn't a very good base commander, he didn't get involved in things, and there wasn't any sea ice, so he hardly ran the dogs as he was looking after the dogs. We did a bit of breeding, we had a couple of litters of pups, but the dogs could have been utilised more. Second winter they were utilised more because we had sea ice and Dick Harris took over as 'Doggy Man'.

[Part 1 0:57:48] Lee: How did you get on with the dogs?

Wearden: Fine! Oh they were great were the dogs, very friendly and I had a favourite one Jura, she was a one eyed bitch had been a leader, but she'd only got one eye so she'd only turn one way!

[Part 1 0:58:06] Lee: Ha! Ha!

Wearden: Think there was some of the old Hope Bay dogs there as well, think Jura was an old Hope Bay dog. But yeah, some people didn't bother with the dogs, and we got the chance to go over to maybe Wordie House for a few days for a break during the winter or early summer. And the second year we got out, as there was more sea ice, and got over to the mainland with the dogs. And myself and the senior met. had quite a long trip with the dogs for about 4 days.

[Part 1 0:58:47] Lee: Was it smooth going or did you get laid up?

Wearden: It was smooth we had a good time actually. We had great sea ice down to a place called Cape Perez there was a depot there, and we camped on this little tongue, Roger Tiffin, who was the senior met., had done quite a lot of sledging at Halley so he was more experienced, it was by Beascochea Bay and nobody had been down there for years! And we were the last 2 to take a dog team down there, as things turned out, because the dogs went out a couple of years later! That was quite good, but coming back they'd had quite a lot of bad weather on base we were 25 miles to the south, but we hadn't had it. We'd had sunshine, but we decided it was getting a bit hairy when the lead dog went through the ice! 'H'm! This shouldn't be happening', and that was slightly hairy coming back, it had been really thick ice going down. But had obviously weakened over 3 or 4 days!

[Part 1 0:59:53] Lee: Were you getting worried?

Wearden: Yeah, we were both probably worried, but we just had to keep going as not a lot else we could have done! We kept going and obviously it was just this one patch, but I mean if a dog, it was Suaq who was the lead dog, who was the biggest dog, but he got out quick! But 'Blumming heck'!! It was a bit worrying was that, but it was just this one patch and we got back quick after that!

[Part 1 1:00:20] Lee: There was visitors on board ships think weren't there, yours was a base tourists ships started to visit?

Wearden: Yes, that's right *Navarino* that would have been early 1969, Argentine ship. Lindblad was on board, the following year the *Lindblad Explorer* came down. But when the *Navarino* came in, they I don't think they had been warned of a ship? No they hadn't been warned, they just turned up.!

[Part 1 1:00:50] Lee: Out of the blue?

Wearden: Yes the ship was round the other side of the island John Dudeney probably talks about it on his interview that was a bit of a shock to the system! In *Ice and Men* Richy Hesbrook was on night met and was sleeping upstairs and he heard women, and he appeared

in his 'Y' fronts through the hatch from the loft, 'Women women'! It was a bit of a shock to the women as well because he was a big lad was Richy!! But I also, that visit had an elderly lady came in the kitchen, and she wanted to help me make pies, which she did! I was a bit bemused, Al Smith talks about this, but she also told me about this book she had been given, 'It would suit you' she said!

It was a book called *Portnoy's Complaint* which was quite a big seller, but it was a bit pornographic to be honest it was a bit of a shock to the system when I read it, she said 'Oh it's not my cup of tea' and it certainly wasn't even when I read it, she sent it ashore for me! And after that, for a couple of years we had the *Lindblad Explorer* in, and it was a nice afternoon and a break! To come ashore and look round, then they'd invite the base on board for a meal. Yeah, it was a break.

[Part 1 1:02:22] Lee: So you went and ate on the ship, rather than the other way round?

Wearden: Yeah they never ate on base, we couldn't cater for them, because I mean yeah!

[Part 1 1:02:32] Lee: So was it a 'red letter day' when a ship came in?

Wearden: Yeah, 'specially, the *Lindblad* they had one or two young women stewards, that always went down well. And the *Lindblad* the captain's secretary was a girl called Trudy who was Norwegian who came on shore in slacks and top, but onboard she had this red mini skirt on, and that went down very well!! But she was very nice was Trudy but, she knew she was stirring it up type of thing! But the tourist ships were always good entertainment, I think even now. I was at Rothera in '95 when they had a visit from a tourist ship that had Edith Ronne on board! And it was just a break, I think these days when they call in, they have to be booked in they can't just turn up, there were quite interesting!!

[Part 1 1:03:35] Lee: Let's take a break now.

Wearden: OK!

Disc 2:

This is Allan Wearden interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 6th of June 2012

[Part 2 0:00:09] Lee: Allan Wearden, Part 2. You were wintering when man landed on the moon, did you miss it?

Wearden: No! No we were all in the radio shack, yeah it was quite a night was that, we all crowded around in the radio shack, and it was weird! Because we were in an isolated place and obviously they were! Yeah, yeah. I remember that quite vividly in 1969 when they landed and we all gathered round the radio.

[Part 2 0:00:39] Lee: One or two Fids have said they shared that sense of remoteness?

Wearden: Yes, I know Ian Sykes said that, because they were on the other side of the peninsula I think on the ice shelf weren't they? Yeah we did, it was quite weird was that, we were certainly remote and they were remote, yeah, we didn't do many things on the radio as such. Because we had the 'Beastie' 2 minutes of every 15 used to 'spon' [spoil] everything! Presumably it was on, but it didn't matter.

[Part 2 0:01:24] Lee: The Ionospheric machine [Beastie!] would destroy all radio reception?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah it was just continuous interference, you lost everything for 2 minutes when it was bringing signals in.

[Part 2 0:01:36] Lee: So how had you kept in touch what was happening in the rest of the planet, or in this case other planets or had you become more isolated from the real world?

Wearden: We knew the moon landing was on, and I tended to have, the 'Beastie room' also had a radio and they tended to put it through into the kitchen, as I got on quite well with the Beastie men, Dick Harris and Dick Kressman the first year. And I quite liked to have *Sports Report* on, on a Saturday if football, Paddy Feeny I think use to do it in those days, so yeah?

[Part 2 0:02:08] Lee: The *World Service*?

Wearden: Yeah, that's right, then again 2 minutes in every 15 you would lose it, you'd get the football results and keep an eye on what's happening, but generally you didn't follow the news as such, if there was anything horrendous happening the radio op would probably tell you, but not as such.

[Part 2 0:02:29] Lee: How did you place bets?

Wearden: You didn't!! Ha, Ha!

[Part 2 0:02:31] Lee: Did you miss all that, your horse racing and such?

Wearden: Well I didn't do much in those days, but funnily enough going on a bit. I do remember placing a bet in 1973, between the Falklands and Montevideo on the *Bransfield* and somebody was running a 'book' and I put money on Red Rum [National] and I think he gave me about 100/6 which probably, they don't do 100/6 now but about 16-1 and he was most upset because it won on the line, as I think he would have made a profit that day apart from me, he was not happy! Ha, ha!

[Part 2 0:03:25] Lee: Did you play sports?

Wearden: Yes, yes certainly the second winter, we had a week the ice had formed and it was very solid and it was smooth and we played Ice Hockey we made various sticks and somebody had given me a golf club, Bob Davidson had given me a golf club the previous year, so I used that. And I think we had a tobacco tin filled with macaroni cheese, sellotaped up as the puck, that was quite good!

[Part 2 0:04:02] Lee: Why macaroni cheese?

Wearden: I think it was left over, just some ballast, because if there was nothing in it?

[Part 2 0:04:14] Lee: It would skid too much?

Wearden: A bit of ballast it was quite good, it was clear enough and slippy enough to play ice hockey.

[Part 2 0:04:23] Lee: Was it a proper organised game with goals?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah I think 6 a side.

[Part 2 0:04:30] Lee: And a referee?

Wearden: No, no I don't think we had a referee, and it was probably only 5 a side because someone would have been on 'night met' and asleep!

[Part 2 0:04:37] Lee: But you'd marked out a field?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah. And we played football as well, and when we played football it generally degenerated into rugby! And I think at Midwinter I got a football, a football appeared from somewhere and we played volleyball for a while, 'til one of the pups decided to eat it and popped it, but we'd no replacement ball so that was unfortunate because the volleyball was quite good fun!

[Part 2 0:05:10] Lee: And the 'Antarctic Swimming Club' you were a fully paid up member?

Wearden: During the football game I sort of went for the ball and went through the ice, it was 'HELP!!' But you get out quick, yeah obviously just a bit of weak ice there, yeah of my winters, my 3 winters the 2nd was best at Argentine Islands good group of lads Vasco was probably the best of 3 base commanders.

[Part 2 0:05:50] Lee: Vasco?

Wearden: Yeah, Alan Woods he was a bit more of one of the lads than some of the others were.

[Part 2 0:06:00] Lee: There's references here to the pups you were breeding and their panaceas for ice cream, they were raiding the kitchen?

Wearden: That was the first year, no Pete Mountford was on 'galley slave', that was the kitchen assistant, and I'd made some ice cream, and we had a little freezer on the veranda, which had been made from the freezer [refrigeration] unit on the radar. But it was a nice little one, and I said go and put the ice cream on the veranda, and he did but he didn't put it in the freezer! So after the meal on Saturday I went to get the ice cream and the pups were eating it, so we didn't have ice cream that night! I was not very happy with Pete I must admit I told him off!!

[Part 2 0:06:49] Lee: What's this reference to 'Henry Fonda'?

Wearden: Right visitors, we got very friendly the Argentines were good they'd come ashore, you'd give them some whisky and they'd give us beef and wine. But we got particularly friendly with the Chileans, and they came in and their 'Commodore of the Chilean Antarctic Fleet'! Commodore Ernesto Joblet that's probably pronounced wrong anyhow! But he had a look of Henry Fonda but he came ashore and we put a bit of food on for them, and I made some like jam puffs triangles, and it was 'Empanadas, empanadas!!' which are quite popular in South America, but they are savoury but he was most impressed we'd made them, even though they had jam in them. So he was very keen, when he came round because they'd come ashore then we'd go out to the ship.

And we had good relations, and it must have been his second or third trip he came back, and he knew we didn't see films. So he brought a film, he bought a projector and a little man to show it. And we went into the bar/lounge and we watched *Prudence and the Pill* which was Judy Geeson, Suzy Kendall and there was obviously a couple of men in it, but I don't remember them! It was quite good film, but it was so nice to have a film in the bar, and he'd just thought about this and brought it ashore, most impressed with that guy!

[Part 2 0:08:45] Lee: Did you ever have anything to do with the Americans just down the coast?

Wearden: We talked to them on the radio and we had one or two helicopters and also we had this very good relationship with the *Endurance* and at the end of the second winter. The survey party from the *Endurance* on the *James Caird* were living in Wordie I supplied them with bread. And we had a games night/day we played cricket, we had a boat race and there was about 12 of them and they all came to the base for the Saturday night meal and we had bar games and beer! The captain of the *Endurace* said 'You have really been good with our lads!'

[Part 2 0:09:33] Lee: Do you remember his name?

Wearden: Buchanan, the survey party was commanded by Lt. Commander Campbell.

[Part 2 0:09:41] Lee: Con Campbell?

Wearden: Sorry!? Big guy with a beard, I know he was Lt. Commander Campbell I can't remember his first name.

[Part 2 0:09:49] Lee: Oh, beg your pardon sorry!

Wearden: Yeah, Captain Buchanan on *Endurance* said 'You've really looked after our guys, would you like to go up to Palmer Station?' So Vasco said 'Oh yes please'! So one Sunday they took the entire base up left a couple of ratings on base for fire watch. Now Vasco had a bit of sense he didn't tell Stanley this was happening, did the 'met. ob.' from Lemaire Channel, went up and met the guys in Palmer Station, had the day up there and came back. And told Stanley after the event, who were not happy at all! And allegedly he nearly lost his 10%!!

[Part 2 0:10:40] Lee: Ten per cent?

Wearden: When you did your winters, you got a 10% bonus, which paid your tax and also the base commander got an extra allowance as well, but allegedly he nearly lost it! But if he had asked permission they would have said 'No!' So bit of common sense but there was no problem, because the *Endurance* had left 2 ratings on base for fire watch it wasn't a problem!

[Part 2 0:11:08] Lee: What were your impressions of Palmer, at that time were they more sophisticated than BAS?

Wearden: They never went outside!!

[Part 2 0:11:17] Lee: They never went outside!?

Wearden: No they just didn't do anything, they were more sophisticated, but in those days it was an easier posting than Vietnam, because they were all military, one or two scientists but most of them were military, and it was better than going to Vietnam! But they didn't really appreciate where they were to be honest.

[Part 2 0:11:36] Lee: They were merely there as presence were they?

Wearden: Yeah, they did have one or two scientists, but I don't know if any wintered they probably did, a couple. But the majority didn't appreciate where they were!

[Part 2 0:11:55] Lee: They had a phone link though didn't they?

Wearden: No, no that was the *Endurance* again he said 'I will give you all a phone call home!' Because this was the first time, possibly the *Endurance* had, had it before? But he said, 'I'll give you all a free phone call', so I phoned my parents up, but it was very weird because there's quite time delay on it. Never phoned since or before, because it was so weird with the time delay, but again it was Captain Buchanan a little goodie for us!

[Part 2 0:12:32] Lee: Did you also run special nights catering wise, were you doing themed evenings or national cookery nights?

Wearden: We'd, every month we'd have a birthday, now it worked out in my first winter there were about 5 people with birthdays in September. So what we did you had your normal birthday and an official birthday, like the Queen! So it worked out we had a party night every month, there might be extra bit of beer out or extra spirits. We'd have a theme, I can remember a 'Roman Night' and a 'Wild West Night' and a 'Horror Night', just something different and the majority of people would dress up. That was one thing against Dave Salter the first year he'd never make an effort he'd never dress up or take part.

[Part 2 0:13:35] Lee: Were they important those nights?

Wearden: Yeah, a good laugh!

[Part 2 0:13:39] Lee: Good for morale?

Wearden; Yeah, not say everyone dressed up, but the majority would make an effort, some more than others! Yeah, it was something different, and again Midwinter that's a big thing! Food on, do a big buffet, which would probably last for about 3 days, so I wouldn't do any cooking but somebody might do a bit extras after a couple of days, or use stuff that was in the dining room, again a bit of a break. Yeah, we always had a 'Midwinter Darts Championship' and the first year, I won it which was very surprising and I beat the guy, who should have won in the final, but I got my name on the shield and he didn't! But after that, 2 weeks later he took my hair at darts as well!

[Part 2 0:14:33] Lee; Took your hair, how do you mean?

Wearden: Played darts for my hair and I lost so I had my head shaved!

[Part 2 0:14:41] Lee: Your hair was the wager was it?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah but that started a trend, and both times at Midwinter several people lost their hair, think I lost my hair twice, had a monk cut at one stop.

[Part 2 0:14:53] Lee: Someone would shave it off?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah Dick Harris usually but!

[Part 2 0:14:57] Lee: Bit chilly wasn't it?

Wearden: Wore a hat for a while, a bob hat!

[Part 2 0:15:09] Lee: You were coming towards the end of your first tour of duty?

Wearden: My first two winters yeah.

[Part 2 0:15:13] Lee: And when that, when it came the time to leave had you any intention to go back again?

Wearden: Yeah, I wanted to go Adelaide, I wanted to go to a field base, couldn't go to Stonington because they don't have cooks, I wanted to go to a field base really.

[Part 2 0:15:37] Lee: What was it about the Antarctic that was calling you back?

Wearden: Well from my point of view it was quite a good job, but it was just the interest and I wanted to spend time farther south, they had more dogs at Stonington at not Stonington, Adelaide and they weren't governed by sea ice, as things turned out probably did more sledging at Argentine islands than I did at Adelaide!

[Part 2 0:16:00] Lee: Looking at it purely as a job, what was good about it?

Wearden: Your own boss, [Lee: The autonomy?] Yeah, yeah you could do what you want you could experiment and I knew I was doing a good job.

[Part 2 0:16:12] Lee: Were you being paid quite well?

Wearden: Every year it went up, and from a cooking point of view you weren't spending it. It was going into the bank, so when you came home quite a nice nest egg! But I mean it wasn't really the money or anything as such, yeah I wanted to try a base farther south!

[Part 2 0:16:32] Lee: So you did come back at the end of those 2 winters and then re-applied, what was that like, what did you have to do?

Wearden: Well had to re-apply and have another interview, sometimes you just had to say but I remember going back for another interview. I think at that time they were reluctant to sign you on 'til you got home, think I probably mentioned it to Bill Sloman because he would have been down that season, because it was the first season of the *Bransfield*. But I think it was 'Get in touch when you get home', but they were reluctant to take you on 'til you had been home.

[Part 2 0:17:15] Lee: Because?

Wearden: Because people change their mind, I have heard in the interviews people staying on for a third winter down there. But that was quite unusual, yeah I got home couple of weeks re-applied and Bill said come down for a talk as opposed to an interview.

[Part 2 0:17:35] Lee: I sense there's a policy here from BAS if I may, they someone mentioning Dad Etchells refused to give somebody a third winter, 'til they spent some time back in the UK [AW: Yeah!] And it's case of people regretting perhaps, saying 'Yes' before they came back and they got back, and there's green fields and women!!

Wearden: Yeah, that was the whole point, get home see what you think and then re-apply, but get in touch.

[Part 2 0:18:05] Lee: If you're still keen, then come back?

Wearden: Yeah, the odd one that's done 3 winters on the run it's usually been the case there's been a problem. Now you're interviewing Alan Piggot next week and he did 3 on the run, but he said he re-applied down there, that was quite unusual, but you'll know more when you talk to him.

[Part 2 0:18:33] Lee: So anyway BAS said 'Yes'?

Wearden: Yeah, so I'd done a bit of a trip South America on the way home, 6 weeks. BAS said 'Yes' and I sailed on the *Bransfield* the following October, wasn't King Fid but I was running the bar! That was quite interesting because it was the first year of draught beer on the ships.

[Part 2 0:18:55] Lee: Oh right, Heineken was it?

Wearden: Heineken!

[Part 2 0:19:02] Lee: So how did you manage that on a rolling ship?

Wearden: Well it wasn't beer it was lager, but anyhow it was draught but it had a very unusual system, it was like a bayonet! You had to ram it in and turn quick, if you didn't turn quicker enough it used to shoot out in a fountain!! And that happened a couple of times, but you got used to it.

[Part 2 0:19:27] Lee: How was the *Bransfield* compared to the *Biscoe*?

Wearden: Oh it was luxury, although I'd spent more time on the *Shackleton* than the *Biscoe*, but yeah it was luxury it was air conditioned, big lounge, big bar yeah! It was completely different, decent cabins and really the air conditioning made such a difference in the tropics!

[Part 2 0:19:52] Lee: You called at Montevideo again?

Wearden: Well I'd made a friend on the way out and we went back and I was walking along with another Fid, he was most impressed with this! And I suppose it was dark and it wasn't where she used to work, but suddenly this woman shot out of the bar calling me by name and grabbed me, he said 'Bluming heck!! She certainly knew you, you're fondly remembered!!' But yeah, that was quite interesting yes Montevideo was good, leather shops the girls and bars, good fun when you took advantage of it!

[Part 2 0:20:39] Lee: So how was Adelaide compared to Argentine?

Wearden: So the air unit was based there, so a lot of trips out, down to Fossil Bluff. Flights out to the sledges, they had dogs and they had tractors, yeah more facilities for getting out. But as things turned out that winter we didn't actually do a lot with the dogs, there wasn't too much interest and we weren't very good at driving the dogs! We'd had a better dog team with the old ones at Argentine Islands as it turned out. But Adelaide was good very small base only 8 of us for the winter. Far too much drinking, there was one or two really bad drinkers! So what I said the second winter at Argentine Islands was the best one!

[Part 2 0:21:30] Lee: So, sorry the alcohol at Adelaide that was out of control was it?

Wearden: It wasn't out of control, but there seemed more about than we'd had at Argentine Islands, this was I mean the private stock as well.

[Part 2 0:21:43] Lee: What people brought south with them?

Wearden: Yeah, but it just seemed.

[Part 2 0:21:53] Lee: Did it affect the working of the base?

Wearden: Think it must have done to a certain effect, didn't affect me, but yeah there were 2 or 3 very heavy drinkers and yeah I mean the base commander could knock it back as well! I can say that now because he's dead, but!

[Part 2 0:22:17] Lee: Who was this?

Wearden: A guy called Harry Lines, a good bloke but he wasn't particularly good, he wasn't strong enough. Older than everybody else and military, but yeah we could probably have done more that winter.

[Part 2 0:22:33] Lee: In what way did it interfere with the running of the base the alcohol?

Wearden: Well I remember one chap was on 'night met.', and we had a builder in to do some work and wasn't doing any of the work, so the 'night met.' trashed the bar, so he had to do the work after that!! But it was OK, but it could have been a lot better winter, with different personnel!

[Part 2 0:23:10] Lee: Were you unhappy?

Wearden: No, no I always got on with my job and did things. Doctor was good, still in contact with the doctor. We had 7 rooms and there was 8 of us and so myself and Colin Kynaston, who's coming down on Friday, we shared a room, because every third week he was on 'night met.' as well, so yeah we've stayed in contact.

[Part 2 0:23:37] Lee: I'm slightly surprised they felt it was worthwhile supplying a cook to a base with only 8 people?

Wearden: Big summer team! And usually it had been bigger and as things was there was a cook for Adelaide but it just worked it was a very small wintering team.

[Part 2 0:24:01] Lee: Was it busy with air traffic?

Wearden: Yeah, we got both twin Otters, first year we got the single Beaver and the twin Otter that's Dave Rowley and Bert Conche but there was a lot of stuff going though, the Air Unit consisted of 2 pilots and 2 mechs. So you've knocked it up again there, and there'd still be people going backwards and forwards, field personnel coming through the base.

[Part 2 0:24:28] Lee: So did you never know how many would be having dinner that night?

Wearden: Oh, you'd an idea, yeah you'd an idea. Because when I went down I took over from Bob Cook, but we got in very early, we were in November! Because I think there were 2 cooks at Christmas, he stayed on and in February I went over to Stonington for 2 weeks to cook for them, when the sledges were coming in from the field, because they don't have a cook and I went over there for 2 weeks. I did that in 1972 and did it again in 1973 it was a nice break to get over to Stonington!

[Part 2 0:25:10] Lee: You keep mentioning scallops in, you've mentioned this several times to me, 'Ask this person if they remember the scallops!'

[Part 2 0:25:17] Lee: Do you remember the scallops?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah I do!

[Part 2 0:25:27] Lee: At Stonington?

Wearden: Now I think they'd had the *Endurance* in, and the divers had been down and come up with bucket fulls of scallops and they were just like a warm water scallop, but half the size. But they cooked up very well and I remember cooking them at Stonington yeah, it was odd because the bed was where they threw all the rubbish, so whether they are still there I have no idea, because they must have been feeding on the rubbish I suppose!?

[Part 2 0:26:00] Lee: How did you cook them?

Wearden: Think I just lightly fried them I think yeah, just lightly fried them! Can't think what we had with them.

[Part 2 0:26:14] Lee: Did you have to treat them, deal with them in some way?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah as they were all in a bucket, we had to get them out wash them off and lightly fried them.

[Part 2 0:26:23] Lee: Did you purge them?

Wearden: Can't say I remember that!

[Part 2 0:26:29] Lee: Empty them?

Wearden: Can't say I remember that!

[Part 2 0:26:38] Lee: Because they was quite a bad case of food poisoning, because somebody had served scallops that hadn't been emptied of their waste product!

Wearden: Oh, I see what you mean, I suppose I must have done! I think the doctor Mike Holmes knew quite a bit about them, think he said do them this way as I don't think I'd actually cooked a scallop 'til then, yeah I think he advised the best way to cook them! Yeah, I think it would have been Mike Holmes the doctor.

[Part 2 0:27:06] Lee: You had a freezer, but it didn't always work very well?

Wearden: The winter at Adelaide we had a big walk in freezer supplied, unfortunately they forgot to bring any gas! So we had all the meat and we had to bury in the snow and ate it as quickly as possible! It was coming up to Midwinter thought I'd like a piece of meat for Midwinter one piece of beef left, and it was GREEN!! So I went to the Doctor Steve Vallance and said 'What do you reckon?' He said 'Trim it all off and cook it well it will be fine'! Best piece of beef I've ever had, talk about being tender! I mean they wouldn't have had it, if they'd seen it!? Cooked it well and they was only me and the Doctor, had seen it, it really was a nice piece of beef was that!

[Part 2 0:28:04] Lee: So burying it in the snow, that wasn't freezer quality meat then?

Wearden: Because your temperatures every month, you might go positive so it wasn't consistent and it was just very close to the base, I suppose, no it wasn't. It wasn't consistent that's the problem if it had been at Halley it would have been fine, but at Adelaide it wasn't but we did it and we must have been on the normal food after that.

[Part 2 0:28:37] Lee: Did you suffer much with the cold?

Wearden: No, not particularly although I did get frost bite! I was out with the dogs, one ill-fated trip with Colin Kynaston, no Mex Merson, and we had a dog fight and one of the dogs ended up with a broken leg so we came back. We had been out, well we were going away for several days, but we came back. He sat on the sledge with the injured dog and I drove and got back and the sleeve of my anorak had been rubbing against, on my wrist and it was sore and I suppose that evening I went to the doctor and I've got these blisters, and he said 'OH FROST BITE'!! So went to get his camera take a picture, couple of picture one for me and one for him and he said 'That's my first case of frost bite', it was only frost nip, but he was most impressed and it was just friction and had just got too cold rubbing, because I was sweating, it got a bit damp!

[Part 2 0:29:54] Lee: Did you take a long time to recover?

Wearden: No, no just a few days really, it was just like a burn as much as anything.

[Part 2 0:30:01] Lee What's the 'Hudson Incident'?

Wearden: Think you've covered that with Graham Wright, 'Genghis'? They were out in the field a geologist and he got problems with his insides and we got a radio message at Adelaide and they contacted the Stonington base commander, who was also out in the field and they got another sledge to Genghis and Rocky Hudson. And decided they needed to evacuate him, and they sent the pilots to Toronto to pick up the planes from De Havilland and they flew down, they were there within a week! A Twin Otter picked him up and flew him out, but there was quite a performance, there was another sledge joined them and they were short of Omnipom, which was the morphine. And they actually did a trip from Fossil Bluff with the skidoo's at that time it proved a point about skidoo's in a way, as they actually got up there and brought some more morphine for him! When the plane got there, there must have half a dozen, maybe 8 people in a little camp just looking after him! And he got taken out and made a full recovery.

[Part 2 0:31:31] Lee: His name was Hudson was it?

Wearden: Rocky Hudson yeah, John Hudson.

[Part 2 0:31:36] Lee: You had a visit from a boat, called *Calypso*?

Wearden: Cousteau's ship.

[Part 2 0:31:39] Lee: Sorry, Jacques Cousteau?

Wearden: Yeah, Jacques Cousteau!

[Part 2 0:31:43] Lee: Yeah, did you come across him?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah again was Adelaide probably the following summer.

[Part 2 0:32:00] Lee: This is the underwater cameraman?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah!

[Part 2 0:32:03] Lee: Research cameraman?

Wearden: And I got up and there was a strange chap there! And it was Philippe, Philippe Cousteau his son who had flown in a helicopter during the early hours of the morning, completely light of course. And he said, 'We'd like to come in today', so they came in and most people went out to the ship and some of the crew came ashore, and I have a good picture of the Twin Otter flying, so it was the summer season, flying over the *Calypso* but they were doing some filming.

[Part 2 0:32:44] Lee: What did you make of Jacques Cousteau?

Wearden: He was very old! That's my memory he developed aqua lungs during the war? So he was quite an elderly man, and his wife was on board and she was quite elderly! Yeah, probably said 'Hello' and that was about it.

[Part 2 0:33:08] Lee: He was an absolute pioneer wasn't he?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah he was and he went all over the world with the *Calypso* I mean heard the song afterwards the John Denver song, *Calypso!* Think Philippe was killed a couple of years after that, his son possibly in a helicopter crash?

[Part 2 0:33:30] Lee: You were down at Fossil Bluff for a while in fact you were there rather longer than you hoped to be in the end?

Wearden: Yeah, that same season probably before the *Calypso*, I went down to the Bluff with one of the meteorologists they always wanted 2 people down, and they sent the plane and an air mech. down as doing some work from Fossil Bluff going out to the sledges. And we thought the *Bransfield* was coming in, in December and couldn't get in because of the ice, so they decided to base the plane at Fossil Bluff instead of going back to Adelaide [to save fuel]. So I got stuck down there with the plane, unfortunately it was down there for Christmas, so there was about 20 or 30 people on base and the cook was at Fossil Bluff which was quite amusing!

[Part 2 0:34:24] Lee: What did they do?

Wearden: They'd all done Sunday cook and they had to make do!

[Part 2 0:34:30] Lee: What about you?

Wearden: I had a good time it was quite good was that, yes it was just one of those things I'd no control over that! Yeah it was a funny one was that! Yeah, the Bluff was good fun but quite a small hut and also at that time there was 4 people wintering at the Bluff and they were away. And there was the Air Unit myself and Roger Wilkins a met man and a sledge came in, two sledges Drummy Small and Malcolm McArthur the 'Huns and Spartans' so we'd no booze down there, but there was some of the base booze, so the Winter's booze, so I thought

I'd borrow one of these cases of beer and replace it! So because this sledge came in and had a few beers and 2 of the winters came back that night and I heard them come in, 'Oh there's people here and they been drinking beer, and it's MY BLOODY BEER!!!' And unfortunately I couldn't replace it for several weeks because we got stuck there! But yeah there was nothing I could do about it then, I did replace it eventually!

[Part 2 0:36:07] Lee: You also kept popping back to Stonington or so it seems and you were there prior to Fuchs' last visit to Stonington?

Wearden: Yes, well when I was relieved in 1973 the cook that was taking over from me came in, and I went over to Stonington for a couple of weeks, it was just handy to have someone cooking when the sledges come back and the new people. And when I went over they are always short of beds, but they always found me a bed! So that was quite good, but Mick Pawley [B.C.] had been told to clean the island up, so what he did he cleaned the island up but he also burned the old base down and Fuchs was a bit upset about that! He just burnt it down, because he was cleaning the Island up!

[Part 2 0:36:56] Lee: This is the 1947 hut?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah it was all covered in ice, but you see where everything had been and I've got pictures and the Union jack was still on the side, I thought it was quite shame! But he thought he was cleaning the island up, so he did and took it literally!

[Part 2 0:37:13] Lee: How did Fuchs react?

Wearden: I don't think he was too impressed, he'd obviously took it too far and Mick Pawley he was involved when Anvers burnt down as well, so!!

[Part 2 0:37:30] Lee: Again you decided to come home and you spent some time in the North?

Wearden: I spent 6 months going through South America first and then when I came back to UK, I emigrated to Canada.

[Part 2 0:37:45] Lee: Emigrated!?

Wearden: Mm'm in 1974, March 1974 and I was very keen to go to Fids Farm in Canada.

[Part 2 0:37:56] Lee: What's Fids Farm?

Wearden: This was Fids Farm, Noel Downham he started a sheep farm in Alberta, and it was known as Fids Farm. I didn't know a lot about it, but I thought I'd go and see that and it was Edwin Thornton and Noel Downham had started a partnership as sheep farmers in Alberta. And there was Dick Bird who'd been a cook at Adelaide when I'd been at Argentine Islands and Dick Scoffom, who'd been at Adelaide and they'd got little farms in that area, it was to the east of Edmonton, Vilma area. There was 3 sheep farms, but Noel Downham's was a going concern, quite good, stayed with Noel for about 2 or 3 days, he was a good shearer was

Noel, think he still does a bit of shearing now, because you interviewed him at Windermere the November before last but it was interesting to see, but not quite what I expected!!

But after that, I'd been working in northern Alberta, I got a chance to work in the territories at Resolute Bay which was quite a long way north, I think 76 degrees north! Quite a long way north and a very hard job, you are working seven days a week, 6am in the morning 'til on some nights about 10 o'clock at night really was quite hard! 'Cos we were doing a bit of the catering for one of the aircraft, but one night I was serving on the server and this chap came on the other side of the server and he said 'I know you!?', and I said 'I know you', and he'd been a Fid, and had been at Fossil Bluff the previous year to me at Adelaide, Dick Walker and we ended up sharing a room for a couple of weeks, so that was quite weird was that!

[Part 2 0:40:02] Lee: You, stayed in touch with the Antarctic by running reunions or going to reunions, and eventually running some?

Wearden: Well I was actually in Canada for 6 years, but I'd had a trip round the world and stayed with Fids in Jakarta and New Zealand, but then I came back in late 1979. My father had a stroke, so I came back to stay in the UK permanently and I had been to one or two Marguerite Bay reunions. And I remember going to one and I think flying out to Canada the day after, this was West Bromwich and they had been quite good and I was working in UK, and I went to BAS Club a couple of times. And I thought Argentine Islands never has a reunion? So, not sure if I can do this first in 1987 had a bit of a get together for people that live locally, probably about 1986 and Denis Kershaw came to that, only time I ever met Denis Kershaw who was with Wally Herbert. My brother knew him they were in the Round Table together, but anyhow '87 I had a Base F/ Argentine Islands reunion at Whalley Abbey where I'd worked for 4 years and so that was quite good and that went very well.

Then went up to Rydal Hall in the Lakes in '92, lost a lot of money on that one!! It was a disaster as I had to hire the Hall had to hire the youth centre and we also had camping as well!

[Part 2 0:41:49] Lee; Sorry I laughed there, I thought you meant horses!

Wearden: No, no I lost a lot of money on the actual venue, but I was earning good money, as I was back with Fids at the time! And the last one was '96 and that was on the *Bransfield* and that was probably the most successful of the lot, to actually have one on the ships, but yeah.

[Part 2 0:42:10] Lee: Meanwhile you were heading south again, as you had started working at Halley?

Wearden: My Father had a stroke in the early '80's and he died in '85 and my Mum died in '88. I had my own house about a mile from here and I went to the reunion in Whitby and I was talking to Dad Etchells, we'd become quite friendly over the years. And he said 'They're after some summer cooks for Halley' so I said, 'Are they?' He said, 'Oh yeah I don't know anything about it, just get in touch with personnel'.

[Part 2 0:42:47] Lee: What was going through your mind Allan? Were you determined straight away to do it, or were you trying to resist?

Wearden; No, no my mother had died and it had hit me quite hard, I was quite surprised how badly how hard it had hit me! And I thought, 'Oh I've never been to Halley', that it'd be a real change! And they're taking people on for just 6 months. So I got in touch and I must have had an interview, I can't remember much about the interview but I must have had one! Went down and we had 4 cooks for the summer season and Al Smith was in charge of the project, well Al knew me from previously so he always had a bit of confidence in me. And they made a great mistake that year 1988, as they sailed the entire building party from Grimsby. So the ship had 50 odd people on board, passengers. And they didn't want to be on that ship, it was a disaster!!

[Part 2 0:44:05] Lee: How do you mean?

Wearden: Well they learned a lesson that time they never did it again so many people! Too many people onboard they weren't Fids! They were builders only going down for a summer season! By the time we got to the Canaries, let's get this right, no Madeira, got to Madeira

Got to the Canaries the builder he was sent home, because he wasn't very well! We got to Rio and picked up some more people, there was a few more to join, Dad Etchells was one of them.

That trip was a mistake too many people on board and they didn't want to be on board, but they did learn their lesson! Steve Burns was King Fid, and he had a hell of a time, but it was an interesting trip to say the least, I enjoyed it!

[Part 2 0:45:38] Lee: This is October '88?

Wearden: Mm'm !!

[Part 2 0:45:41] Lee: Your first trip to Halley?

Wearden: Yeah, we'd gone to the full conference and again they stopped that and had a special conference for Halley rebuild after that. Which was a couple of days as such a lot of it went over people's heads who weren't interested as telling them about diving just far too much information, which they didn't really want!

[Part 2 0:46:03] Lee: This was Halley 5 was it?

Wearden: Yeah, the start of it and we got there and Al Smith was in charge and we had a party of Royal Engineers and he said 'Right, I want you to come up and cook for us'. And we were staying in little tents called Polar Havens and think we had 2 sleeping tents, probably there were 12 of us. There was Al Smith, myself and I think everybody else was Royal Engineers and I was cooking on 8 Primus stoves, we had a tent to cook in and there were all brand new Primus stoves. And I nearly killed myself with all the fumes off that

because they were all brand new!! You know what Primus stoves can be like at the best of times!

[Part 2 0:46:51] Lee: What is particular bad about brand new one?

Wearden: Because of burning off the enamel and stuff. [Lee: Oh really!] I just didn't realise how bad it was, I got really chesty there! But we were living off sledging rations, which had changed over the years there used to be 6 pounds of butter in a sledging box, now there is only a pound. Bit more variety, little freeze dried things but still it was basic, I asked for a few tins of beans from Halley 4 and things like that, we did OK. And I think after a week, we had the first Weatherhaven which was this great big tent Canadian design, which we were going to live in. And we had it up to sleep in for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day we did our first meal, and I think Stewart sent me some steaks up.

[Part 2 0:47:51] Lee: Lawrence? [Captain]

Wearden: I asked and we had a Christmas meal and think he sent something rum sauce up in Thermos's and mince pies probably, but yeah we were in and another cook came up as well. So we had 4 cooks for the project, because we were doing 24 hours 2 on days and 2 on nights! And they main thing was, we were going to fill the water tanks as well and empty the toilets!?! But they decided it probably wasn't a good idea for the cooks to be emptying the toilets and cooking as well!?!?

So we had to keep the water tanks topped up. But all these builders they went mad with the water sometimes, so we got the bulldozer to push snow up, as it really was they were having long showers and you had to be careful with the water, but we had one unit up and then we got more people up and got the other unit up. They were really very efficient, really good best kitchen I ever had in the Antarctic, own generators and we had to leave the cookers on all the time just to put a load on the generators that first season, because there was nothing else running on them.

But yeah, that first season was quite a good one, they got the platform up which was the base for Halley 5 there was nothing on the top, but they got all the platforms up, 3 platforms. But the builders weren't coming back for 'smokos' we had a skidoo called the 'smoko express' and we were taking Thermos's of coffee and a big thing of biscuits or cakes down each day for each break time.

[Part 2 0:49:55] Lee: Sorry, I'm confused by the cooking arrangements, you were cooking on Primus stoves and electric?

Wearden: No, no that was just while we were building we were on Primus stoves.

[Part 2 0:50:03] Lee; Ah!

Wearden: So as soon as we got the first Weatherhaven up, we got the kitchen going and we cooked in there on Christmas Day, which was very efficient and obviously the Primus were redundant then. I was cooking on the Primus for a week.

[Part 2 0:50:20] Lee: The Weatherhaven then is a large tent is it?

Wearden: A huge tent, like a big Nissan hut. The sleeping one that year slept 64 people, so it was quite big, but that was just sleeping and bathroom. The other one was cooking, dining room and recreation area and a store room.

[Part 2 0:50:44] Lee: And in terms of cooking on electric in the Antarctic, isn't the most obvious way of going about it really! So did you notice a big difference of what you could do, once you got electricity?

Wearden: Oh yeah, yeah well before that there'd been Agas and Kempssaves!

[Part 2 0:51:02] Lee: Mm'm!

Wearden: Well the Aga's had obviously gone to oil fired as opposed to anthracite!

[Part 2 0:51:08] Lee: Yeah, but electric is more controllable is it?

Wearden: Yeah it was great, but we'd got the power. But the problem is even with the build of Halley 5 they'd no power to run an electric cooker, they put the silly Kempssaves in which were a disaster! And then John Newman came up with the idea of putting a Calor gas stove in which has worked very well! But, yeah we'd got 2 generators just for our unit, so we'd loads of spare power. We'd a huge fryer, 2 big ranges, grill, bread making machine, prover, yeah we got everything we wanted!

[Part 2 0:51:46] Lee: I have to ask you about the 'Pacto's' whatever they are!?

Wearden: Well this is the toilets we should have been emptying!! Now they were a very ingenious Scandinavian camping [toilet] situation and you actually did a motion into a plastic bag and these rolls had 60 plastic bags, which heat sealed its self!! Then dropping into another big black bag underneath, very, very clever! But they had a counter going from 1 to 60, trouble is these counters could be turned back and people didn't want, it had been decided we weren't going to empty them. It came out whoever did the last motion, would empty it!

Now people got wise to this, so they changed the clock, so when they were too full, they could back up on themselves! So very nasty so the second year, we thought 'We aren't going to do this', they put a big light in the dining room with a bulb on so you'd know when somebody got caught and they couldn't sneak out! Steve Eadie set this up, and that became known as 'Pacto Roulette' if they got caught! And the funny thing was Steve Eadie who was the mechanic got caught twice during one smoko on 2 different toilets!! And you'd got to empty it, seal the bag up and put it out to go with the rubbish. But as long as nobody tampered with them, they were fine, but if they got tampered with, they could be very, very nasty! But if you started, oh yeah!! But very, very clever because they didn't use any water!

[Part 2 0:54:02] Lee: So were they continued with or not?

Wearden: No, I thought they were a great system, but they could be tampered with. We used them on the Weatherhaven for 6 years, but [sigh!].

[Part 2 0:54:18] Lee: That second season at Halley, which in your case would have been 1989? In your case you managed to get yourself down into Halley 3?

Wearden: That's right, there was myself and we had a good turn over in cooks. The first year they was 4 of us, and I went back again and also Simon Gray who had been down for the summer, he went in to winter at Halley 5. And then we got 2 new cooks Steve Goose he'd been a Rothera cook so he came and after that, he was cook on the ship. We got 'Paxo' Neil Roster who was a new cook, but again after that season, he came back and did 2 winters. So it was a nice let in for cooks but that season myself and Neil Roster did nights.

[Part 2 0:55:15] Lee: Which was daytime I presume?

Wearden: Sorry?

[Part 2 0:55:20] Lee: Which was daylight presumably?

Wearden: Oh yeah, yeah I think we did nights, yeah we did nights and Simon and Goosey did days. And Steve Eadie and Andy Spearey a couple of mechs.. were going down to Halley 3 to get one or two things. And Steve said 'If you want to come come with us. So I said, 'Oh right!' So we did a shift, that's right we were on nights, did a shift then they went down in a morning so we went with Steve and got the chance to go down. And funnily enough we had got very short of tea bags, that year, so we found some tea bags down Halley 3 which was quite interesting, but yeah we were quite lucky to do that, as they'd opened it up.

We got one or two bits, of goodies which supplemented the stuff. That now, at this stage with Halley all the foods had changed and it was a lot easier. After the first year, I just went into BAS. A day in BAS and I ordered what I wanted for the following season and that went on for well 6 seasons. So that was a lot easier, there was no a ration scale as such and there wasn't the problems as before.

[Part 2 0:56:43] Lee: But, you still lost some food or found it again?

Wearden: We, the second season the first season wasn't so bad. We got a small store room, and got all the boxes outside no problem, second season got a lot of snow and lost quite a few boxes, we had a snow blower and he was clearing stuff and he found some of the boxes. The Kit Kats went through the snow blower very easily, but it was the tins of ham, which were very dangerous when they started shooting out of the snow blower!! But, yeah it was quite dangerous, but I wasn't around at the time, it must have happened during the daytime and we were on nights.

[Part 2 0:57:29] Lee: What an R. E. because they were used for the last time?

Wearden: Royal Engineers.

[Part 2 0:57:35] Lee: Ah, I see!

Wearden: They did those 2 seasons and that second season was very, very hard! About 90 days on the ice, Al Smith didn't believe in days off, which was stupid, it was stupid!! He

should have said, 'We are going to have every Sunday morning or every other Sunday morning off', so you had something to look forward to! But he said 'Oh no we have got to get it done' they did get a couple of mornings off due to bad weather. We didn't, but you've got to give people something to work towards, and the Royal Engineers made it even worse, because they did a 'Chuff chart' so every morning when they came in, start at 90 days and then they'd put 89 that made it even worse! And there was a bit of illicit booze around that year as well.

[Part 2 0:58:39] Lee: The third season which was 1990 of course, was distinguished by the fact there were now women around? You were King Fid weren't you? And you had females on board the ship?

[Part 2 0:58:52] Lee: Have I got that right?

Wearden: Yeah, that's right Dutch divers that first season, yeah, yeah!

[Part 2 0:58:58] Lee: Did it make a difference?

Wearden: Yeah they weren't on for very long, Sandra McInnes maybe as well? Yeah, the season after was probably better, because I got used to it. Yeah, it was fine although I did, there was 2 Dutch divers and one very good looking one and I did send her ashore to unload at Bird Island!! Which was a plan thing, but yeah once I got into the idea and was used to it was fine. It would be the following season was there was Debbie and Sue on board, a female GA and a Geologist and they, I said 'Oh Saturday night', and they made a point of putting on dresses, yeah it worked very well once I got used to the idea!

[Part 2 0:59:55] Lee: Peoples' taste for food, was becoming more sophisticated all over this period in time?

Wearden: Yeah!

[Part 2 1:00:04] Lee: And you started coming up against vegetarians for the first time?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah but generally we didn't really cater for them on the rebuild I must admit but as a matter of fact don't remember a vegetarian as such, but there was a vegetarian at Halley, there was the guy who wanted all the different beans!

[Part 2 1:00:26] Lee: A Vegan?

Wearden: Yeah, but he was at Halley 4, yeah but more at Rothera was I had to cater for them, certainly on the rebuild at Halley never remember catering for vegetarians as such.

[Part 2 1:00:39] Lee: Alright I will come to that when we get to Rothera then!

Wearden: Yeah, yeah.

[Part 2 1:00:44] Lee: You were visited by the Director of the British Antarctic Survey in your third season at Halley, is that right?

Wearden: Yes that's right, because that was the short season! Yeah that was the *Bransfield* lost a motor, so we were on half power two and half thousand shaft horse power, as opposed to five lots of rumours that we were going to South America or South Africa for repairs!! I would see Stuart every day and I'm not sure where we are going today! But in the end he decided to press on to Halley and we got in. But on the way down we heard one of the Weatherhavens we had put up originally, the estimate was that they'd take 2 weeks to put up, and 3 weeks to take down so they were never taken down!

And the first season they stayed were cleared away and they were fine for the second season. But the third season, we were coming down and we heard the one, the kitchen one, had collapsed. Lost a cooker, it was flattened!! But then they managed to get the other cooker out and what they did, they took half the bunkrooms out and put the kitchen equipment in the other half, so one Weatherhaven luckily we had less people that year. And there was accommodation on the platform as well for people. So we went in, and it was quite a long way down was this tent, so they had to build a shaft, a wooden shaft down to the doors.

[Part 2 1:02:44] Lee: The tent was becoming covered in snow then?

Wearden: When we left all the kitchen equipment was taken out through the roof, so you can see it was quite a long way down! So virtually we were living in a tent under the ground! I think it was a bit dodgy!!

[Part 2 1:03:01] Lee: What way was it dodgy, fumes?

Wearden: No, because we were in a tent under the ground!!

[Part 2 1:02:03] Lee: Because it could have collapsed!?

Wearden: Well they got the snow blower on the sides, but it was a bit odd, it was a fair way down. And like I said, when we left we took all the kitchen equipment out through the roof and Simon Bluton said, 'Well I got to cut the hole that we took the stuff through.' But yeah, it was a very short season and we were only on the ice for 6 weeks.

[Part 2 1:03:33] Lee: Why was it short?

Wearden: Because the ship had to go for repairs!

[Part 2 1:03:35] Lee: Oh, I see!

Wearden: So we were actually a cook short, because we were only going to do one shift and we had to do two shifts, a plumber became a cook and he went up and cooked for nights on the platform! The other cook came over from Halley [4] who was coming out, Neil. We managed and then there was a couple of extra people had to winter, because they hadn't done all the work they wanted to on the platform in the summer, because of the short season I think there was an extra plumber and an electrician that winter.

[Part 2 1:04:22] Lee: This pattern of going to Halley every summer, every Antarctic summer went on to 1993?

Wearden: '94!

[Part 2 1:04:29] Lee: 1994?

Wearden: Yeah!

[Part 2 1:04:31] Lee: So that's 6 seasons?

Wearden: Yeah, 6 seasons.

[Part 2 1:04:35] Lee: Were you reapplying every time?

Wearden: It just became, after the first one it just became!

[Part 2 1:04:40] Lee: Understood?

Wearden: Richard Hanson said 'Do want it', yeah it was like King Fid after the first year of 'King Fidding' after that I said 'I'll do it on the way south'. So I always sailed from Grimsby and that was always good for getting your team together in Grimsby usually the Halley winterers would it be that year? Or the following year but the following year we had the Signy winterers on board as well. That was good you'd get a little group together and that worked well, and they don't do it now. In doctoring people into what it would be like to winter!

[Part 2 1:05:32] Lee: Was it all sweetness and light every year or was there a season when people didn't get on very well?

Wearden: There was always somebody odd on the rebuild 'til the last season, there was always one square peg every year, for various reasons! But the last year there wasn't, but they had problems on the platform that year!

[Part 2 1:05:54] Lee: How do you mean?

Wearden: It's somebody I know quite well, but I don't think he was a very good base commander! And I think they'd let things slide, the previous year they'd had a very good BC in the winter. That would have been the 5th season the second Weatherhaven and we went in and there was a kettle on the stove everything was fired up, the gennies were on, the only thing that was wrong that year was a urinal frozen up that was it! We just walked in straight to work they'd done a real good job getting it ready!! But that last season, they'd certainly got a few problems which during the winter, there was a new summer base commander and they weren't too keen on him, just a bit odd. But we had a brilliant season on the Weatherhaven!

[Part 2 1:07:01] Lee: So were people being relieved of their duties?

Wearden: There was, a couple of people fired yeah! Yeah, David Drewery came down, and John Dudeney and David Drewery and I think?

[Part 2 1:07:14] Lee: That was quite an exceptional thing for them to come down?

Wearden: Well they were coming down anyhow.

[Part 2 1:07:17] Lee: But they came earlier than planned?

Wearden: No! No, no it would have been, Munro Sievwright was in to start with, who was personnel, and he should never have been personnel because he was never very good with people!! So the ship must have gone back to Stanley [note: actually went to Cape Town!] and come down again, brought David and John. I think there was 2 people either quit or were fired not sure!?

[Part 2 1:07:54] Lee: So had the base split?

Wearden: No they were all together were the base, but they'd just?

[Part 2 1:08:02] Lee: [REDACTED]

Wearden: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was a bit odd it was definitely a very odd season, what they did they sent a lot of the wintering people to the ship early [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They should have sorted things like that out, they was problems on both sides!! I mean, I did find it quite upsetting and David Drewery and I did have a special meeting with David Drewery. And he did explain all the things, which was nice of him to do I did get on with him quite well.

[Part 2 1:09:17] Lee: This is in your capacity as King Fid was it?

Wearden: No, was just a cook then, but he knew me from previous seasons and he just come along 'I'll give you, quarter of an hour or 10 minutes and just explain what we've been doing and why we have done it', and stuff like that! But yeah I still can't see what their big problem was, but when you are isolated little problems become big problems anyhow!! That's happened at Halley in the past, little things get blown up out of proportion! But then things get a bit silly, and I think that summer season it all came to a head! And it just blew up, and I don't think anybody could see exactly why it happened, they all have a different story!

Disc 3.

This is Allan Wearden interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 6th of 2012.

Allan Wearden, part 3.

Wearden: Right the 4th season at Halley that was the new Weatherhavens and there was a lot of problems on the ship sailing down.

[Part 3 0:00:24] Lee: What year was this?

Wearden: Hang on '88/89? '92/93 [note: it was actually 91/92!] And I joined the ship in Grimsby, King Fid and the galley boy came up and he said 'Can you show me how to do bread?' So I'm going to be the second cook, they'd got a second cook who they found out when they left, couldn't cook!! So the galley boy was promoted to second cook, fairly local he was from near Southport, well he knew me from various trips. So I said 'Fine I'll come down with you', so I went down and showed him and helped him, so I went down quite regular on the trip south. The second cook became the laundry boy, think the laundry boy became the galley boy anyhow so that's fine and I did quite a bit helping out in the kitchen.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] So I actually took over as chief cook from Stanley to Halley.

[Part 3 0:02:14] Lee: What ship was this?

Wearden: The *Bransfield*, John Cole was captain that trip, but yeah it was a strange trip in a way, we also had Barbara Mitchell on board who was doing a, no that was the following year? No they do tend to mix in! No that 4th season Mike Leach from Blackburn sailed and there was a girl called Viv Jones, joined the ship. I'm not sure how it came about, me and Mike from Blackburn and she said 'I was born in Blackburn' as well! So there was 3 of us from Blackburn on board, but we all ended up being asked to the wardroom one Sunday, I got asked every Sunday to bring a couple of Fids up, so I thought I'll take myself and Mike and Viv up so that was quite a nice afternoon!

[Part 3 0:03:26] Lee: In the?

Wearden: In the wardroom, we'd go to the captain's cabin for drinks on a Sunday. I tried to do 2 different people every Sunday, I think by the time we got to Signy there was only one person that had not been asked that was just unfortunate. Yeah, we'd go to the captain's for a couple of drinks, then we'd go down to the wardroom for lunch, I remember this day the young 4th officer so we went to his cabin for drinks afterwards, because Viv was quite a nice looking girl! Yeah, so that trip I ended up cooking and that trip there was a 'Race Night' in the crew bar and David Drewery [Director] must have been on board and he said, 'Do you realise we are exactly the same age?' We were born on the same day so after that he always knew who I was, that was quite good!! And we sailed to Halley, done quite a bit of cooking and I'd always said I'd like to go in the conning tower going through the ice, so John Cole who was the captain invited me up into the conning tower, and you could drive the ship from the conning tower, as we went through last bit of ice before Halley, so that was quite nice.

[Part 3 0:04:57] Lee: And you spent most of that season at Halley working at night again?

Wearden; I went on to night baker, I was the only one on nights I just baked! And we had a cook on day and I can't remember what he was called.

[Part 3 0:05:09] Lee: What, were you having to produce each night, how much produce were you coming up with?

Wearden: It was all done very scientifically was that!! So I didn't have to do so much washing up! How did I do it? Start with bread and then rolls and croissants for breakfast, then I'd start to do cakes and biscuits so I didn't have to wash the big mixing bowl, because the bread cleaned itself. Yeah that breakfast, Andy Smith will tell you this one, we used to have croissants and pancakes for breakfast along with the normal stuff, that probably one of the best seasons they had for food!

[Part 3 0:05:52] Lee: For example how many loaves of bread were you producing a night?

Wearden: Oh, probably about half a dozen.

[Part 3 0:06:00] Lee: Oh! I see OK!

Wearden; Big ones yeah but because I was doing rolls every day, the rolls tended to take the weight off the bread. Yeah I learnt that, the rolls take the weight off the bread because it's easier to butter a roll than cut a slice of bread, because you've obviously got to slice it.

[Part 3 0:06:21] Lee: What about the 5th season, this was 1992 and your third season as a King Fid?

Wearden: That's right! And then, which they sailed women down this was Simon Gill's wife Wiz she wasn't his wife then and Maggie, who they'd no doctor she was a nurse from the BAS Medical Unit which was in Aberdeen in those days.

[Part 3 0:06:45] Lee: Do you remember Maggie's surname?

Wearden: No! [Lee: OK!]

Wearden: She died, unfortunately she was diagnosed with cancer, and I think she was dead within a couple of years! Because she left some money to be used for ship's crew to better themselves, but because of the way it's worded it's been very difficult to access this money from what I can gather. Very nice woman but her and Wiz, Wiz had wanted to sail down, but they said we can't sail one woman, but when Maggie was going it was 'You can come'. So that was the first time women had sailed all of the way south! And we had 'Crossing the Line', Stuart Lawrence was captain it was alternate Stuart Lawrence one year and John Cole the other. And Stuart was involved in 'Crossing the Line' that year, because he didn't want it to get out of hand with women being involved!!

[Part 3 0:07:50] Lee: Oh I see!

Wearden: Because some years it could get out of hand! It would be crew on crew, the deck boys could really get hammered by some of the other crew, but he kept it on a very level can't think was I Neptune that year? I was Neptune several times, but Stuart he got involved and he was on deck and because the captain was involved they kept it quite low key! And we also had that year Barbara Mitchell and she was being funded by WWF and she was looking at the rebuild of Signy, Barbara was eating upstairs in the wardroom, but we got quite friendly and there was a bit of an incident in Stanley! So we said 'We'll go out for a bit of a drink in Stanley', and Ben had sailed down on the *James Clark Ross*.

[Part 3 0:08:55] Lee: Ben? Ben Hodges?

Wearden: Yeah, and we went, oh went to Stanley and there was me and Barbara and Ben and a woman that was going to look into the rebuild in Rothera, called Cassandra Phillips, David Drewery and Barry Heywood. And had a couple of beers and I think David and Barry decided they should maybe go home they didn't want to have too many beers! So Ben said 'I'll take you home along the shore'. Cassandra Phillips went and Barbara said 'Oh no I think I'll stay with you and we'll have another beer'! So he took them home and he got them very wet on the way back to the ship, good old Ben!! Because it's alright walking the path in the daylight, but when it's dark it's not quite as easy! But, yeah so that was that season.

[Part 3 0:10:03] Lee: Cassandra Phillips was Greenpeace wasn't she?

Wearden: Well she was the same thing as Barbara Mitchell, the funding came from 2 or 3 different organizations I've got, funnily enough Barbara sent me a full report [note about rebuilding Signy.]. Barbara was fine, but she didn't particularly want to eat in the wardroom, she would have preferred to eat with us, but she was fine we went up Tumbledown together in Stanley, well in the Falklands but yeah, she was level headed.

[Part 3 0:10:38] Lee: So were they both monitoring the ecological impact of the building of the British Antarctic Survey?

Wearden: Yeah, yeah both of them!

[Part 3 0:10:42] Lee: Particularly the Rothera runway and so on?

Wearden: And Signy for Barbara. [Lee: Yeah] But they were colleagues and knew each other, I didn't really know Cassandra, I met her. But Barbara was more level headed. But she put in a very thick report, that's why the Director and the Deputy Director were in! I think Barry had been around at Signy with Barbara and David was going down to Rothera with Cassandra, you have obviously come across her before? [note: I got this wrong in the interview, it had all been the previous season '91/92!]

[Part 3 0:11:25] Lee: What's this about the 'Garden Shed Expedition' that year, I don't quite understand that?

Wearden: That year was it? Yeah, it was that year. Right we went down the peninsula to a certain extent that year, we dropped people off at Damoy, Wiz and Ben to be flown down to Rothera and after that we did actually did the relief at Faraday. They'd had a party the night before, but we just turned up! And we did it, which we did I'll tell you that in a minute.

But we also had a hut to put on to Courverville Island, which was Bernard Stonehouse's little project. And were putting a hut up on Courverville to monitor the effect of tourists on penguins! And Stuart Lawrence said 'It's a garden shed'! And it was, it was a garden shed you would have bought in B&Q!

But the name stuck and we got T shirts and at this stage, phew, we tried to do the unloading at one point then we couldn't get in for ice. We did the relief at Faraday, came back up and

we could get in. We went in about midnight, light enough, the doctor was drunk, the dentist was drunk! I'd about 6 Fids, 4 people from a group that were doing, (what were they doing?), they were doing like a seismic survey, they weren't Fids they were based somewhere in Liverpool, they were the ones that got the T shirts done actually! But it was a matter of, we've got in and took everybody that we'd got on the ship to Courverville and there was about 3 Argentinians there, we should have taken them some whiskey but we never thought! They thought we were bringing something, but we were bringing this flipping garden shed!! So the launch went in, with the scow, boatman and there must have been an officer involved somewhere, but we just put it ashore and just left them to it!! But they never used it to sleep in it was just like a storeroom, because they slept in tents.

[Part 3 0:14:05] Lee: That was that the year you got your Fuchs Medal?

Wearden: It probably is yeah. Yeah, that sounds about right, in fact I have got the Fuchs Medal here. In fact I'll tell you what year it is, you possible haven't seen a Fuchs Medal?

[Part 3 0:14:25] Lee: I think I have seen one, before now.

Wearden: I think it was '92, you can't really wear it!

[Part 3 0:14:38] Lee: Ha! Allan Wearden 'Inspiring Blender of Food and Fids'!!

Wearden: That comes up with doing the King Fid stuff afterwards.

[Part 3 0:14:48] Lee: Yeah, there's no date on it in fact?

Wearden: Yeah, '92 I think, yeah it was '92.

[Part 3 0:14:53] Lee: The end of that season.

Wearden: Yeah, it was the summer of that season, yeah.

[Part 3 0:15:00] Lee: And your last season at Halley, if I've got my facts right was '93 when you were flown down?

Wearden: Yeah, flew from Brize to Stanley and I took over as King Fid in Stanley.

[Part 3 0:15:13] Lee: And that was the year the difficulties arose, tell me about Simon Blurton?

Wearden: Simon Blurton was the, he was John Newman's assistant. Hell of a nice bloke never wintered, Manchester City supporter for his sins! He once came here for a day, and I got tickets for a City game at Blackburn at Ewood. Hell of a nice bloke, and he was in charge of the Weatherhaven that year and we had a good season, but the following summer he bought a motor bike and he was taking it out bank holiday weekend and he came off and was killed, very sad! I know the funeral was September, because it was during the conference when I was going to Rothera. So it must have been August bank holiday when he was killed, very sad one of the doctors rang me up and said, 'Oh some bad news about Simon, he's been

killed in a motor bike accident this summer!' That was very sad, he was an excellent bloke was Simon.

[Part 3 0:16:36] Lee: Was that the year you managed to get some time on the platform itself instead of rather being in tents all the time?

Wearden: Yeah, we did a season, great season then we done what stuff we could. And then the Weatherhavens had to be demolished and then taken out. So I said to the cook 'If you want a week sorting your depots out, I'll come up and cook for a week', so he said 'Right!' He didn't sort his depots out but he did other things! But it was sometimes they get buried, but he didn't do much of that stuff, but other things. But I went up and cooked for a week, which was a nice change. Because that season during relief one of the Dutch divers, the good looking one Patty she'd ended up wintering at Signy the previous year and she came down to Halley and they'd put her on driving a Snow Cat on the sea ice, because she was a diver I think!!!? Somebody had a sense of humour!! But she wanted to look round the base, and because they were doing 24 hours, and because she was sea ice she wouldn't have the chance, but we did a bit of, and the diesel mech. who'd been talking to her all year and knew her from the previous season. You know when she'd come down for a summer season and they did a bit of swooping and got her up to the base to have a look round, which was quite nice, because she would have gone to Halley and not seen the base! We are talking about 20km from the sea, so it's a fair way.

[Part 3 0:18:21] Lee: Were you jacking the base at this point?

Wearden: Yeah, I did a shift jacking because it was so labour intensive! 40 odd people everybody was put to, but yeah I did one shift mainly so Simon said, 'You can say you have done it!!'

[Part 3 0:18:41] Lee: That was your last season at Halley, [Wearden: Yeah!] but not your last season south?

Wearden: No!

[Part 3 0:18:46] Lee: Then Rothera beckoned?

Wearden: Well I came home, and fancied Rothera and it worked out there was a summer cook going every other year at Rothera, because when there was a new cook coming in that would mean they had 2 cooks, so there was no change over that season so I went Rothera. Which meant flying from Brize to Stanley and then from Stanley to Rothera, Ben [Hodges] was in Stanley as well, he'd been waiting a bit for a flight had Ben, I think he must have gone down the previous week. But then we had a slight delay in Stanley, because when we should have flown, I think it was a Boric Twin Otter had crashed off the jetty at Rothera and they were all killed! We could still see the remains when we flew over, we flew on the Dash 7 down to Rothera.

But that was a pretty good season at Rothera, different again to Halley. Although I did get one of the, all the cookers out of the Weatherhavens when we demolished them, they said

they're going to Stanley to sell them. I said 'Well can't we depot them here and see what they were going to do next season?' Because we didn't know what they were going to do about temporary accommodation, they took in a big like caboose like thing. But I was at Rothera and we only had one cooker, which there was the Kempsafe which we weren't using, which was a waste of space. So I actually said, 'Well I know where there's a cooker', so they brought it round from Halley for us.

[Part 3 0:20:27] Lee: When, you said brought it round from Halley, how do you mean?

Wearden: Well they put it on the ship.

[Part 3 0:20:32] Lee: On the ship?

Wearden: They put it on the ship and brought it round.

[Part 3 0:20:36] Lee: OK! So it wasn't a flying visit?

Wearden: No, no a bit heavy for that! But we got that round, yes Sara Wheeler was there that season!

[Part 3 0:20:44] Lee: Yes! You met Sara Wheeler?

Wearden: I got on very well with Sara, I get an acknowledgement in the book, [Lee: I know!] there's certain people Steve Rumble, myself and Ben Hodges are about the only people that are mentioned, might be the odd other one.

[Part 3 0:21:00] Lee: Why, did you deserve a mention?

Wearden: I think we were friendly to her is what she said, but I didn't realise it was quite as bad as she makes out in the book!?

[Part 3 0:21:14] Lee: What's the book called?

Wearden: *Terra Incognita*.

[Part 3 0:21:16] Lee: *Terra Incognita*.

Wearden: That's the one!

[Part 3 0:21:20] Lee: I have read it!

Wearden: Yeah, yeah you have read my copy actually, Sara was alright but I mean I remember it was February it was pancake Tuesday, well before pancake Tuesday Richard Casson said 'It's Pancake Tuesday on Tuesday!' This was on the Sunday, and I think there was about 60 or 70 people on base and I said 'I can't do pancakes for everybody and do a normal meal as well!' So Sara said 'I'll come in and help', so she came in and tossed all the pancakes, Cath Nicholson from BAS Office came in as well, I got a couple of extra bottles of wine out and it was quite a good afternoon! In my inscription on the book which she did at the book launch says 'To Al with memories of tossing!' [Lee: Ha, Ha!]

[Part 3 0:22:15] Lee: Was there much fallout from Saras Wheeler's book do you recall?

Wearden: A few people weren't happy, but then again I wasn't connected with BAS after that! I was just trying to find my copy but couldn't see it, a lot of people weren't mentioned and I think that probably rankled and I think she purposely didn't mention them!? Like the base commander and obviously that was up to Sara that was her prerogative I mean she'd always said 'Come to the book launch and you can have as much wine as you want!!'

[Part 3 0:23:04] Lee Ha!.Ha!

Wearden: So I did, I went to the book launch and Frank Curry was there and Bob Headland, a summer GA she must have got on reasonably with, he might have been at Sky High with her? Think that was it, I think from BAS was Richard Hanson there? Could have been, think he was, Richard Hanson he gets an acknowledgement, but it was a good night was the book launch yeah, when you went in you got a glass of wine, half an hour later you were helping yourself to wine, later on in the evening I was opening wine!! And then there was a group of us went to 'Wong Ke's' in Soho. Bob Headland and an American friend of Sara's I don't know who she is, I know I walked her back to Leicester Square to catch a bus, but we had quite a good night!

[Part 3 0:24:13] Lee: There was also a farewell party for John Cole wasn't there, because he was stepping down as the Captain of the *JCR*? [Wearden: *Bransfield* yeah!] Oh I beg your pardon!

Wearden: *Bransfield*, yeah it was the *Bransfield*! We had the Tilbury Douglas people on base that year as well, who were the forerunners of Morrisons so myself and Dave Bailey who was the other cook, does get a mention in the book as well. We decided we would do a buffet on Saturday nights so it would accommodate everyone, which worked well. So we did one for John Cole and they came up to the base, and that was quite good! Except one of the Tilbury Douglas, John Cole's wife was with him as well, one of the Tilbury Douglas guys had a party piece and he just took all his clothes off!! And I remembering him doing that, and she was just talking to him, but yeah John had a good last season there.

And we also had a trip out on Christmas Eve to the sledges myself and, yeah I think they put it in the log as 'Cooks on Tour!' Myself in one twin otter and Dave Bailey in the other, went to all the sledges we could get at, and took them a Christmas box. A chicken, mince pies some cake. Yeah, we took them a little Christmas parcel, I dressed up as a penguin picture up there, that's on the Uranus Glacier yeah that, was quite a good day out was that. And I remember we had organised to have a buffet that night when we got in so it was quite a good day, and there was vegetarian sledge I remember that! Jane Scarrow who married Mike Dinn, they got everything bar the chicken I'm not sure what we substituted for the chicken?

[Part 3 0:26:21] Lee: When you got back from Rothera that was the time to collect your Polar Medal?

Wearden: Yeah, I had arranged with Stuart Lawrence, because they give you a couple of dates and my first dates I was down south. So I arranged with Stuart Lawrence we would go

that following summer, which was have been the summer of '95? So we arranged it, and I turned up and Stuart's there and John Cole's there getting his MBE as well. So that was quite good, there was 3 of us and you have a long wait before you go in Stuart was getting a 'Bar' to his Polar Medal and John was getting his MBE, so John would have been on a different section. Me and Stuart were near the end the only people after us, I think was the Ulster Defence Force, they were the last ones. And some of those were done *in camera*.

[Part 3 0:27:21] Lee: How did you feel about it?

Wearden: It was nice, I'd known I had it for 18 months, but yeah I was surprised, because I'd already got the Fuchs Medal. The Polar Medal was a bit of a surprise, I always put it down to David Drewery who knew who I was!

[Part 3 0:27:44] Lee: He knew your date of birth!

Wearden: Well he knew who exactly who I was, and yeah it was and really worked out to a good day. Because a friend of mine should have come and she got cold feet at the end, so Sara Wheeler was always going to come and have lunch with us, but she ended up coming to the Palace as one of my guests she had to pretend to be somebody else, but nobody asked! And I also took my great niece, who was probably 6 or 7 at the time and her father who could get time off. But I was staying at the Regent Palace Hotel and I'd been talking to John Cole and he said 'What are doing afterwards?' 'Well think I'm going to have lunch in the hotel as they do a buffet. Oh, you know a carvery.' 'Oh' he said, 'that sounds alright, can we come as well?' So John Cole his wife and his 2 daughters were there, so they were staying with Pearson, Pearson he's an artist, think its Pearson [Bruce] I know he's done Antarctic paintings. So they went home, and then came to join us, we had a really good afternoon because they just left us to it, did the hotel so I know when we left Sara and I went for a drink in 'Happy Hour' which was 5 to 6 so we had quite a fair stretch in the dining room!

[Part 3 0:29:30] Lee: It wasn't the end of your time in the Antarctic though because although you didn't work for BAS again, you did work for Morrisons?

Wearden: Yeah, that was a bit of, although I went down in 2000 on the 'Marguerite Bay 2000' trip, which I thought was like the swan song! And that was a good trip to go on.

[Part 3 0:29:46] Lee: So you weren't expecting to go south again after that?

Wearden: No, no I did get approached at Rothera by 'Arkwright', Simon Almond, who was working for Morrison's and he said 'Oh well', and he said what they were paying and I said 'No chance! Not going away for that', so it must have been some other time in 2001 and I can't remember who approached me to be honest, so I said 'What are you paying?' So they said 'Oh well £500 a week' or £400 something like that anyhow it was quite a good deal, so I agreed to go and I did negotiate when on base and I got another £100 a week as I found out how much everybody else was on!

[Part 3 0:30:54] Lee: This was at South Georgia and Signy was it, demolishing structures?

Wearden: Yeah, we sailed, we flew from Brize to Stanley and then it was a fisheries protection boat out to the Point. The base had been built the year before, well it was the same year, but started the year before. So the Army had gone and they were demolishing Shackleton House and several buildings on the Point, it was overrun with rats was Shackleton House they took it down gradually because they'd no heavy equipment, think they'd one small JCB but they did very well. And we lived, we ate in the Fids' base for the first couple of months, they didn't have a cook so I was cooking for everybody.

We slept in our accommodation, did our accommodation up and we moved into there sometime in December, but a few, the foreman and Dave Mitchell who was in charge of our lot, they went home for Christmas. We obviously stayed on, and we had a joint Christmas with the base and they'd been doing some work on the dam which supplied the water to the whaling station and the base. And the previous year the *Endurance* had taken up a cement mixer by helicopter, now they did the work on the dam, but they didn't actually need the cement mixer. But the cement mixer was on top of this hill having been taken there by helicopter, now the *Endurance* didn't come in, due to problems with their helicopters, so we had to take the cement mixer down as they needed it for work down below. So they took virtually everybody from the building team and I thought I'm getting on this! Christmas Eve we went up and there was various estimates from 6 hours to how long it would take to get the cement mixer down, in the end we just ran it down the off the side of the hill with ropes and it took an hour and that was Christmas Eve 2001!

But that day we had a tourist ship in, and a lot of the lads went on board the tourist ship that night. But I'd also organised a party on our thing so some of them stayed behind and the base came over. Then we had a service in the church at midnight, which was very eerie! There was quite a lot of mist around!

[Part 3 0:34:24] Lee: Is this the Norwegian church?

Wearden: In the whaling station yeah, and walking down very misty midnight candlelit church, bell tolling if Shackleton had turned up that night, I wouldn't have blinked!! It really was quite eerie and a nice service but the tourists ships that had been in that day, 2 of them were German ships and it's a regular thing to use the church around Christmas time, but yeah it was quite an eerie feeling that night!!

[Part 3 0:35:08] Lee: When! It was time for you to leave you left on the *Shackleton*?

Wearden: Yeah well, but we'd played cricket on Boxing Day, on the whaling station pitch [football] and a Bar-B-Q on the beach, we'd lots of Bar-B-Q's, we'd brilliant weather at South Georgia that year! And then we left on the *Shackleton*, to sail to Signy.

[Part 3 0:35:29] Lee; You were going to go to Halley to pick up? No?

Wearden: The *Shackleton* had come in, the *JCR* and *Shackleton* had both been in. The *Shackleton* had left to go to Halley to take people and couldn't get in! So came back and picked us up and took us to Signy and then went to have another attempt to go to Halley and again didn't get in!! So that was the only year that the ships didn't get into Halley and they

got to an ice shelf and I think the relief was done by aircraft, they got a couple planes over from Rothera. Personnel and vital equipment, luckily they had a lot of fuel in, down to John Newman because they said 'It's too much to leave 2 years supply of fuel', but if they hadn't they would have had a real problem! Because they had got 2 years supply so they could carry on, because they couldn't have taken that much fuel in by air.

[Part 3 0:36:39] Lee: Finally, I think we should stop in a moment, its nearly 3 hours Allan no wonder your voice is packing up! But you were leaving on the *Shackleton*?

Wearden: We did our work at Signy demolished the old base. And that was yeah, an interesting season, we had one good day in Signy the weather was Signy!! And I stayed, I got on very well with the base commander John Blunn and Mary was the doctor Mary Philipsz. So I stayed to the bitter end all the other Morrison staff had gone aboard, but I gave a hand doing the stock take, indents and stuff. I left on the last, next to last landing craft and I'd never gone up the side of the *Shackleton*., top of the *Bransfield* had two handles, I got to the top of the rope ladder on the *Shackleton* and turned round to get hold of the handle and it's not there!? So I've only one hand on, slippy gloves and next thing I know it's 'AH-HH!!' And I'm falling off so your life flashes before your eyes at this stage, you think 'GOD!!' And I landed between the landing craft and the ship, but the launch man saw me coming down and he grabbed my wellingtons, so he's holding on, and I see the rope ladder and pull myself up, and so lucky !! I could have been curtains there!! And they took me in the cab of the landing craft, and I think they had some doctored coffee there, with a bit of something in it! But so quarter of an hour to steady down.

[Part 3 0:38:56] Lee: So! You didn't even get wet?

Wearden: A couple of bruises, no a couple of bruises! So that's why Jenny and I have always been friends!

[Part 3 0:39:06] Lee: Jenny Dean the doctor?

Wearden: She was the doctor on the ship at that stage, and I would have been her dead body!! So she was always thankful I didn't die, because it would have been yeah!!

[Part 3 0:39:23] Lee: You more than anybody really has had your life completely altered by that decision to go south?

Wearden: Oh! Yeah, yeah definitely!

[Part 3 0:39:37] Lee: Even now you are organising the Marguerite Bay reunions?

Wearden: Yeah, involved in the oral history.

[Part 3 0:39:41] Lee: Yeah, so it's completely dominated your life?

Wearden: Yeah, it has, well the best thing I ever did! There's been big gaps, Friday we have got 8 former Fids staying here for this pub crawl, yeah so a lot of friends, so yeah, it has dominated my life definitely!!

[Part 3 0:40:06] Lee: Thank you very much Allan!

Wearden: OK!

Interesting clips:

- Raymond Priestley (and the VD lecture). [Part 1 0:15:55]
- Cooking local produce! [Part 1 0:30:51]
- Arrival at base F. [Part 1 0:34:52]
- Base food ration scales. [Part 1 0:40:25]
- Cunning marmalade 'scam', making the most of available materials, and the hazards of cooking chips! [Part 1 0:44:24]
- Growing salads on base. [Part 1 0:50:45]
- Sledge trip to Cape Perez. [Part 1 0:58:49]
- Arrival of tourists on base. [Part 1 1:00:20]
- Sports on the ice. [Part 2 0:03:25]
- Visitors from other Antarctic nations. [Part 2 0:06:49]
- *Endurance* rewards base - trip to Palmer Station and free phone calls. [Part 2 0:09:49]
- Green beef! [Part 2 0:27:06]
- *Calypso* and Cousteau. [Part 2 0:31:36]
- An 'interesting' trip to Halley. [Part 2 0:44:05]
- Building Halley 5. [Part 2 0:46:03]
- Ingenious toilets! [Part 2 0:51:46]
- First females go South. [Part 2 0:58:58]
- The 'Garden Shed' expedition. [Part 3 0:11:25]
- Sara Wheeler at Rothera. [Part 3 0:21:14]
- The Polar Medal. [Part 3 0:26:21]
- Falling off RRS *Shackleton*! [Part 3 0:36:39]

